



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



29 September

International Day of Awareness
of Food Loss and Waste



GET INVOLVED!



Sixth observance
of the International Day
of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste

The sixth observance of the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE calls for the expansion and strengthening of stakeholder efforts to reduce food loss and waste, as a critical element of securing a sustainable food future for all.



FOR THE PEOPLE! FOR OUR PLANET!

The world's population, currently at 8.2 billion, is expected to grow to close to 9.7 billion people by 2050 ([UNDESA, 2024](#)). Ensuring a food secure world – where current and future populations have access to sufficient nutritious food – crucially requires new ways of working, and concerted efforts to improve the sustainability and resilience of agrifood systems globally.

Reducing food loss and waste (FLW) helps to protect natural resources and biodiversity, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and maximize the use of food produced. It is therefore central to securing efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, and to improving food security, nutrition and health.

Embracing innovation and fostering circular economy approaches in agrifood systems to prevent, reduce, reuse and repurpose FLW also serves to create new job opportunities, improve livelihoods and generate financial benefits for a range of stakeholders.

Now is the time for everyone

– from producers, investors, businesses and supply chain stakeholders to consumers of all ages, as well as academia and research, civil society, and the private and public sectors – **to take urgent action to expand and strengthen efforts both individually and collectively, to reduce food loss and waste towards ensuring a food secure world – now and in the future.**



FOR THE PEOPLE! FOR OUR PLANET!

Reducing FLW is enshrined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – within SDG 12, which seeks to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, Target 12.3 aims to “halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains” by 2030.



Facts and figures

- An estimated 13 percent of food – the equivalent of 1.25 billion tonnes – was lost globally after harvest and prior to reaching retail shelves in 2021 ([FAO, 2023](#)).
- An estimated 19 percent of food – the equivalent of 1.05 billion tonnes – was wasted in households, food service and retail in 2022 ([UNEP, 2024](#)).
- Households account for 60 percent of global food waste ([UNEP, 2024](#)).
- Approximately 28.9 percent of the global population – 2.33 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure in 2023 ([FAO et al., 2024](#)).
- One out of eleven people in the world faced hunger in 2023 ([FAO et al., 2024](#)).
- Food loss and waste generate 8 to 10 percent of global GHG emissions ([IPCC, 2019](#)).



DID YOU KNOW?

- Saving food that is already produced – by reducing FLW – may be one of the least expensive ways to help transform agrifood systems for greater efficiency and resilience ([FAO, 2024](#)).
- Valorizing food-processing side streams to mitigate food loss can improve economic, social and environmental aspects of the current food system and encourage more equitable distribution of food from different geographical regions, thus helping to ensure greater global food security ([IFT, 2023](#)).
- Preventing and reducing food waste not only lowers methane emissions; it also cuts down on the use of resources (such as land, water, and energy) that are required for food production.
- Reducing food waste is the most cost-effective and achievable climate solution ([Project Drawdown, 2022](#)).

KEY MESSAGES

Every action taken to reduce food loss and food waste matters!

- Reducing FLW is crucial in maximizing the use of food produced, fighting food insecurity, enabling healthy diets, reducing GHG emissions, preserving biodiversity, and promoting resource efficiency towards ensuring a more sustainable, equitable and food secure world.
- Sound data and evidence are critical to informing policy development and investments that support context-appropriate actions and innovations to reduce FLW.
- Empowering consumers through education and awareness-raising campaigns is essential for changing behaviours towards reducing household food waste. Food businesses can play a role in this regard.
- Both individual consumer action and cross-food chain collaboration, supported by enabling policies, are necessary to effectively tackle the complex challenge of reducing FLW.
- Now is the time for everyone to take urgent action to expand and strengthen efforts to reduce FLW to ensure a food secure world, both now and in the future.

FOR THE PEOPLE! FOR OUR PLANET!



CALLS TO ACTION

No single entity can solve the problem of FLW reduction. From government and civil society to businesses, consumers, and research and academia, a range of targeted approaches are required. Cross-food chain collaboration, network-building, awareness-raising, stakeholder dialogue, and the scaling up of tried and proven solutions to reduce food loss and food waste are all key.



TAKE ACTION!

GOVERNMENTS

- Invest in national agriculture and food data systems to generate information that is relevant for agrifood systems transformation.
- Make use of the Food Loss Index (FLI) and Food Waste Index (FWI) methodologies to measure and report on FLW, target hotspots and track progress.
- Support the implementation of national strategies and roadmaps, infrastructure development and innovation to enhance the economic viability of preventing and reducing FLW, as well as to accelerate the pace of transitioning to the circular economy.
- Scale up and expand education, awareness-raising campaigns and behaviour change interventions to reduce FLW.
- Collaborate with and support research by academic and private sector entities to prevent, reduce, reuse and upcycle FLW towards maximizing its use for consumption in a sustainable manner.
- Adopt food waste deterrence policies and provide an adequate regulatory, institutional and policy environment, with incentives for the adoption and scaling up of successful innovations that accelerate the pace of FLW reduction.
- Incentivize food supply chain stakeholders and businesses to scale up and expand their efforts to reduce FLW, implement circular economy practices, and enhance the sustainability of their operations.

BUSINESSES

- Engage in public-private partnerships, collaborating across supply chains to maximize FLW prevention and food surplus donation, overcome bottlenecks, and co-develop solutions that support transitioning to the circular economy.
- Increase transparency and accountability by measuring and publicly reporting on FLW.
- Use food business communication channels to raise awareness among consumers and provide practical solutions to support food waste reduction in households.

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIA

- Conduct research to identify FLW hot spots and their underlying causes in order to identify context-specific solutions and promote education and awareness on FLW issues.
- Mainstream practical aspects of FLW reduction in post-harvest handling and food-processing programmes.
- Collaborate on and scale up the use of methodological approaches to quantify the impacts of FLW reduction on GHG emissions.



TAKE ACTION!

CIVIL SOCIETY

- Engage with governments to advocate for policies to reduce FLW.
- Expand collaborations with governments and private entities to scale up the recovery and redistribution of surplus food, and educate consumers on food waste reduction.
- Support governments at all levels – as well as food businesses – to implement roadmaps for FLW reduction.
- Contribute to communication strategies and expand outreach and awareness-raising to positively influence and impact consumer behaviour change.

CONSUMERS

- Plan food purchases and meal preparation, shop mindfully, and store food properly to maintain its quality and shelf-life.
- Pay attention to the “use-by” date on food labels, especially when purchasing highly perishable foods.
- Measure portion sizes for meal preparation and preserve, share or donate surplus food.
- Participate in community efforts to recover surplus food and support food redistribution.
- Compost food waste or explore options for local food waste collection.



FAO'S RESOURCES ON FOOD LOSS AND WASTE REDUCTION

FAO's support to the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste is particularly important. FAO is the United Nations specialized agency leading international efforts to defeat hunger and food insecurity and is mandated to raise levels of nutrition and reduce food loss and food waste, taking into account sustainable production and consumption practices. FAO is working in partnership with national governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia to promote awareness about food loss and waste and its impacts to stimulate commitment and action to address the issues and to bring about behaviour change.

FAO is committed to working together to promote ambitious collective action to reduce food loss and waste in support of achieving the 2030 Agenda. This will lead to the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable, agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Key technical resources to support actions to reduce food loss and waste:

- The [Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food loss and Waste](#) is a dynamic web-based platform that serves as a gateway to FAO's work in collaboration with a range of partners, to address food loss and waste prevention, reduction, measurement and policy.
- [FAO's Data Lab for statistical innovation](#) builds and maintains databases to provide timely, real-time information obtained from non-conventional sources to facilitate data analysis and evidence-based policymaking.
- The [FAO food loss and waste database](#) is the largest online collection of data on both food loss and food waste and their causes reported in scientific journals, academic publications, grey literature and countries among others.
- The [Food Loss Index and data collection methodology](#) developed by FAO, to measure and monitor progress on SDG 12.3 at the national level.
- An on-line [e-learning course on the FAO food loss analysis methodology and its application](#).
- An [Educational package: Do Good: Save Food!](#) on reducing food waste, developed by FAO in collaboration with the International Food Waste Coalition, targeting children aged 5 to 14.
- [The State of Food and Agriculture: Moving forward on food loss and waste reduction](#). Rome, 2019.
- [Voluntary Code of Conduct for food loss and waste reduction](#). Rome, 2021. The Code of Conduct (CoC) presents the actions and measures countries, partners and stakeholders should establish to contribute to food loss and waste reduction.
- [Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG Indicators](#). Rome, 2023.
- [Food loss estimation: SDG 12.3.1a data and modelling approach](#). Rome, 2023.
- [Agrifood solutions to climate change](#). FAOs work to tackle the climate crisis. Rome, 2023.
- [Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: a global roadmap](#). Rome, 2024. How the transformation of agrifood systems through accelerated climate actions will help achieve food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow, In brief.
- The [FAO Food Loss App](#) (FLAPP) is a tool designed to help farmers, companies, producer associations and cooperatives to make informed decisions to reduce crop losses. By crowdsourcing of data, FLAPP also enhances FAO's ability to analyse food losses directly from the farm level.
- The [Food Loss and Waste Challenge](#) is an interactive online game, available in Arabic, English, French, Italian, and Spanish.



UNEP'S RESOURCES ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

The [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) works on a number of different fronts to tackle the issue of food loss and waste. As the custodian of the SDG 12.3.1(b) indicator, UNEP co-hosts the observance of the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste with FAO. Mandated by United Nations Environment Assembly ([UNEA Resolution 4/2](#)), UNEP builds capacity and advocates for improving enabling conditions to halve food loss and waste.

Supporting SDG Target 12.3

As custodian of the [SDG 12.3 food waste indicator](#), UNEP publishes the [Food Waste Index](#), which tracks the latest global estimates on food waste in retail and at the consumer level. According to UNEP's 2024 Food Waste Index Report, an estimated 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2022. This is equivalent to 19 percent of food available to consumers being wasted in retail, food services, and in households. As custodian, and mandated by [UNEA Resolution 4/2](#), UNEP builds capacity and advocates for improving the conditions to halve food loss and waste. UNEP's Regional Food Waste Working Groups enable countries to access technical expertise on food waste measurement and reduction, learn from and share experiences with neighbouring countries, and develop mechanisms to track progress toward meeting the SDG 12.3 target.

Integrating food waste targets in the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

[Food Forward NDCs](#) is a guidance tool developed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), UNEP and partners, to support the enhancement and implementation of NDC ambitions for agriculture and food systems transformation, including food loss and waste. It is designed to help countries to strengthen their NDCs by providing easy and accessible content to identify policy measures and practices and information about their climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development benefits.



UNEP'S RESOURCES ON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

Encouraging household level action

[A Guide: Changing behaviour to help more people waste less food](#), by Champions 12.3, helps key actors in the food system to focus on how they can help consumers to reduce food waste through behaviour change.

A Facilitation Guide for Youth-led Month of Action on Food Waste designed to empower youth to take action to reduce food waste, will be developed by UNEP in collaboration with the [Edible Schoolyard Project](#) and launched to mark the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste 2025.

The [Recipe of Change Toolkit](#) is a practical, action-oriented guide developed by UNEP, supported by [Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals \(GO4SDGs\)](#) to help the hospitality sector tackle food waste and achieve SDG12.3. Drawing from successful pilots across West Asia, it offers tailored checklists, tools, and case studies designed by and for hotels, restaurants, and caterers. Using the “Target–Measure–Act” framework, it supports frontline staff, managers, and policymakers in making food waste reduction a daily business practice – cutting costs, emissions, and hunger, while driving a culture of sustainability.

Additional resources

The [Global Methane Assessment](#) shows that methane emissions from the organic waste sector, contribute nearly 20 percent of all human-caused methane emissions. Reducing food loss and waste toward reducing methane emissions by 65 to 80 tonnes per year over the next few decades, is one of three areas of behaviour change to be tackled in this context.

A report by UNEP, [Global Cooling Watch 2023](#), highlights how the lack of cold chains reduces the income of millions of farmers and drives food loss. A new edition to be released in 2025, will highlight new estimates of the impact of inefficient cold chains on global food loss estimates.



CONTACT US!

If you have any doubts or wish to have more information, you can send an email to Food-Loss-Waste-Day@fao.org

The UN recognizes the importance of reducing food loss and waste. On 19 December 2019, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 74/209 proclaiming an International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste.

The International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste seeks to promote awareness and collective action to reduce food loss and waste.

www.fao.org/platform-food-loss-waste/flw-events/international-day-food-loss-and-waste/en
www.stopfoodlosswaste.org
#FLWDay





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