

Education Material:

Circular Success Story 1:

Repurposing Brewer's Spent Grain for Sustainable Food Production

Interreg
Alpine Space

Co-funded by
the European Union

CEFoodCycle

D.1.2.4, part of O.1.2 [Deliverable Lead: Fachhochschule Salzburg GmbH]
Video created by: Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften München
Supplementary material created by: Fachhochschule Salzburg GmbH

This circular success story video is crafted for professionals in the food sector seeking to reassess and innovate their current business strategy as well as business management students in higher education. Below, you'll find a brief overview of the video's content, as well as a set of related discussion questions.

Video Description

Stiegl Brewery, in collaboration with a startup, initiated a project to repurpose brewer's spent grain (Biertreber), a by-product of the beer brewing process, into sustainable food products. This project was awarded with the CEFoodCycle Award 2024 that honoured circular innovation in the food sector. The spent grain, rich in protein, minerals, and other nutrients, was transformed into vegan burger patties and other innovative food items, offering a circular approach to reduce waste in the food production process.

The project embraced circular thinking, using brewer's spent grain as a raw material to create high-quality, plant-based food products. This approach not only reduced waste but also helped to lower CO₂ emissions by using a by-product of the brewing process rather than additional agricultural resources. The vegan burger patties was marketed as a sustainable, innovative food choice that aimed to attract a broad audience.

Although the startup involved in the collaboration is no longer operating, the project remains a strong example of an innovative business model that reduces waste, promotes sustainability, and applies circular economy principles in food production

Questions for Reflection

Please answer the following questions based on your company. If you are a student, feel free to choose any company you would like to focus on.

1. What circular opportunities exist within your current waste streams, and how could these be transformed into new revenue-generating or value-adding products or services?
2. Who are potential strategic partners across your value chain that could help co-create circular solutions?(Consider suppliers, startups, NGOs, research institutions.)
3. How will you assess partner risk? How can you structure agreements to mitigate risk while encouraging innovation?
4. What cultural or organizational changes are needed internally to support circular innovation (e.g., training, leadership buy-in, mindset shifts)?
5. What structures or incentives can foster effective circular collaborations (e.g. co-branding)?
6. How do you define and measure success in a circular initiative — financially, environmentally, and socially? What are your KPIs beyond profitability?
7. How do you educate and engage customers around the value of circular products without compromising brand appeal or trust?

Video links



long version
(05:45 min)



short version
(01:04 min)

Further education material:
www.foodcycle.ai/education



Further Information

