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Headline: Koufu food court in SMU stops providing plastic straws to customers

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(To commemorate the launch, 198 participants gathered at SMU's Koufu food court at 1pm on Thursday and broke the Singapore Book of Records for "Most Number of People Drinking From Bamboo Straws". PHOTO: Koufu)

The Koufu food court at the Singapore Management University (SMU) no longer provides plastic straws to customers as from Thursday (29 March) under a new initiative.

"Koufu at SMU is poised to be Singapore's first food court to go plastic straw-free," said a press release on the Say No to Plastic Straws initiative.

While there are no immediate plans to roll out the initiative to the rest of over 50 Koufu food courts in Singapore, David Yang, Chief Development Officer, Koufu, doesn't rule out the possibility.

"We will like to further this initiative, however, we will monitor the overall response from this first outlet before we move onto more outlets," Yang told Yahoo News Singapore via email.

To commemorate the launch, 198 participants – from SMU students, faculty, staff to members of the public – gathered at SMU's Koufu food court at 1pm on Thursday and broke the Singapore Book of Records for "Most Number of People Drinking From Bamboo Straws".

The reusable straw – handmade from whole bamboo – is a product from The Sustainability Project by SMU School of Accountancy undergraduate Joline Tang. The straw is available for purchase online at \$7 for a pack of two or \$27 for a pack of ten.

Apart from banning disposable straws, the food court will be using biodegradable takeaway packaging and reusable utensils.

"We encourage them to drink off the cup as it does not change the taste. However, we understand it will also take time to get used to and they can bring their own reusable straw," added Yang.

SMU President Arnoud De Meyer said, "This will go a long way towards cultivating a mindfulness about the harmful use of plastic, not just within the university, but also among members of the public who patronise Koufu. It is my hope that all F&B outlets at SMU will follow this excellent example."

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According to the 2017 statistics on waste and recycling by the National Environment Agency, plastics constitute the highest amount of disposed waste (763,400 tonnes) and have the second lowest recycling rate at six per cent in Singapore.