The U.S. Food Waste Challenge

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Why so much food waste?

Two characteristics of food help explain high amounts of waste

• Food is a logistical nightmare
  – Variable
  – Highly perishable
  – Lumpy production stream: That’s a lot of watermelon!

• Food waste is often the least-cost option for individuals, firms and organizations
  – Food waste may be less expensive than high-priced harvesting, storage, distribution, processing, and preparation – particularly in cases of low returns
  – Dumping food scraps and waste into landfills or drains may be less expensive than donations, composting or other options
Food waste may not be the least-cost solution for society*

Food waste has widespread ramifications:

- Food security
- Environment
- Climate change

*But sometimes it might be
Public goods

- Infrastructure
  - Roads, rail and waterways
  - Waste recycling infrastructures

- Markets
  - Are markets working to efficiently allocate product and reduce waste?
U.S. policy targeting food waste (II)

Better align private incentives with public objectives

- The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act provides limited liability to businesses donating food
- Federal tax deductions provide incentives to businesses to donate food
- Federal Food Donation Act encourages Federal agencies and contractors of Federal agencies to donate excess food
- Landfill restrictions for organic waste encourage recycling (local government regulations in the U.S.)
U.S. policy targeting food waste (III)

Cultivate innovation to help make reducing waste the cost-effective option

USDA is investing in research on

• New technologies for reducing spoilage of fresh foods
• New products from food waste at farms and food processing facilities

Private investors are competing for the $161 billion food waste market
U.S. policy targeting food waste (IV)

USDA programs and policies? New commitments:

– Reduce food waste in the school-meals programs
– Educate consumers about food storage
– Streamline procedures for donating misbranded meat and poultry
– Facilitate donation of out-of-standard imported produce
– Develop a meat composting program for inspection samples
– Update estimates the amount of food loss
U.S. policy targeting food waste (V)

Raise Awareness

We have been doing this for some time…..
Keep Good Food Out of Your Garbage Pail and Kitchen Sink
Don't Feed High-Priced Human Food to Hogs or Chickens

WASTE NO FOOD!

HOUSEHOLD WASTE ABOUT 700 MILLION DOLLARS

"For partial immunity to lack, every individual and community should understand correctly the matter of food conservation and the limitation of waste. As a nation we seem to have a distinct promise to make. In many respects there is a strong feeling that it is "only dollar" to produce more food than will be eaten and that it is dangerous to reckon dearly. The reports of the Department of Agriculture in regard the dietary studies made by them prior to the annual food waste of about $100,000,000. If so, the waste in families of very limited means is eight, but in the families of mediums and ample means the waste is considerable. Even if the amount was reduced by half, the waste would still be enormous."

The food waste in the household, the reports assert, results in large measure from bad preparation and bad cooking, from improper use and handling, and, in part, to the families. From serving an undue number of courses and an over-abundance of food and failing to see and utilize the food not consumed. As an instance of improper handling, it is discovered that in the preparation of potatoes 90 per cent of the edible portion is wasted in many ways as documented. - Hoover at Agriculture, March 3, 1913

FOOD IS WASTED
When anything edible is allowed to go to the garbage pail or allowed to spoil for lack of proper handling

FOOD IS WASTED
When too much is served at a meal. Unsewed portions are left on the plate and later thrown into the garbage pail. Learn to know the needs of your family and serve each no more than you think he will want.

When too much food is prepared for a meal. Unused portions are likely to be thrown into the garbage pail or allowed to spoil. Many housewives do not know how to use left-over food to make appetizing dishes.

FOOD IS WASTED
When we eat more than our bodies need for growth and repair and to supply energy for our work

Overeating tends to poor health and fat instead of lean, makes us sluggish and indolent instead of energetic and serviceable. Eat enough and no more. Eat for physical and mental efficiency.

DEMONSTRATE THRIFT IN YOUR HOME
MAKE SAVING, RATHER THAN SPENDING, YOUR SOCIAL STANDARD

Begin to save to day. For practical advice on how to feed your family efficiently and make the most of the food you buy or raise write to days your State Agricultural College, or to the

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.
LICK THE PLATTER CLEAN

Don't Waste FOOD
Food

1. buy it with thought
2. cook it with care
3. serve just enough
4. save what will keep
5. eat what would spoil
6. home-grown is best

don't waste it
U.S. policy targeting food waste (V)

Raise awareness and educate

- EPA’s *Food Recovery Challenge* (2010)
  EPA offers businesses and organizations access to data management software and technical assistance to help them measure and reduce their food waste

- EPA’s *Food: Too Good to Waste* (2012)
  Community development toolkit to help families and individuals waste less food at home – currently being piloted in over 14 communities in the U.S.

  USDA and EPA launched the US Food Waste Challenge to encourage more widespread action on food waste. To join, participants either list their activities to reduce, recover or recycle food waste—or work with EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge
Goal of the U.S. Food Waste Challenge

• Disseminate information about the best practices to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste

• Stimulate the development of more of these practices across the entire U.S. food chain.

• Provide a snapshot of the country’s commitment to—and successes in—reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste.

Over 1,000 participants by October 2014
For more information

http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste
(Or google US Food Waste Challenge)