

# Updating Guidance to Food Businesses on the Application of Date Marks and Related Advice

## Overview

WRAP is working with Defra and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to develop updated guidance on the application of date and related (for example storage and freezing) advice on pack. A draft will be available for consultation in spring 2017, and a final version published in autumn 2017. This guidance aims to enable further reductions in food waste at home and remove key barriers to increased redistribution. Scope of the guidance:

- What the different date labels mean
- How to decide what date to apply (and the consequences of this decision)
- Highlighting the importance of maximising both 'closed' and 'open' life, whilst ensuring quality and safety are maintained
- Highlighting the importance of correct storage guidance, including fridge temperature and freezing advice
- What can (and cannot) be done as the date approaches / is past (at home and for sale / redistribution)
- Responsibilities (both for food sold through normal channels and food redistributed)

The work WRAP is carrying out with Defra and the FSA does not involve changes to any existing legislation, nor plans for the introduction of new legislation/regulation, nor any fundamental changes to the technical approach to setting durability dates.

## Context

Around 2 million tonnes of food is thrown away from households due to 'not being used in time', and for a third of this, the date label is cited as a factor. Giving consumers longer to make use of the food they buy has the potential to significantly reduce household food waste. This can be influenced for example by the choice of date applied ('Best Before' rather than 'Use By'), the length of time between purchase and the date expiring (so called 'closed life'), any guidance on how long a product can be consumed once it has been opened ('open life') and optimal storage/freezing guidance. WRAP estimated the potential further impact of technical changes at around 350,000 tonnes of avoidable food waste (with a value of around £1 billion a year).

The Retailer Survey, 2015<sup>1</sup> report provided a snapshot of relevant aspects of key products to assess the degree of progress since 2011, and identify where the focus going forwards should be to ensure maximum impact on household food waste. It is informing WRAP's work with retailers and manufacturers through Courtauld 2025, and the development of new industry guidance (see below). Highlights include:

Areas of good progress:

- Simplification of date labelling (<3% of packs with two dates [A 'Display Until' date used in combination with either 'Use By' or 'Best Before'])
- Two high-volume products (hard cheese and pasteurised fruit juice) moving away from predominantly carrying a 'Use By' to overwhelmingly carrying 'Best Before' dates.
- Many products moving away from 'Freeze on day of purchase'

Priorities for action by retailers and manufacturers:

- Reviewing the choice of date mark on products that currently carry a 'Use By' date, and moving to a 'Best Before' where there is not a food safety risk
- Reviewing both the 'closed' and 'open' life set for high waste products
- Continuing to implement WRAP/FSA Guidance on freezing advice, across all products that can be frozen at home
- Review the availability and relative pricing of smaller packs / split packs for products that are wasted in high volumes (bread being a priority)

Key audiences for the guidance will include:

- Large grocery and hospitality businesses
- Grocery and hospitality SMEs
- Redistribution organisations (charitable and commercial)
- Enforcement officers
- Consumer groups and campaigns (to align messages)

Guidance to industry on setting date marks was last updated in 2011<sup>2</sup>, and was informed by WRAP research<sup>3</sup> (consumer understanding of date labels; Retailer Survey 2009 and 2011).

Related guidance from WRAP was published on storage and freezing advice, and sector-specific guidance was developed by Dairy UK<sup>4</sup>, the BSDA, BSA<sup>5</sup> and BFFF<sup>6</sup> for example.

**More detail and Q&As are provided in the rest of this document**

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<sup>1</sup> [Helping Consumers Reduce Food Waste: Retail Survey 2015](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Guidance on the application of date labels to food, Defra 2011](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Consumer insight: date labels and storage guidance, WRAP 2011; Helping consumers reduce food waste - a retail survey 2011, WRAP 2011](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Guidance on the Application of Date Marks and Storage Instructions for the Dairy Industry, Dairy UK 2012](#)

<sup>5</sup> ['BSA Breakthrough on Waste'](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Guidelines on Giving Food to Good Causes](#)

## Background

Around a fifth of food brought in to UK homes ends up as waste. Of this 7.3 million tonnes, 4.4 million tonnes is defined as avoidable, and has a retail value of £13 billion<sup>7</sup>. Previous research commissioned by WRAP identified not only how much food is thrown away from UK households but key insights into why this happens<sup>8</sup>. The reasons why food is wasted at home are many and often interrelated. Aspects of food product labelling, design and functionality combined with consumers understanding of how to make best use of these can be key contributors<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to changes in behaviour reducing food waste, technical changes in food products, packaging and labelling can also lead to less food being wasted, through enabling consumers to buy the most appropriate amounts of food and make greater use of what is bought (for example through having longer to eat the food bought). Around 2 million tonnes of food is thrown away from households due to 'not being used in time', and for a third of this, the date guidance on the pack is cited as a factor. Giving consumers longer to make use of the food they buy has the potential to significantly reduce household food waste. This can be influenced for example by the choice of date mark applied ('Best Before' rather than 'Use By'), the length of time between purchase and the date expiring (so called 'closed life'), any guidance on how long a product can be consumed once it has been opened ('open life') and optimal storage/freezing guidance.

Although it is challenging to separate out the potential impacts of specific technical changes, it was estimated by WRAP that around 15% of the 1 million tonne reduction in household food waste from 2007 to 2015 was the result of such innovations (preventing around £400 million of food from being wasted). WRAP also estimated the potential further impact of technical changes, and this analysis suggested that around 350,000 tonnes of avoidable food waste (with a value of around £1 billion a year) could be prevented through technical changes, an 8% reduction in avoidable food waste or a 5% reduction in total food waste, compared to 2015 levels<sup>10</sup>.

Based on an extensive evidence base, and in consultation with the food industry, WRAP has developed a series of recommendations for how changes to products, packaging and labelling can help consumers buy the right amount of food and waste less of what they buy<sup>11</sup>. The Retailer Survey report provides an updated snapshot of relevant aspects of the key products at a particular point in time. The aim of this work was to a) assess the degree of progress since 2011, and b) identify where the focus going forwards should be to ensure maximum implementation of WRAPs recommendations. It seeks to inform WRAP's work with retailers and manufacturers through the Courtauld Commitment 2025<sup>12</sup>, in order to enable change and widespread adoption of good practice, with the aim of further reducing household food waste.

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<sup>7</sup> [Household Food Waste in the UK, 2015; WRAP 2016](#)

<sup>8</sup> See [Household Food and Drink Waste Resource Listing](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Household Food and Drink Waste- A Product Focus 2014; WRAP 2014](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UK food waste – Historical changes and how amounts might be influenced in the future; WRAP 2014](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Solutions to prevent household food waste](#) and [Concept to Consumer](#)

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.wrap.org.uk/category/initiatives/courtauld-commitment> for more information.

In 2009 a retail survey<sup>13</sup> was conducted to review approximately 10,000 individual items across 19 product categories. In 2011 data was collected for approximately 12,000 individual items from 20 product categories. The retail survey was repeated in 2015 to assess key changes across the same product categories since the surveys were conducted in 2009 and 2011<sup>14</sup>. Data was collected for approximately 9,000 individual items. A total of 78 stores were surveyed, across England, Wales and Scotland, including 5 online orders. The main areas of interest were changes to date labels, storage guidance, freezing and defrosting guidance and the availability of a range of pack sizes.

Areas of good progress:

- Simplification of date labelling - from 40% of packs having two dates (A 'Display Until' date used in combination with either 'Use By' or 'Best Before'), which caused consumer confusion and the premature throwing away of food, to <3%
- Two high-volume products (hard cheese and pasteurised fruit juice) have moved away from predominantly carrying a 'Use By' to overwhelmingly carrying 'Best Before' dates. This gives consumers more flexibility to consume products after the date, but also illustrates that industry can reassess what date mark products should carry and make significant changes  
[94% of fruit juice had a 'Use By' date in 2009, only 4% in 2015]
- Good progress has been made in moving away from 'Freeze on day of purchase', following the publication of new guidance from WRAP/FSA in 2010, particularly in categories such as pre-prepared foods. This gives consumers more opportunity to preserve (and eat at a later date) food that might otherwise have ended up as waste.  
[100% of the branded and own brand chilled ready meals assessed in WRAPs 2015 research had the new guidance; as did 41% of bread and 65% of fresh chicken]

Priorities for action by retailers and manufacturers:

- Reviewing the choice of date mark on products that currently carry a 'Use By' date and are wasted in high volumes, to establish whether this is justified from a food safety perspective. If not, moving to a 'Best Before' could help reduce food waste at home, and also in the supply chain:
  - WRAPs latest Retailer Survey revealed that 57% of multi-pack yoghurts had a 'Use By' date in 2011, which had risen to 91% in 2015
- Reviewing both the 'closed' and 'open' life set for products that are wasted in large amounts due to not being used in time (for example fresh meat, milk and pre-prepared foods), and assessing the potential to extend the time available for consumers to make use of food at home. WRAP research suggests that there is potential to achieve this without new innovations, although new processes and packaging technologies could deliver additional benefits:
  - There are several food types where the duration of open life guidance has reduced over time (and none where it had increased between 2011 and 2015);

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<sup>13</sup> [Helping consumers reduce food waste – a retail survey; WRAP, 2009.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Helping Consumers Reduce Food Waste: Retail Survey 2015](#)

- Chilled chicken, 42% of packs had 'use immediately' in 2015 compared to 0% in 2011 whilst 43% of packs gave between 1 – 3 days in 2015, compared to 100% in 2011
- Chilled cooking sauces. 38% had 2 days or less in 2011, which had increased to 75% in 2015, whilst 63% had 3 days in 2011 which had fallen to only 15% in 2015
- Milk. There was a reduction in 1 week open life from 20% in 2011 to 6% in 2015, and an increase in guidance to use somewhere between 2-5 days
- Reviewing refrigeration guidance - WRAP (and FSA) recommend that 'keep refrigerated below 5°C' guidance should be used where temperature information is stated on-pack, and that this statement should be used in full where guidance is given to keep refrigerated
  - Cheese and yoghurts showed the greatest variety in terms of temperature ranges, with six different ones observed in 2015
- Continuing to implement WRAP/FSA Guidance on freezing advice<sup>15</sup>, across all products that can be frozen at home, including maintaining or reinstating use of the snowflake logo (e.g. 50% of bacon still says 'freeze on date of purchase')
- Review the availability and relative pricing of smaller packs / split packs for products that are wasted in high volumes and primarily due to not being used in time (bread being a priority).

WRAP will also continue working with food manufacturers and retailers to raise awareness of how changes to products, packaging and labelling can help consumers reduce food wasted at home, disseminating the insights from this research and the updated guidance and monitoring progress. Tailored insights reports will be shared with the main retailers.

New research is required around fresh produce labelling as it is exempt from a legal requirement for date marking. WRAP will work with FSA, food businesses and Governments to explore how best to progress this.

### **Guidance on date labelling and related advice**

Guidance to industry on setting date marks was last updated in 2011<sup>16</sup>, and was informed by WRAP research<sup>17</sup>. Related guidance from WRAP was published on storage and freezing advice, and sector-specific guidance has been developed by Dairy UK<sup>18</sup>, the BSDA, BSA<sup>19</sup> and BFFF<sup>20</sup> for example.

The primary focus was to help reduce food waste at home.

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<sup>15</sup> [Freezing guidance to prevent food waste, WRAP 2012](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Guidance on the application of date labels to food, Defra 2011](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Consumer insight: date labels and storage guidance, WRAP 2011; Helping consumers reduce food waste - a retail survey 2011, WRAP 2011](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Guidance on the Application of Date Marks and Storage Instructions for the Dairy Industry, Dairy UK 2012](#)

<sup>19</sup> ['BSA Breakthrough on Waste'](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Guidelines on Giving Food to Good Causes](#)

FSA, Defra Labelling and WRAP are producing updated guidance, with the objectives to enable further reductions in food waste at home and remove some of the key barriers to increased redistribution. This work does not involve changes to any existing legislation, nor plans for the introduction of new legislation/regulation, nor any fundamental changes to the technical approach to setting durability dates.

Scope of the guidance:

- Reiterate what the different date labels mean
- How to decide what date to apply (and the consequences of this decision)
  - A 'Use By' should only be applied where there is a food safety issue; foods should not be consumed at home after midnight on this date, nor can they be redistributed or sold
  - Food can be frozen up until the 'Use By' date for use at a later date (importance of defrosting and subsequent usage – e.g. 'defrost thoroughly and use within 24 hrs')
  - Food can be eaten after the 'Best Before' date, and it is permissible to sell or donate foods past a 'Best Before' date, as long as they 'meet the quality demanded by the purchaser' (i.e. have been properly stored) and are safe to eat
  - Therefore having a 'Best Before' date gives more flexibility for consumers and food businesses / redistribution organisations to make use of food and reduce the likelihood of it being wasted
- Importance of maximising both 'closed' and 'open' life, whilst ensuring quality and safety are maintained
  - WRAP research suggests that there is potential to achieve this without new innovations, although new processes and packaging technologies could deliver additional benefits<sup>21</sup>  
[A 1 day extension to product life across all types of foods currently wasted could prevent 250,000 tonnes a year of food being thrown away in home]
- Importance of correct storage guidance, including fridge temperature and freezing advice
  - Correct storage is essential to ensure that products maintain quality and are safe to eat up until the 'Use By' date or beyond the 'Best Before' date
  - WRAP (and FSA) recommend that 'keep refrigerated below 5°C' guidance should be used where temperature information is stated on-pack, and that this statement should be used in full where guidance is given to keep refrigerated (this will help reinforce the importance of checking fridge temperatures, as up to 70% of fridges are operating at higher than recommended temperatures)
  - Continue to implement WRAP/FSA Guidance on freezing advice<sup>22</sup>, across all products that can be frozen at home, including maintaining or reinstating use of the snowflake logo

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<sup>21</sup> [Reducing food waste by extending product life, WRAP 2015](#) and [Extending product life to reduce food waste \(guidance on reviewing product and open life\), WRAP 2015](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Freezing guidance to prevent food waste, WRAP 2012](#)

- WRAP freezing guidance and decision tree will be incorporated in to the main guidance document
- [WRAP has estimated that at least 800,000 tonnes of food is thrown away each year that could have been frozen to eat at a later date. This is associated with over 3 million tonnes of CO2e and has a value of over £2 billion]
- What can (and cannot) be done as the date approaches / is past
  - At home ('Use By', freeze before the date if possible; 'Best Before', safe to eat after the date)
  - Retail<sup>23</sup> & redistribution ('Use By', reference potential to freeze and redistribute<sup>24</sup>; or test and re-label food for redistribution<sup>25</sup>; 'Best Before', can be sold/redistributed after the date)
- Responsibilities (both for food sold through normal channels and food redistributed)

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<sup>23</sup> *There are of course other strategies retailers can employ such as price reductions as the date approaches*

<sup>24</sup> *For example ['M&S given green light to trial frozen food redistribution'](#)*

<sup>25</sup> *For example see ['BSA Breakthrough on Waste'](#)*

## Q&As

### Why do we need dates on food?

There is a legal requirement that most foods (there are some exceptions) require either a 'Use By' date (where there is a food safety risk<sup>26</sup> if the food is consumed after the date) or a 'Best Before' date (to indicate the point after which the food may not be at its best quality).

WRAPs research suggests that people prefer to use dates on pack to tell them when to consume the product (rather than for example a product carrying no date at all). For this reason, it's important that we continue to improve people's understanding of what 'Use By' and 'Best Before' mean, whilst ensuring they are correctly applied by food businesses. Having 'Best Before' dates where possible (and safe) rather than 'Use By' dates gives people the flexibility to safely eat products later than the date if they choose to.

WRAP has previously recommended the removal of 'Display Until' dates in combination with either a 'Best Before' or 'Use By' date (i.e. not having two dates on the same pack) to avoid any confusion (and the risk that food is thrown away after the earlier date).

- 'Best Before' dates refer to quality rather than food safety. Foods with a 'best before' date should be safe to eat after the 'best before' date, but they may no longer be at their best.
- 'Use By' dates refer to safety. Food can be eaten up to the end of this date but not after even if it looks and smells fine. Always follow the storage instructions on packs.
- To extend the life of food beyond its date, freeze it before the date and defrost and use within 24 hours.

'Best Before' dates are indicators of freshness and, ideally people should eat food before that point (and manage food in the home accordingly) so that it's in as good a condition as possible when they consume it. Improving understanding of 'Best Before' would also mean that people would not be deterred from eating the product after that point if it is in good condition.

In other words, although you don't need to stick to the 'Best Before' date, it still carries important information for the consumer about the product quality and, like the 'Use By' date, should be applied correctly by the manufacturer (e.g. selecting 'Use By' only for products where there is a food safety risk), set as long as possible, and used by the consumer to manage their food planning and consumption to minimise waste.

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<sup>26</sup> *Wording from the legislation is 'highly perishable and are therefore likely after a short period to constitute an immediate danger to human health'*

[FSA research<sup>27</sup> suggests that almost 20% of people consider 'Best Before' to be an indicator of food safety, highlighting the importance of helping to improve understanding as well as making technical changes]

#### How will changing food labels help reduce food waste – at home?

Moving from a 'Use By' to a 'Best Before', where safe to do so, and as has been done for most hard cheeses and pasteurised fruit juices, gives people the flexibility to consume the food after the date if they haven't managed to do so before. WRAPs previous research shows that it's less likely for food to end up being wasted if it has a 'Best Before' rather than a 'Use By' date.

Similarly, moving away from 'Freeze on day of purchase' to 'freeze by the date shown' or 'freeze as soon as possible after purchase' (the choice of wording depends on the type of food) gives people more flexibility to freeze food that they perhaps haven't eaten when planned, before it ends up being thrown away.

#### Why does WRAP recommend having a 'Best Before' date on fresh produce if it's not a legal requirement?

WRAP research has shown that whilst many people don't refer to the dates on fresh produce packs, a significant % do (particularly those with younger children). For the former having a date or not should not make a difference, but for the latter a BB date provides reassurance and helps people to manage their food better (i.e. plan what to eat and when). It is also important to help people understand what BB dates mean though, so that those people that do focus on the date don't throw food out immediately after this date is reached. WRAP will be doing more research in this area this year, to determine if this recommendation needs updating (i.e. to take dates off fresh produce).

#### How much food is thrown away because of date labels?

48% (2.0 million tonnes) of avoidable household food waste occurs due to 'not being used in time'. A date label was mentioned as the trigger for disposal for one third of such instances (around 660,000 tonnes; 16% of all avoidable food waste). The products most often disposed of for this reason were dairy and eggs (mainly yoghurt & yoghurt drink and eggs) followed by drink (predominantly fruit juice and smoothies).

Of the food thrown away where a date label was cited as the reason:

- Around 30% is likely to have carried a 'Best Before' date (210 kt)
- Around 50% is likely to have carried a 'Use By' date (315 kt)
- 20% is likely to have carried a 'Best Before' date, but also a 'use-by x days of opening' (and much of what is thrown away here has been opened but not finished, such as cooking sauces, condiments etc.) (135 kt)

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<sup>27</sup> [Food Waste PR Survey Summary findings June 2016](#)

How much food is thrown away because of fridges being set at the wrong temperature or because it's not being frozen when it could be?

WRAP has estimated that at least 800,000 tonnes of food is thrown away each year that could have been frozen to eat at a later date. This is associated with over 3 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e and has a value of over £2 billion.

WRAP research suggests the combined estimates for potential annual UK waste savings resulting both from lowering fridge temperature and also refrigerating foods which are predominantly stored at ambient are together worth £280 million and associated with 580,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.

[Sainsbury's Waste Less, Save More'. Fridge thermometers were given out to 15,000 Swadlincote residents so they could find out if their fridges were set at the right temperature. Through the initiative, 74 per cent of people changed the temperature of their fridge, with 22 per cent finding their fridges were not cool enough. Half noticed a difference in the length of time food lasted in the fridge after adjusting the temperature]

How will changing food labels help reduce food waste – in the supply chain / through redistribution?

Foods with a 'Use By' should not be consumed at home after this date, nor can they be redistributed or sold.

Food can be eaten after the 'Best Before' date, and it is permissible to sell or donate foods past a 'Best Before' date, as long as they 'meet the quality demanded by the purchaser'. Therefore having a 'Best Before' date gives more flexibility for consumers and food businesses / redistribution organisations to make use of food and reduce the likelihood of it being wasted.

Isn't this helping retailers give 'second class' food to those in need?

This is about ensuring more good quality food that isn't sold through the normal channels can be redistributed, either by charities or through commercial routes (for example Approved Foods sells food that is after its 'Best Before' date). Some food businesses already have processes in place to ensure that any food that is redistributed after its 'Best Before' date still meets quality standards, and WRAP and the FSA, through the Courtauld 2025 Redistribution Working Group will be helping to develop guidelines to help more businesses do the same.

What were the recommendations WRAP made after the 2011 Retailer Survey:

These can be found in full in WRAPs '[How to apply date labels to help prevent food waste](#)', '[Freezing guidance to prevent food waste](#)' and in the [Retailer Survey, 2011](#) but the key ones are in brief:

- Choose the right date label to apply ('Best Before' where possible)
- Remove 'Sell By' and 'Display Until' dates when used as a second date
- Extend shelf life where possible (without reducing quality or increasing food safety risks):
  - Extend the 'Best Before' or 'Use By' date

- Extend 'Use within x days of opening'
- Provide clear storage guidance (specific to each product type)
- Follow FSA recommended 'keep refrigerated below 5oC' where fridge temperature guidance is stated on-pack
- Make it clear when foods can be frozen at home (use snowflake logo)
- Move away from 'freeze on day of purchase' to 'freeze before the date shown'
- Continue to provide cooking and portioning information on-pack, and develop pack functionality that aids portioning and extends shelf life
- Continue improvements in availability of smaller pack sizes / loose variants, where appropriate. Where it is not possible to provide smaller packs, investigate how to provide guidance on optimising storage, freezing and using leftovers.

### Why haven't retailers / Brands implemented the changes WRAP asked for in 2012?

There has been considerable progress made in terms of how food products are labelled since WRAP started work in this area. For decades many foods were labelled with combinations of 'Sell By' or 'Display Until' (which are not legally required) with 'Best Before' or 'Use By' and now this is very much the exception. Similarly 'freeze on day of purchase' was present on virtually all foods that could be frozen at home, and now around half (and for example almost all chilled ready meals) have the new advice.

Of course there is more to do, and WRAP will be working through Courtauld 2025 and with the FSA and trade associations to encourage and enable further progress.

[WRAP is also aware of progress being made since 2015, and C2025 signatories will be able to cite examples of this]

### What is WRAP asking retailers and manufacturers to do now?

WRAP is calling on retailers and manufacturers to:

- Review the choice of date mark on products that currently carry a 'Use By' date and which are wasted in high volumes (such as yoghurts and fresh milk). In some cases it may be feasible and safe to replace 'Use By' with 'Best Before' label, which can help reduce household food waste and waste in the supply chain
- Review and where possible extend the shelf-life given to consumers, both when 'closed' (i.e. before opening) and 'open' (i.e. after opening) on products wasted in large volumes (such as fresh meat, milk and pre-prepared foods)
- Continue to implement WRAP/FSA Guidance on refrigeration and freezing advice, across all products that can be frozen at home, including maintaining or reinstating use of the snowflake logo
- Review the availability and relative pricing of smaller packs/split packs for products that are wasted in high volumes and primarily due to not being used in time (bread being a priority)

### Can't the UK follow the US (USDA) lead here and simplify labelling?

The USDA is currently consulting on a proposal to introduce more consistency around food date labelling because labelling requirements are more disparate than in the UK

and EU as rules vary by State. USDA recognises that 'the use of different phrases to describe quality dates has caused consumer confusion and has led to the disposal of food that is otherwise wholesome and safe because it is past the date printed on the package'

The current approach in the UK (and EU) requires consumers to be given guidance on food safety where this is needed (through the 'Use By' date) and food quality ('Best Before') where there is not a food safety issue.

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/newsroom/news-releases-statements-and-transcripts/news-release-archives-by-year/archive/2016/nr-121416-01>

Does this [WRAP publishing guidance to industry] mean WRAP is taking responsibility for food safety / food legislation as well as food waste?

No, there are no changes to the responsibilities for food labelling legislation, nor the legislation itself. WRAP is working with FSA and Defra, as we have in the past, to provide businesses and others with guidance on how best to label products (within the bounds of current legislation where relevant) to reduce the risk of food products being wasted. This is similar to the work WRAP has done previously to advise industry on date and freezing guidance (see

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Info%20Sheet%20Date%20Labels%20final.pdf> and <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Info%20Sheet%20Freezing%20final.pdf>)

Food labelling legislation is harmonised at an EU level. In England, responsibility for food labelling legislation and policy is split across Defra, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of Health (DH). General food labelling policy responsibilities (where this is not related to food safety) in England lie with Defra, whilst responsibility for nutrition labelling policy sits with DH.

For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all domestic standards legislation is the responsibility of the FSA.

The FSA is responsible for food safety and food hygiene across the UK. It works with local authorities to enforce food safety regulations and its staff work in UK meat plants to check the standards are being met.

The FSA also has responsibility for labelling policy in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and for nutrition policy in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Responsibility for nutrition policy in Wales lies with the Welsh Government.



WRAP's vision is a world in which resources are used sustainably.

Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products; re-thinking how we use and consume products; and re-defining what is possible through re-use and recycling.

Find out more at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

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