

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



## THE CHALLENGE OF HOUSEHOLD FOOD WASTE

### Why does household food waste matter?

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.

### What progress have we made?

Estimated household food waste in the UK fell by 15% between 2007 and 2012, to 7.0 +/- 0.3 million tonnes.

WRAP's aim was a 5% reduction in the period 2012-2015, but the estimated waste in 2015 was 7.3 +/- 0.3 million tonnes.

The margins of error around the estimates make any change between 2012 and 2015 unclear, but it is clear that overall progress has stalled.

### What are the challenges?

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.

### Why do people find it difficult to change?

Ordinary, everyday pressures on our lives affect our food behaviours significantly, and in different ways. WRAP's research shows we may:

- Be time-poor with unpredictable busy lives, so our shopping is unplanned and we don't always eat what we buy;
- Love our food, but have limited kitchen skills so we don't get quantities and storage right;
- Need to be well-stocked with food to meet needs that change day-to-day and even meal-to-meal, so some gets left over;
- See cooking as a chore, so we aren't motivated to do things differently; and
- Be good with food planning, shopping and preparation, but find it difficult to share our skills with others.

## ACTION TO MAKE BETTER USE OF FOOD

### Love Food Hate Waste and the Courtauld Commitment

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.

### Campaign activities 2012-2015

WRAP and its partners have delivered media campaigns, and provided face-to-face training and information in-store and in the community. Food businesses have also improved date labelling and storage advice to help the public make the most of their food. Partner activity increased substantially over this period, and many people have benefitted. But this alone hasn't been enough – so a shift in approach and scale is clearly needed.

### What's happening in the home?

To better understand why food waste happens at home and inform campaign design, WRAP recently undertook a piece of research with a representative sample of more than 4,500 people across the UK. The research also gave the opportunity to find out which media channels people use the most, and what would motivate them to start thinking differently about their use of food.

Five clusters of people were identified: Aspirational Discoverers, Spontaneous Creatives, Pressured Providers, Functional Fuellers and Ideal Advocates. These include people who waste a medium or high amount of food and that Love Food Hate Waste may not have reached or motivated up until now.

### 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.



**Who do people listen to?**

The choice of media has expanded rapidly over the last decade: there are various new digital channels, an explosion in the use of social media, and a vast choice of TV and radio channels.

Some of us are tech-savvy, and love to create content on social media. And some of us feel so bombarded with messages that we only pay attention to channels and people we trust, such as our peers.

Traditional approaches to public information are fast losing the ability to engage many of us.

**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 as a norm, for example on TV;
- 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, loyalty card schemes and on-pack; and
- Asking people to share information and skills with others through community groups and volunteer networks.

**How to reach 27 million households?**

A few key skills can help us make better use of the food we buy: planning, correct storage, getting portions right, and using leftovers.

But getting information to millions of people in a form that's relevant to each one of us requires large-scale communication – delivered in a cost-effective way, and personalised where feasible.



**27 million**

**Reaching people at scale**

The new phase of collective action on food waste, the Courtauld Commitment 2025 (C2025) brokered by WRAP, brings together food businesses, local authorities, trade organisations, governments and other partners. Signatories already represent 95% of UK food retail and 40% of council populations; so there is a great opportunity to reach people at scale.

In particular, WRAP will work with leading food businesses to develop on-pack, in-store and online information for the most wasted food and drink products, and agree 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?**

First and foremost, we as individuals will make 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 retail sector.

Clearly, retailers and brands have a great opportunity to help their customers, and C2025 will mobilise further action.

**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 them, tuned to each cluster. This will start early in 2017. WRAP will also share materials with businesses, local authorities and community groups 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, refrigeration and freezing; and
- Providing personalised information to customers, for example through loyalty cards, online shopping, digital receipts and apps.



Find out more about the Courtauld Commitment 2025: [www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld2025](http://www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld2025)

Find out more about Love Food Hate Waste: [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com)

**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.

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