

WITH ITS NX-FOOD HUB, METRO CONTRIBUTES TO SHAPING THE FUTURE OF FOOD

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- NX-FOOD is a hub for customer demands and trends, new food solutions and the evolution of the food system
- The NX-FOOD Start-up Shelf was already launched at METRO Cash & Carry and Real last year and is now also rolled out internationally
- Cooperations with the start-up Plumento Foods which for the first time in the German retail sector produces everyday foods such as noodles on the basis of insect proteins and with the start-up Wisefood which produces eatable straws
- Cooperation with the German Institute of Food Technologies (DIL), co-initiator with METRO of the project FOOD 2025

Düsseldorf, 2 March 2018 – A growing world population and increasing urbanisation, food waste, the foreseeable limits of conventional animal husbandry and the environmental impact are topics that concern society as a whole. With the NX-FOOD hub, the wholesale and food specialist METRO contributes to developing sustainable food solutions and to actively shaping the future in regard of these challenges. To this end, the NX-FOOD hub is always on the lookout for new technologies, impulses and innovative products.

“As a food specialist, we consider it our responsibility to identify solutions for future challenges in the existing food system and to contribute to shaping them. That is the reason why we founded the NX-FOOD hub. It shows how we are taking these topics one step further, using opportunities and assuming responsibility – and how we then implement the ideas, both at the national and international level,” says Olaf Koch, Chairman of the Management Board of METRO AG. NX-FOOD is short for Next Generation Food. The METRO hub is responsible for business development regarding new food solutions and concepts in the wholesale, retail and hospitality sectors.

Scouting trends, identifying customer needs, developing solutions – at the NX-FOOD hub, this is done with the team and also with external partnerships. NX-FOOD cooperates with universities, research laboratories and start-ups to take in valuable external impulses and innovations from the outside, and process them. Important initiatives such as the Start-up Shelf are developed by NX-FOOD on its own: innovative products get access to the market and are offered in

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selected METRO Cash & Carry wholesale stores and some Real hypermarkets. In addition, the shelf gives the start-ups the opportunity to collect first commercial experiences.

“We are always on the lookout for new technologies, innovative products and ideas which we can put to practice. Projects like the Start-up Shelf, vertical farming in METRO stores or promoting sustainable solutions such as eatable straws are the proof that promising solutions exist. With events such as meet-ups, we are building a food tech and food innovation community, thereby extending our network. This way we are not only meeting young entrepreneurs and creative minds, but also showing start-ups how our support can advance their ideas”, says Fabio Ziemßen, Director Food Innovation NX-FOOD hub.

Since February 2018, the second round of innovative products has been available in the Start-up Shelves, which in the start-up speak is referred to as a “batch”. For a period of three months, customers of both sales lines have the opportunity to try out these products. “With the Start-up Shelf, METRO Germany underscores an important element of its claim to offer a trend platform especially for customers from the hospitality sector. We want to inspire them and give them access to new products. The feedback is fantastic: the Start-up Shelf in the selected stores is very well received by customers and employees alike”, says Thomas Storck, CEO of METRO Germany.

Some products from the first batch also made the leap into the Austrian market and are sold at local METRO Cash & Carry stores. In three stores, they now also gain international experience. A rollout to further countries is planned in the next few months.

In the second batch, the selected Start-up Shelves offer pioneering new products. At Emmas Enkel, the grocery store on the METRO Campus, for the first time in Germany, everyday foods such as noodles with insect proteins will be sold over a period of three months. Offering insects as food in Europe was made possible by the new EU Regulation No. 2015/2283 on Novel Foods that came into force on 1 January 2018. It regulates the handling of novel foods and novel food ingredients.

From March 2018, three METRO Cash & Carry stores will be offering eatable straws produced by the start-up Wisefood. To reduce the volume of plastic waste and contribute to sustainability, the start-up developed straws made from apple pomace in cooperation with the German Institute of Food Technology (DIL). Even if they are not eaten, they help reduce the amount of waste plastic as they are compostable.

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In March, NX-FOOD and the DIL will launch the project FOOD 2025. Together, the cooperation partners will search for new food solutions of the future, promote start-ups and initiate the first Innovation Camp on 8 March 2018. Start-ups, business and product development experts and the initiators METRO and DIL have set themselves the goal of defining and implementing innovation projects. "METRO is aware of its social responsibility and would like to actively contribute to shaping the future of these issues in its role as a wholesale and food specialist. The NX-FOOD hub helps us in this endeavour. The next exciting projects are already in the pipeline", says Ziemßen.

METRO is a leading international specialist in wholesale and food retail. The company operates in 35 countries and employs more than 150,000 people worldwide. In financial year 2016/17, METRO generated sales of around €37 billion. The company provides custom solutions to meet the regional and international needs of its wholesale and retail customers. With its sales brands METRO/MAKRO Cash & Carry and Real as well as delivery services and digitalisation initiatives METRO sets the standards for tomorrow: for customer focus, digital solutions and sustainable business models. More information at www.metroag.de

NX-FOOD stands for Next Generation Food and is a hub of METRO for new food solutions to address customer demands, future trends and a better food system. The range of NX-FOOD covers topics such as food waste and its reduction, vertical farming as well as sustainable new food concepts and innovative products for hospitality and end consumers that are made accessible by way of initiatives such as the Start-up Shelf. More information about NX-FOOD at nx-food.com

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