

SA Harvest introduces innovative nutritional tracking technology to fight hunger

An innovative digital platform created specifically for tracking and analysing the nutritional worth of the food it distributes has been unveiled by food rescue and hunger relief charity, SA Harvest. The technology evaluates the nutritional value of the food parcels sent to more than 200 beneficiary groups around the nation in response to creator Alan Browde's concern over poor nutrition, particularly in children.



Source: SA Harvest

The nutrition tracker employs data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), identifying 60 essential nutrients in over 1,000 food items. It calculates the weight of each micro and macronutrient relative to the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA), contributing to a holistic view of the nutritional value of food 'bundles' delivered to SA Harvest's beneficiary organisations. The tracker also includes a scoring system that rates the nutritional value of the food bundle, setting a potential industry-wide standard for hunger relief efforts.

In addition to nutrition tracking, the organisation's dashboard provides an aggregate of data, useful for identifying specific nutritional needs and shaping future procurement focus. Furthermore, warehouse personnel can use this data when assembling food bundles, ensuring a balanced nutritional content.

Nutritional meal importance

Commenting on this development, Browde says: "Lack of nutrition is one of the greatest scourges of South African society, with over two million children (three out of ten) suffering stunting as a result. From a food rescue and delivery point of view, one of the challenges in South African hunger relief practice is that too much maize and other starch is delivered. While carbohydrates are vital as part of a balanced diet, it is only one element of a fully nutritious food basket.

"At SA Harvest, we have always emphasised the importance of nutritious meals. This technology allows us to measure the average nutritional value of our million meals delivered per month. It's part of our continuous commitment to ensuring dedicated focus on delivering balanced nutritional bundles to our beneficiary organisations and contributing towards reducing the scourge of childhood stunting."

The nutritional tracking has been integrated into the organisation's bespoke technology platform, which enables complete transparency of where food is being rescued from and where it ends up, and the logistics involved in getting it there.

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