

## Reducing waste in the fish sector

As part of [WRAP's Hospitality and Food Service Agreement](#) businesses are looking for ways to improve their environmental performance, use resources wisely, and strengthen the industry's resolve to continuously reduce its impacts. Signatories have targets to meet as part of this commitment, and are looking to you, their suppliers, to help them achieve these. We encourage you to take action, become more resource efficient, and benefit from saving money in the process. We specifically want to prevent food waste and optimise packaging wherever possible.



Many companies underestimate how much waste is costing; it could be as high as 4% of turnover<sup>1</sup>. Waste arises from<sup>2</sup>:

- Filleting of finfish, or picking/shucking/peeling of shellfish;
- Breadcrumb and batter waste from secondary processing;
- Rejection of products due to: damage (including damage to packaging), product outside specification, poor quality produce, product incorrectly labelled, temperature rejection.

## What can you do to reduce your waste?

**Step 1: Find out where and why waste is being created.** The first step towards improved resource efficiency is to identify the waste currently being generated as part of your business's activities. The best way to do this is to carry out a waste 'walk-around'. A walk-around will allow you to gain an overview of the main processes, and will probably identify areas in which rapid, no-cost or low-cost improvements can be made.

**Step 2: Calculate the cost.** The true cost of waste isn't limited to the charges for disposal. It also includes wasted raw materials, energy and labour. The real value to the food and drink retail and manufacturing sector of a tonne of waste is between £820 and £1,600 per tonne<sup>3</sup>. Calculating your current waste costs will give you a baseline figure that you can use for benchmarking and against which you can compare future performance and help you to prioritise the most impactful changes you can make.

**Step 3: Develop an action plan** with targets, timescales and responsibilities. Your action plan can take the form of a written document or a table; make sure it is clear what is to be done, who needs to do it and what you aim to achieve.

**Step 4: Review progress on the plan each month.** Speak to staff and get their feedback on the progress being made. This will keep people involved and motivated. Measure the amount of waste produced regularly and work out how much money is being saved.

**Step 5: Share your good work with stakeholders.** Keep up-to-date on the good practice being carried out across the sector by looking online e.g. the [WRAP websites](#). Apply anything you learn to the plan and update it regularly.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP\\_Food\\_Drink\\_Manufacturers.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/WRAP_Food_Drink_Manufacturers.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Resource%20Maps%20for%20Fish%20across%20Retail%20and%20Wholesale%20Supply%20Chains.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/estimates-waste-food-and-drink-supply-chain>

Not sure how to get started? For more information download the WRAP guide: [Self-Assessment Review for Food and Drink Manufacturers](#) or visit the [Business Resource Efficiency hub](#) to access a range of tools and guides to help you to improve your business resource efficiency.

## Solutions in the fish sector

- **Apply Lean manufacturing;** WRAP has developed '[W.A.S.T.E.](#)', a straightforward problem-solving approach to help reduce waste in the food and drink supply chain. Follow this process to help your business understand the **root causes** of waste and develop **solutions** to reduce waste. [Tip sheets are available](#) to help you at each stage in the process.
- **Reduce fish dropped on the floor.** Use **catch trays** under belts and modify machinery operations to catch material before it falls on the floor.
- **Set target yields** for filleting processes and consider paying staff based on yield achieved.
- **Assess machinery generated waste.** Mechanised processes (**e.g. grading**) can result in higher waste than manual operations as machines can lead to increased spillage of product from conveyors.
- **Look for bottlenecks** that might be caused by **poor line balance** due to an uneven spread of workload between individuals and/or machines.
- **Use rejected fish.** Fish rejected, e.g. wrong size, can be used in **alternative products** such as fish cakes. **Develop markets for shell products** that could include aggregates, filter media and use for decorative purpose. Regulatory clarification on 'free of flesh' shell is required to realise this potential.
- Small processors and those in remote locations could benefit from **collaborative programmes** designed to **optimise collection** or **exploit market opportunities**.
- Consider replacement of **expanded polystyrene (EPS)** fish boxes with alternative **reusable and recyclable** transit packaging.
- **Modify packaging to enhance shelf life.** This may include variations in modified atmosphere or use of vacuum packaging.
- Use the [Product Action Finder](#) to help you identify potential actions you can take to change your products' **labelling, packaging and merchandising** to help your customers waste less food.

## See how others have taken steps to reduce their waste

**Young's Seafood** re-launched its entire range of standard fish pies in a new format which uses **12% less packaging**. Whilst product sizes remain the same, outer cartons have been re-engineered to be smaller and lighter in weight, **saving some 242 tonnes of board per year**. [Read more here](#).

## Spread the word and let us know!

Promote best practice and the reduction of food and associated packaging waste wherever possible. Try and influence others in the Hospitality and Food Service sector using the information provided.

Please record what you have done to reduce food waste – we would be interested to know what activities you have undertaken and any achievements that have been made.

If you would like to get in touch, contact us at [hafs@wrap.org.uk](mailto:hafs@wrap.org.uk)