Toolkit to reduce consumer food waste from the European Consumer Food Waste Forum

Check out the website:

- See what type of actions you can take -> **action planner**
- Calculate the impacts of your action -> **food waste prevention calculator**
- Learn how to design, implement and evaluate an action -> **video tutorials**
- Read the recommendations of the experts -> **leaflets** (in all EU languages)

European Commission

Reducing consumer food waste: recommendations for food businesses and other organisations

Food waste is a pressing issue with significant environmental, social and economic consequences. In the EU, nearly 59 million tonnes of food waste (131 kg/inhabitant) are generated each year. The largest share of food waste is generated in households and food services. The food groups that are most commonly wasted are vegetables, fruits and cereals.

Consumers can change many behaviours that lead to food waste (e.g. cooking too much), but their capacity to prevent food waste is influenced by a number of factors (e.g. related policies, lifestyle factors). Reducing consumer food waste requires collaboration between all actors in the food system, in which food businesses and other organisations play a key role.

53 % of EU food waste is generated in households (70 kg/person/year).

9 % of EU food waste arises in restaurants and food services, including school canteens (12 kg/person/year).

The role of food businesses and other organisations

Food businesses play a crucial role in addressing the issue of food waste, as they are involved in various stages of the food supply chain, from production to consumption. They can help reduce consumer food waste by facilitating sustainable choices for consumers, informing consumers about food and food waste and promoting sustainability throughout the food supply chain (e.g. by offering a range of portion sizes, ensuring adequate packaging and logistical operations to optimise shelf life and protect products in the food supply chain and offering doggy bags in restaurants). Organisations such as coalitions or third parties involved in running, for example, voluntary agreements also play a vital role and can coordinate and facilitate actions to reduce consumer food waste.

Preventing food waste: a selection of actions

1 Nudges and tools for households

Nudges are small changes in an environment that are easy to implement and make it more likely that an individual will make a particular choice or behave in a particular way. These actions aim to enhance consumers' food management skills and support them in adopting new habits and routines to reduce food waste at home. The duration should be a minimum of 1 week to test and evaluate the effects, and then prompts and tools can be adopted for a longer period. Some tools show food waste reductions of up to 40 % compared with the baseline. Monitoring is highly recommended and can be done by either direct measurement (waste compositional analysis or food waste diaries) or surveys and control groups.

How to implement actions

- **Understand what behaviour needs to be changed** and which target audiences should be reached.
- **Identify the best channels** through which to provide the targeted households with tools/prompts.
- **Include a baseline measurement and control group** to understand the context for and levels of food waste before you start, thus allowing you to monitor the effects of the action.

Some successful examples:

- *Offer stickers to place on kitchen appliances (fridges and freezers) to remind consumers about good storage habits.*
- *Distribute portion-based measuring cups to help consumers prepare portions according to their needs.*
- *Share recipes designed specifically to allow more flexibility in the choice of ingredients and encourage the use of leftover food.*
- *Encourage the use of shopping lists to improve meal planning and avoid impulse purchases.*

Joint Research Centre