

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

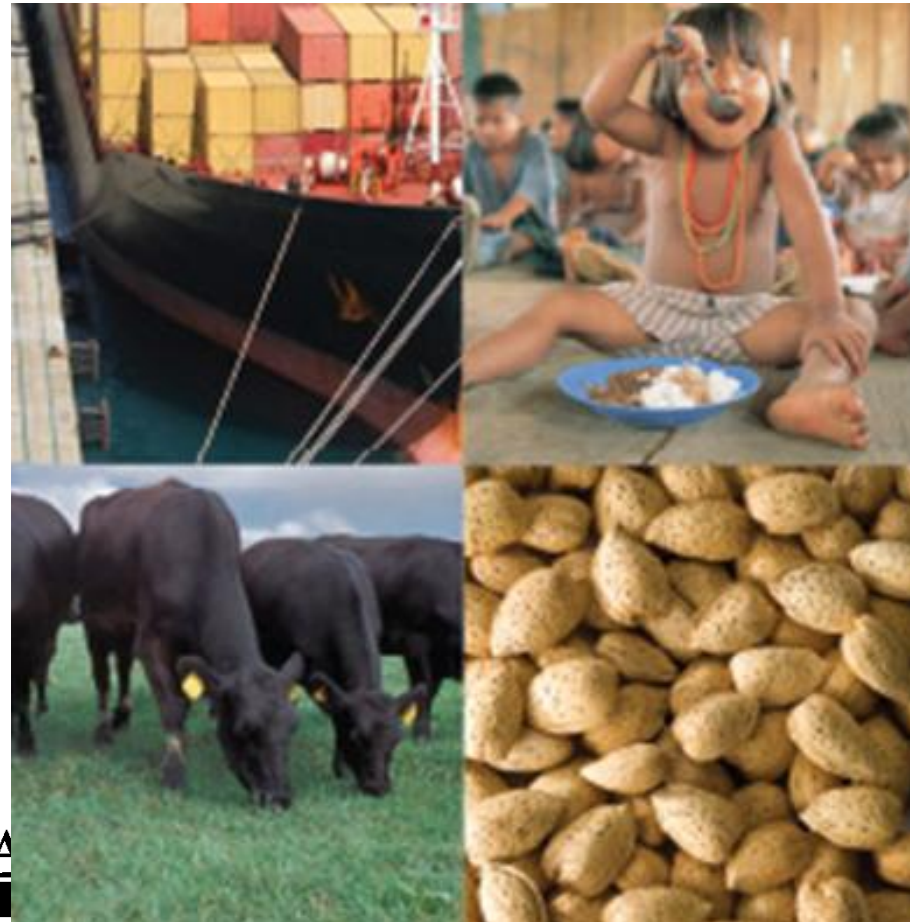
- Food is a logistical nightmare
 - Variable
 - Highly perishable
 - Lumpy production stream: *That's a lot of watermelon!*
- **Food waste is often the least-cost option for individuals, firms and organizations**
 - Food waste may be less expensive than high-priced harvesting, storage, distribution, 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



U.S. policy targeting food waste (I)

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

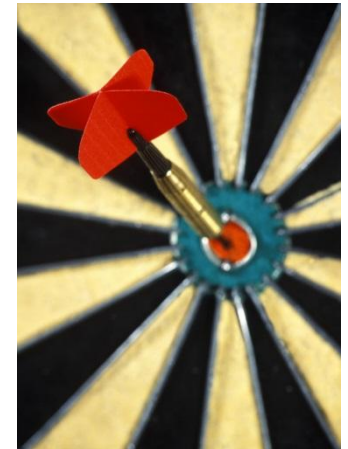
- New technologies for reducing spoilage of fresh foods
- New products from food waste at farms and food processing facilities

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

"The partial incineration which, every individual and community should consider seriously, the matter of food conservation and the limitation of waste. As a nation we seem to have a habit of over-eating. In many homes there is a strong feeling that it is 'only decent' to provide more food than will be eaten and that it is 'demeaning' to eat too cheaply. The reports of the Department of Agriculture report to us that the dietary studies made by them point to an annual food waste of about \$100,000,000. Of course, the waste in families of very limited means is slight, but in the families of abundance

and single means the waste is considerable. Even if the waste were reduced by half, the waste would still be enormous. "The food waste in the household, the reports assert, results in large measure from food preparation and food cooking, from improper care and handling, and, in well-to-do families, from serving an undue number of courses and an over-abundant supply and being to serve and utilize the food not consumed. As an instance of improper handling, it is discovered that in the preparation of potatoes 30 per cent of the edible portion in many cases is discarded."—*Journal of Nutrition*, March 1, 1931.

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. Uneaten portions are left on the plate and later thrown into the garbage pail. Learn to know the needs of your family and serve such no more than you think he will want.

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

FOOD IS WASTED

When burned or spoiled in cooking. Improperly prepared or poorly seasoned food will be left on the table and probably wasted. They food wisely and then prepare it carefully.

When handled carelessly. They clean food, keep it clean until used, and be neat in all details of cooking and serving. This means waste and is a valuable health measure as well.

FOOD IS WASTED

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

Overeating leads to poor health and fat instead of brains, makes us sluggish and indolent instead of energetic and successful. 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-day to your State Agricultural College, to your county agent, or to the

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

LICK THE PLATTER CLEAN



Don't Waste **FOOD**

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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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.
- *U.S. Food Waste Challenge* (2013)
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)**

