More sustainability in the kitchen:

How the hospitality industry can also contribute to environmental protection.

The protection of natural resources concerns everyone. Guests in the hospitality industry are paying more attention to what they eat and their food's origins, including how ingredients were cultivated and farming conditions for food of animal origin. These are obvious criteria, but restaurateurs should go one step further and consider water and energy usage (both of which impact a company's bottom line). Here are a few ways you can address these concerns in your foodservice operation. With a few simple ideas, it is possible to take on these challenges.

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Immediate savings potentials
Reducing energy usage is probably the most obvious in terms of potential savings. Of course, you may need some creative ideas and make some investments, but in the end it will pay off. The first step, for example, is the type of lighting: Switching to LED lighting and installing motion sensors in less busy areas of the foodservice business is a start.

According to ENGIE Impact, almost 80% of annual energy costs in the hospitality industry are due to energy-inefficient food preparation and storage. So updating the kitchen equipment can make perfect sense. In addition to refrigerators and dishwashers, cooking appliances are the biggest energy guzzlers. It's worth taking a closer look here and to consider replacing units that use a lot of energy. The payback period is often shorter than you think, taking into account the savings potential.

For example, all RATIONAL iCombi Pro combi-steamers are certified according to the new Energy Star 3.0 standard, effective from January 2023. This means that energy usage has been reduced by another 10% compared to the model introduced in 2020 in hot air mode. In steam mode, it has been reduced by 13%. These values are even more impressive if you take a six-year-old combi-steamer as a basis. The savings potential when cooking with hot air is over 25% and with steam a whopping 35%. Reducing variable costs by replacing equipment that consumes high levels of energy is worth considering.

Energy usage values at a glance
The iCombi Pro heats up and is ready for use quickly. This is a fact that is reflected positively in the electricity bill. To make these savings visible, all energy usage values from cooking and cleaning can be displayed at any time in the ConnectedCooking Cockpit. A first step towards more transparency in the usage of resources and a clear statement on the efficiency of the iCombi Pro.

“Thanks to RATIONAL units, we have been able to reduce water usage by around 50%.”

Philip Watson, Head of Facilities,
Royal United Hospitals (Bath, UK)

* compared to a 2018 combi-steamer

Identify energy losses with digital data.
Another is the use and analysis of digital data. Digital data means energy losses can easily be identified. In ConnectedCooking, the free digital kitchen management system by RATIONAL, energy usagevalues of the iCombi Pro can be viewed very easily. The loading time, i.e. the time for which the cooking cabinet door is open for loading, and the idle time after the end of preheating, (e.g., times of day or locations, which provides an essential basis for further optimization). Door opening and idle times are now immediately marked with the value of the energy loss.

Critically examine water usage.
According to the UN World Water Development Report 2019, water use is increasing all over the world. At the same time, the amount of drinking water available is shrinking significantly. This should be motivation enough to take action against water waste. This mainly concerns the water required for rinsing and cleaning, but also the handling of water when preparing food. Cleaning vegetables and meat, as well as cooking food, often consumes too much water. Vegetables can be steamed beautifully – with minimal water use – in the combi-steamer until crisp and without loss of vitamins and natural color. When cooking a beef brisket or steaming rice, water savings of as much as 60 % have been measured.*

Once everything is done and the kitchen is closing, the time has come to clean the units. And here is another advantage offered by the RATIONAL iCombi Pro. On the one hand, the amount of water required is optimally matched to the cleaning program, and on the other hand, the Active Green cleaner is environmentally-friendly. It is phosphate and phosphorous-free and significantly reduces the quantity of cleaning agent without compromising on cleaning power or hygiene.

Philip Watson, Head of Facilities at the Royal United Hospitals in Bath (UK) says, “Thanks to the RATIONAL units, we have been able to reduce water usage in our kitchen by around 50%, in addition to significant savings in energy usage.”

Of course, these are only a few suggestions that can help make a contribution to greater sustainability. There are countless other possibilities, the effectiveness of which should be discussed individually according to the business. With a little creativity and the will to make investments that make sense in the medium and long term, foodservice operators can positively impact their organization’s cost structure.

Specialists like kitchen planners or manufacturers of modern kitchen technology would be happy to advise.

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