



**Label better  
less waste**

Publication date  
April 2018

# Milk guidance

**Helping reduce consumer food  
waste, through changes to  
products, packs, labels and retail**

Produce of



**wrap**

 **Food  
Standards  
Agency**  
food.gov.uk

  
Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**Dairy  
UK**



# Top actions for consumer waste prevention

- ✓ Extend closed and 'Open Life' to the maximum possible. For 'Open Life' adopt the wording, 'Best within x days of opening'
- ✓ Include prominent storage guidance
- ✓ Include Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) tips and other communications on larger packs

## Date labelling

- Consider ways of adding length to product life through processing, supply chain or protocol innovations. The amount of product life available to householders has a significant influence on wastage rates, reducing wastage by up to 10%, or more, for every extra day of life<sup>1</sup>.
- Where the food safety risk is sufficiently covered by the 'Use By' date, remove food safety-related 'Open Life' guidance ('Use within X days of opening').
- Where 'Open Life' is important for food quality rather than safety, use the wording – 'Best within X days of opening'.

A [decision tree](#) is available to support the decision of which date label should apply.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Milk%20Model%20report.pdf>

## Storage guidance

- Use a prominent blue fridge icon and supporting wording – 'Keep in the fridge below 5°C'.
- Consider other innovations to help householders store at the right temperature, e.g. temperature sensitive labels.



- Where space permits, use the snowflake icon with the wording – 'Decant into a clean air-tight container'. Provide freezing and defrosting instructions alongside, e.g. 'Freeze by the date mark shown; best within X months; defrost in the fridge and consume within 1 day'.
- Work is currently underway with industry on the effect of freezing.



## Love Food Hate Waste tips and other communication

- On larger packs, consider using messaging on the story of food, e.g. 'Milk is amazing, it's too good to bin. Pop it back in the fridge pronto / Pour it on your cereal, not down the drain'.
- On larger packs, consider using tips to re-inforce key storage messages, e.g. 'Return to fridge immediately after use' or 'Always put me back in the fridge straight away – I'll stay fresher for longer' or 'Store upright'.
- Re-inforce through in-store messaging, e.g. on the shelf edge, or at checkout – 'Pack cold items together to keep fresh until they reach your fridge'.



# Consumer insights and evidence

## Evidence on consumer waste at home<sup>2</sup>

UK consumers waste:

**290,000 tonnes**

of milk a year (7% of purchases).

**50%**

was thrown away in larger quantities (> 1 pint).

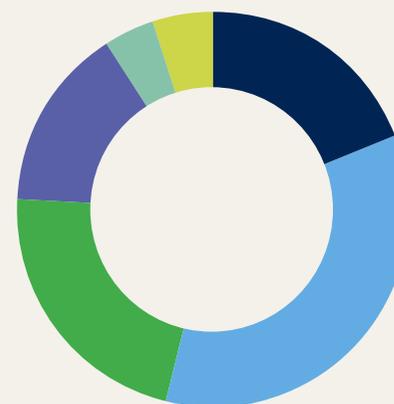
**50%**

was thrown away at breakfast.

## Other insights

1. Customer complaints data suggests that c. 80% of complaints are about milk going off before the 'Use By' date, potentially related to temperature abuse.
2. An on-shelf survey found that freezing guidance for milk was minimal<sup>3</sup>. 17% of consumers believe milk to be 'un-freezable' and only around 1 in 10 regularly buy milk to freeze at home<sup>4</sup>.
3. WRAP focus panels have found that consumers respond well to 'motivational' messaging on the story of food.

## Reasons for not using milk purchases



Not used in time (date code)	19%
Not used in time (not date code)	35%
Cooked/served too much	22%
Fussy eating	15%
Accidents	4%
Other	5%

- 2 Household Food & Drink Waste – A Product Focus, WRAP 2014
- 3 <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/helping-consumers-reduce-food-waste-retail-survey-2015>
- 4 Understanding Consumer Use of the Freezer, WRAP, August 2010. A quantitative study into consumer attitudes, understanding and behaviour with regards to freezing.



## Label better less waste

While we have taken reasonable steps to ensure this report is accurate, WRAP does not accept liability for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising from reliance on this report.

Readers are responsible for assessing the accuracy and conclusions of the content of this report. Quotations and case studies have been drawn from the public domain, with permissions sought where practicable.

This report does not represent endorsement of the examples used and has not been endorsed by the organisations and individuals featured within it.

This material is subject to copyright. You can copy it free of charge and may use excerpts from it provided they are not used in a misleading context and you must identify the source of the material and acknowledge WRAP's copyright. You must not use this report or material from it to endorse or suggest WRAP has endorsed a commercial product or service.

For more details please see WRAP's terms and conditions on our website at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

**Image source:**

© Andrey Burstein / Shutterstock

**WRAP**

Second Floor  
Blenheim Court  
19 George Street  
Banbury  
Oxon OX16 5BH

[wrap.org.uk](http://wrap.org.uk)  
[@WRAP\\_UK](https://twitter.com/WRAP_UK)

**wrap**



Food  
Standards  
Agency  
[food.gov.uk](http://food.gov.uk)



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**Dairy**  
UK

