Reducing the amount of food and drink that gets wasted in the home

The Challenge of Household Food Waste

In the UK, we throw away 20% of the food and drink we buy. On average, that's £700 worth each year for a family of four. The environmental impact is massive: if global food waste was a country, it would be the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the USA and China. In the UK, more than half of food waste occurs in the home.

Why does household food waste happen?

WRAP introduced the Love Food Hate Waste campaign in 2007 to raise people's awareness of household food waste and the actions they could take. WRAP worked with leading businesses, local authorities and other partners, and agreed collective targets in the Courtauld Commitment.

Love Food Hate Waste and the Courtauld Commitment

During 2012-2015, the population grew, food prices fell and more people lived alone – factors that increase the amount of food thrown away at home.

A long-standing challenge in reducing food waste is that many of us just aren't motivated to change what we do with our food, and most of us don't perceive we're wasteful.

Three in five of us say we throw away hardly any food, but on average we threw a quarter of a tonne of food into the bin in each home last year. That's equivalent to 500 meals, or more than one a day. Half of the food we waste is thrown away because we don't use it in time, and another third because we cook, prepare or serve too much.

Developing messages that resonate

WRAP has developed a new campaign approach designed to reach the right people with the right information, tools and resources. Campaign activities will address each cluster or 'segment' with tailored concepts and messages that reflect the issues they are interested in and motivated by. Research showed that key motivators include saving money, personal environmental impact, and understanding where food comes from and how it’s produced.

More people are keen on “loving food” than “hating waste”, so food waste statistics have limited influence and the campaign will put more focus on the value of food.
Our mission is to accelerate the move sustainably. Which resources are used
WRAP’s vision is a world in possible through re-use and recycling.

How to reach 27 million households?

First and foremost, we aim to deliver the major difference through our own actions. Not only can we make simple changes in our own lives, we can share our successes and skills with others, e.g. through our social networks and community organisations for which we volunteer.

To put the challenge into perspective, household food waste is 30 times greater than food waste in the workplace. Clearly, retailers and brands have a great opportunity to help people by:

- Explaining key skills face-to-face, e.g. to employees and community groups;
- Adopting best practice for storage and portion advice on pack;
- Introducing product changes such as single portion servings;
- Promoting innovations in packaging, sub-branding and digital receipts and apps.

Involving organisations that can make a difference
WRAP will deliver a core campaign through digital and other media to help people identify what works for their business, their products and their industry-wide best practice. Through actions such as these, signatories and campaign partners will be able to reach millions of customers each week. Each action will be piloted first, before taking them to scale, so that signatories can focus effort on what works best.

Who will deliver change?

We design, produce and sell products; economy through re-inventing how we buy: 

- Planning, correct storage, getting better use of the food we buy;
- Introducing product changes such as single portion servings;
- Promoting innovations in packaging, sub-branding and digital receipts and apps.

How to reach 27 million households?

The new phase of collective action will focus on food waste, the Courtauld Commitment 2025 (C2025) brokered by WRAP bringing together over 100 businesses, local authorities, trade organisations, governments and other partners. Signatories already represent 95% of UK food retail and 40% of consumers poppin. So there is a great opportunity to reach people at scale. In particular, WRAP will work with local food businesses to develop on-pack, in-store and online information for the most wasted and vulnerable products, and agrees industry-wide best practice. Through actions such as these, signatories and campaign partners will be able to help them engage their audiences through the media and face to face.

The Love Food Hate Waste website will provide a fresh source of inspiration for members of the public.

C2025 signatories and other Love Food Hate Waste partners have a great opportunity to help people by:

- Using their own communications to amplify campaign messages;
- Explaining key skills face-to-face, for example to employees and community groups;
- Adopting best practice for storage and portion advice on pack;
- Introducing product changes such as single portion servings;
- Promoting innovations in packaging, sub-branding and digital receipts and apps.

While we have tried to make sure this document is accurate, WRAP does not accept liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising from reliance on this guide. Readers are responsible for assessing the accuracy and conclusions of the content of this document.

Whos people listen to?

Choosing the right channels and intermediaries
The new campaign will target those channels and intermediaries where each cluster of people is most likely to see and trust the messages. This includes:

- Greater use of digital media;
- Seeking to show the value of food and how it impacts on us;
- Encouraging people to create and share relevant content across their social media networks;
- Providing information widely and consistently at point of purchase or use, e.g. through online shopping or in-loyalty card schemes and on-pack;
- Asking people to share information and skills with others through community groups and volunteer networks.

Who will deliver change?

Involving organisations that can make a difference

WRAP will deliver a core campaign through digital and other media to help people identify what works for their business, their products and their industry-wide best practice. Through actions such as these, signatories and campaign partners will be able to reach millions of customers each week. Each action will be piloted first, before taking them to scale, so that signatories can focus effort on what works best.