

# FOOD WASTE

## quick fact file

As part of our **MADE BY YOU** series

Written and researched by: **Sude Ertas Aged 14:**

### INTRODUCTION

Food waste refers to food that is perfectly edible but gets thrown away or left uneaten. This can happen at every stage of the food chain — from farms, factories, shops, restaurants, and even in homes.

A lot of food waste is due to **SURPLUS** - which is food that is produced but never eaten.

If food waste were a country, it would be the **THIRD-LARGEST** emitter of greenhouse gases, after the US and China.

Food waste is not just a social issue, but an environmental issue too as many environmental resources are wasted!

**1/5<sup>TH</sup>** of food for human consumption is wasted or lost globally, which is about **1 BILLION** meals per day!

If all of the US' surplus food was to be grown in one place it would cover **80 MILLION ACRES**, which is the equivalent to around 45.3 million UK football pitches!

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Food waste has a serious impact on the environment, even though it often goes unnoticed. Here's how:

### 1. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- When food is wasted, it ends up in landfill, and decomposes without oxygen.
- This process releases methane, a greenhouse gas that is **25 TIMES MORE POTENT** than carbon dioxide.
- Globally, food waste is responsible for **8-10%** of total greenhouse gas emissions.



### 2. WATER

- Around **25%** of all water used in agriculture is lost through food waste.
- Many steps are involved in the processing of food - from extraction, to irrigation and pumping (using fossil fuels).
- When we throw food away, we are also wasting the freshwater used to grow and process the food.

### 3. WASTED ENERGY AND FUEL

- Energy is used to: run tractors and machines on farms; power factories and refrigeration; transport food by lorries, ships, or planes
- Food waste means that all the fuel, electricity and labour is wasted too, increasing the overall carbon footprint.

### 4. LAND USE AND HABITAT LOSS

Vast areas of land are cleared for farming to support global food production, often leading to:

- **Deforestation**
- **Loss of wildlife habitats**
- **Soil degradation**



FOLLOW US:



**WWW.POWEROF10.EARTH**



## CASE STUDIES

Farmers in Zimbabwe have adopted a method for converting organic and food waste into **PROTEIN-RICH FEED** for livestock, such as maggot-farming. This not only saves food from being wasted but follows a **CIRCULAR** and sustainable agricultural and food system.

Another example is banana wine-making in Kenya. Due to rising temperatures, crops of bananas are ripening faster than they can be harvested and distributed. This means that a significant amount of food waste was being produced until a solution was found. One cooperative in Kenya found that once the bananas were harvested, the banana fruit could be made into meals for the locals, and the banana skin **FERMENTED** into producing a **WINE**! This solution has significantly supported the local economy and communities across Kenya as banana wine has become a **MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTION**.



## Reasons for HOPE!

Since 2023, over **20 MILLION PEOPLE** in the UK have used surplus food apps in 2023, saving around **3 MILLION MEALS** from being wasted. These apps provide great access to discounted food that would otherwise go to waste.

Additionally, in Scotland, an innovative project has been turning food waste into bio-gas to fuel local communities. In just one year, **5000 TONNES** of food waste were processed into **RENEWABLE ENERGY**, reducing the demand for fossil fuels.

## What can YOU do?

- **PLAN** meals and only buy what you need
- **STORE** food properly to make it last longer
- Get creative with **LEFTOVERS**!
- Understand **FOOD LABELS** - "best before" doesn't always mean "bad after"
- **DONATE** unused food or turn into **SCRAPS** if possible
- **EDUCATE** others about the importance of not wasting food
- Get your locals **SCHOOL** and **COUNCIL** involved in the fight against food waste!

ANOTHER  
WAY

1



I AM PROUD TO BE A  
**POWER OF 10**  
CHANGEMAKER

Remember YOU are making a difference... Keep it up!

No-one is too small to make a difference!

Download more resources at:

JOIN THE MOVEMENT...



[WWW.POWEROF10.EARTH](http://WWW.POWEROF10.EARTH)

FOLLOW US:



[WWW.POWEROF10.EARTH](http://WWW.POWEROF10.EARTH)

ANOTHER  
WAY