



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



29 September

International Day of Awareness
of Food Loss and Waste



GET INVOLVED!

Fifth Observance
of the International Day
of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste

CALL TO ACTION

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS OF FOOD LOSS AND WASTE will highlight the critical need for financing to bolster efforts to reduce food loss and waste, contribute to achieving climate goals and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



FOR PEOPLE! FOR THE PLANET!

Enormous amounts of resources – land, water, energy, and labour – are used to produce food. When food is lost or wasted, these resources go to waste, impacting the efficiency of food production. In 2021, the percentage of food lost globally after harvest on farm, transport, storage, wholesale, and processing levels was estimated at 13.2 percent ([FAO, 2023](#)). In 2022, the food waste occurring at retail, food service and household level was estimated at 19 percent of all food available to consumers ([UNEP, 2024](#)).

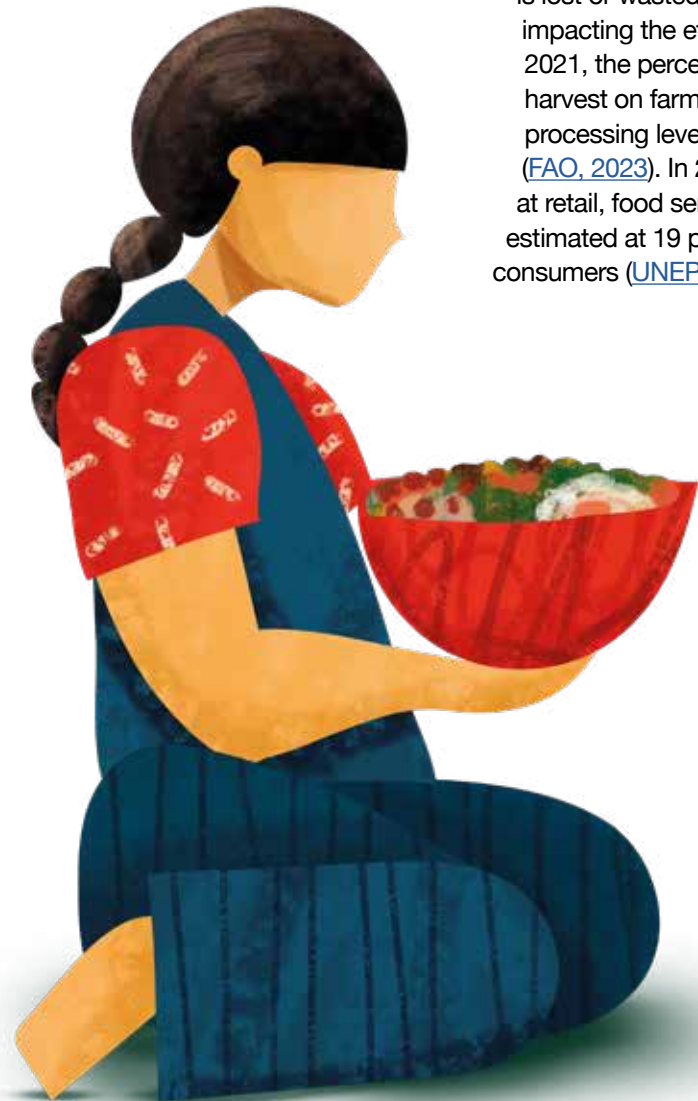
The world produces enough food to feed everyone, and yet millions suffer from hunger and malnutrition. Food loss and waste exacerbate this problem by reducing the amount of food available for consumption, thus contributing to food insecurity. Many of the most highly nutritious foods, such as fresh produce, fishery, and animal products are highly perishable and sustain high levels of food loss. Food loss and waste also translate into a substantial economic loss. This impacts not only producers but also consumers and nations, not to mention livelihoods and economic stability. Moreover, food

waste in landfills contributes to 8 to 10 percent of total agrifood system emissions, impacting climate change and environmental sustainability. Methane gas produced by food loss and waste is at least twenty-eight times more harmful than carbon dioxide in impacting climate change ([IPPC, 2021](#)). Food loss and waste also exacerbate inequalities. While significant amounts of food are wasted around the world, because of consumer behaviour or inefficient supply chains, in other regions people struggle with food scarcity and hunger. As the global population increases, the demand for food rises. Reducing food loss and waste can help alleviate pressure on food production systems, assuring more effective use of the available food resources.

Addressing food loss and waste throughout the supply chain, from production to consumption, would improve the overall efficiency of the food system, helping to ensure that more food reaches those in need. *Target 12.3 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 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, highlighting the importance of this issue in the broader context of sustainable development. Reducing food loss and waste is crucial for improving food security and enabling healthy diets; promoting efficient resource use; mitigating hunger; protecting the environment; and fostering more equitable distribution of food resources globally. However, solutions implemented to protect and preserve foods should not lead to higher emissions through an increase in non-renewable energy, increased emissions of fluorinated gases (F-gases) or additional consumption of plastics. Instead, it is vital to control emissions to obtain sustainable limits to global warming while building resilience. Improving the circular economy to maximize the use of food through prevention, reduction, reuse, and upcycling is pivotal to diverting it away from landfills and cutting emissions.

Reducing food loss and waste is a climate solution, which countries and communities can employ to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Successfully doing so will require a significant increase in the quality and quantity of accessible climate finance.





DID YOU KNOW?

- Reducing food loss and waste is a priority area for action in FAO's Global Roadmap Toward Achieving SDG2 Without Breaching the 1.5 0 C Threshold ([FAO, 2024](#)).
- Higher seasonal temperatures, extreme heat events, and droughts make it more challenging to store, process, transport, and sell food safely, often resulting in significant quantities of food loss and waste (United Nations Environment Programme [\[UNEP\]](#), 2024).
- Rotting food in landfills produces methane gas, which has far greater potential to trap heat than carbon dioxide.
- Food waste continues to hurt the global economy and fuel climate change, nature loss, and pollution ([UNEP, 2024](#)).
- As of 2022, only 21 countries have included food loss and/or waste reduction in their national climate plans ([UNEP, 2024](#)).
- [The United Arab Emirates Declaration of Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action](#), endorsed by 159 heads of state and heads of government at [The COP28 UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai](#), includes an explicit reference to the need to: “Revisit or orient policies and public support related to agriculture and food systems to promote activities which increase incomes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and bolster resilience, productivity, livelihoods, nutrition, water efficiency and human, animal and ecosystem health while reducing food loss and waste, and ecosystem loss and degradation.”

GLOBAL FACTS AND FIGURES

- While an estimated 733 million people go hungry globally ([FAO et al., 2024](#)), food loss and waste generate 8 to 10 percent of greenhouse gasses and is a methane hotspot. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [[IPCC](#)], 2019).
- One tonne of methane gas is estimated to be equivalent to 28 to 36 tons of carbon dioxide if looking at its impact over 100 years ([IPCC, 2021](#)).
- An estimated 13 percent of food, the equivalent of 931 million tonnes or 120 kilograms (kg) per capita, were lost in the supply chain, from after harvest, and prior to reaching retail shelves in 2021 ([FAO, 2023](#)).
- An estimated 1.05 billion tonnes of food were wasted in households, food services and in retail in 2022, the equivalent of 132 kg per capita ([UNEP, 2024](#)).
- Strategies to reduce food loss and waste include adjustments in production; technological enhancements in post-harvest handling, treatment, storage and distribution; targeted interventions; information dissemination; and behavioural reminders to optimize food consumption, reduce food waste, and foster circular economy practices ([FAO, 2024](#)).
- Opportunities to finance food loss and waste reduction and low-carbon diets remain untapped, with only USD 0.1 billion invested annually in 2019/20. This represents a minor fraction of annual needs, estimated at USD 48 to 50 billion ([Climate Policy Initiative, 2023](#)).



KEY MESSAGES



- A significant increase in the quality and quantity of accessible climate finance is needed to improve financing of projects and programs to reduce food loss and waste.
- Investments that reduce food loss and waste contribute to improving food security, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enable healthy diets, and contribute to ensuring a future where food availability is not threatened by climate.
- Equipping value chain stakeholders with climate smart funding can contribute to achieving significant incremental impacts in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and building resilience.
- Investing in the circular economy to reduce food loss and waste, contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while generating returns for investors and benefits that outweigh the costs.
- Countries must take action to reduce food loss and waste. Profound change in the prevention and reduction of food loss and waste can only take place when countries develop and allocate sufficient human, organizational and institutional capacity to tackle the issues from production to consumption.

AREAS FOR ACTION TO REDUCE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE AND AID CLIMATE MITIGATION EFFORTS

Addressing food loss and waste reduction and reducing greenhouse gas emissions necessitates interventions along the value chain and mobilization of efforts by all stakeholders - public and private, including non-profit organizations - to act to:

- **Raise public awareness on the importance of reducing food loss and food waste.**
- **Improve food production, harvesting and distribution practices**, to assure food safety, food quality and reduce food loss and food waste.
- **Introduce improved technologies with a low greenhouse gas footprint** to address the underlying causes of food loss, and to reduce food waste.
- **Optimize public procurement and public stock programmes** to reduce food loss and waste.
- **Invest in research and innovation targeting** academic and research institutions, startup-companies, micro, small, and medium-sized food processing enterprises, and initiatives to reduce food loss and waste toward reducing the greenhouse gas footprint.
- **Improve coordinated investments between private and public actors through fostering the development of public-private partnerships** to invest in infrastructure, logistics, and technological innovations with a low greenhouse gas footprint, which streamline the supply chain.
- **Adjust the stringency of regulations and standards for fresh foods** to reduce the levels of food losses on farm.
- **Improve the dissemination of information.** Provide consumers and suppliers with information on the benefits of reducing food loss and waste.
- **Improve the targeting of interventions to focus on areas** that sustain high levels of food losses in terms of locations and commodities, with consideration for nutrient losses and greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Change pricing mechanisms through public policies** to avoid incentivizing food waste.
- **Educate consumers to alter their behaviour** and encourage food sellers and consumers to make responsible decisions.
- **Take collective, coordinated action in supply chains, cities, and at the national level** to reduce food waste (UNEP, 2024).
- **Improve the circular economy** by according the highest priority to prevention, reduction, and upcycling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food sent to landfills.

Adapted from [Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 C Threshold: A Global Roadmap](#). Rome, 2024



COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

Below is a list of materials in the six official languages of FAO, which are accessible on the [IDAFLW website](#) in the [IDAFLW 2024 Digital Media Hub](#). Share them with partners or providers and follow the website for updates as new material will be added over the coming months.

IDAFLW POSTER

The IDAFLW poster can be downloaded from the [IDAFLW 2024 Digital Media Hub](#). The standard measurement is 100 x 70 cm, both horizontal and vertical formats available.



WEB BANNERS

IDAFLW 2024 web banners [Long top banner (920 x 350 pixels) and square sidebar (210 x 146 pixels) formats] are provided in the IDAFLW 2024 Digital Media Hub.



IDAFLW RIBBON

You may find that your partners cannot always use the full IDAFLW visual. For example, they may have their own branding for an event. In these cases, the IDAFLW ribbon can be used. This is an important tool for reinforcing the IDAFLW brand and message. If you should wish to use the ribbon or distribute it to partners, send an email to Food-Loss-Waste-Day@fao.org

GADGETS

The IDAFLW 2024 Digital Media Hub provides graphics for local printing or production of t-shirts, mugs, bags.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE



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ORGANIZE AN IDAFLW EVENT!

Take advantage of this important call to action. Consider a fresh approach, engage in different activities with a message about food loss and food waste: food tasting, cooking demonstrations (also with leftovers!) concerts, festivals, roundtables or public lectures.

BRING THE IDAFLW TO YOUR TOWN OR CITY!

Approach municipalities, outdoor advertisers, transportation companies (e.g. city metro, buses or trains), shopping malls, cinemas or airports, to place IDAFLW visuals.

ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE - OF ALL AGES - IN FOOD LOSS AND FOOD WASTE REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

Engage students in food loss and food waste reduction activities in schools, on college campuses and in youth events. Young people can learn about food loss and food waste this way and become proactive partners in reducing food loss and food waste.

RECREATION AND SPORT

Platforms, such as Skype and Zoom, are modes to organize online activities for exercise. Organize an online exercise class, such as aerobics, yoga or zumba, to promote awareness of food loss and food waste.

USE THE IDAFLW VISUAL

- Download the IDAFLW web banners, share them and update your web page with them, linking them to the IDAFLW website.
- Produce a range of promotional materials – t-shirts, mugs and bags, using our free graphics.
- Use the IDAFLW visual as much as possible for events and activities and online!

LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR IDAFLW EVENT!

- There are many ways to observe and promote the IDAFLW. Tell us about your events or efforts.
- Send us your best photographs and videos of your event. We'll add them to the IDAFLW Flickr Album. Remember to credit all high-resolution photos and information about the event.

SPREAD THE WORD

- Educate, and engage audiences with information about reducing food loss and waste.
- Join the campaign to promote #FLWDay. Share our free material on digital channels. Ask local and national digital influencers in the food sector (bloggers, celebrities, public figures, photographers, chefs and experts) to amplify our messages about #ReducingFoodLossAndWaste.
- Publish your photos, messages and video. Show us what you're doing to reduce food loss and waste!

GET THE MEDIA INVOLVED

Spread the key messages! Take part in talk shows, discussion panels, media briefings and radio or TV call-in shows.

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 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 waste and 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, for 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.



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 12.3b indicator, UNEP co-hosts with FAO the International Day of Awareness on Food Loss and Waste on 29 September each year. Mandated by [United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA\) Resolution 4/2](#), UNEP builds capacity and advocates improving the enabling conditions to halve food loss and waste.

Supporting SDG Target 12.3

As custodian of the [SDG 12.3b indicator](#), UNEP publishes the [Food Waste Index](#), which tracks the latest global estimates on food waste occurring at retail and consumer level. As custodian, and mandated by [UNEA Resolution 4/2](#), UNEP builds capacity and advocates to improve the conditions to halve food loss and waste. The Regional Working Groups on Food Waste, launched by UNEP, enable countries in each region to access technical expertise on food waste measurement and reduction, learn from the experiences of neighbouring countries, and develop mechanisms to track their country's progress on SDG 12.3.

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

The UNEP publication, [Reducing Consumer Food Waste Using Green and Digital Technologies](#), provides an overview of the causes of consumer food waste and the opportunities for reducing it through technological solutions, behavioural change, and public and private initiatives.

An educational package, "[Kitchen Lessons, Saving the Scraps](#)" on reducing food waste in the kitchen was developed by UNEP in collaboration with the Edible Schoolyard Project for children aged 10 to 14.



[The Global Methane Assessment](#) shows that human-caused methane emissions can be reduced by up to 45 percent this decade. Three behavioural changes have been identified: reducing food waste and loss, improving livestock management, and adopting healthy diets that could reduce methane emissions by 65 to 80 tonnes per year over the next few decades. A report by UNEP, [Global Cooling Watch 2023](#), highlights how the lack of a cold chain reduces the income of millions of farmers and drives food loss.

The report, [Sustainable Food Cold Chains: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward](#), by UNEP and FAO, finds that food cold chains are critical to meeting the challenge of feeding an additional two billion people by 2050 and harnessing rural communities' resilience, while avoiding increased greenhouse gas emissions.

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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