

## FOOD WASTE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

# SHOP SMART



Let's start with the facts and the issue of food waste. Give your audience a vision of what the problem is and simple steps to help them make a difference.

### KEY MESSAGES

#### What is food waste?

- ✓ By definition, **food waste is edible food** that could otherwise be eaten but is thrown out. This could be for many reasons and anywhere within the supply chain from farm to table, but many of them are preventable.
- ✓ The average person living in America wastes nearly **one pound of food daily**. In terms of calories, that equals roughly 30 percent what every American consumes on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Consumers are the primary contributor of food waste — chucking out anywhere from **15-25% of all food purchased**.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ When we waste food **we waste valuable resources** like water, cropland, fuel, labor, time and money.
- ✓ **Why does food get wasted?** There are many contributing factors, including purchasing too much food, confusion over spoilage dates, lack of knowledge when preparing and storing foods, uncertainty around when food is ripe, uneaten leftovers, and throwing away food that is still safe to eat.
- ✓ Each year, the average **family of four wastes an average of 1,000 pounds of food** at home, resulting in **\$1,500 lost**.<sup>3</sup>

### DRIVE ACTION

- **Take inventory.** Snap a **#shelfieselfie**: Before you shop, grab a photo of your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry so you know what you have and what you need.
- **Make a shopping list.** While planning ahead for what you might need for the days or week ahead, base your list on the number of meals you will eat at home.
- **Shop at home before you roam.** Use up what you have by planning at least one meal a week to eat up leftovers or create a new dish with what you have laying around.
- **Check out additional tips** for shopping smart at: [savethefood.com](https://www.savethefood.com).

### WAYS TO CUSTOMIZE

- ✓ Share what steps you've taken to minimize food waste with your audience.
- ✓ Encourage a community spirit — suggest local resources that could use donated food.
- ✓ Share photos of your **#shelfieselfie** on your social handles; describe how it helps you plan your shopping trip.

## SUGGESTED HASHTAGS



#wastenotwednesday

#shelfieselfie

#foodwastewarrior

#stopfoodwaste

#savethefood

#tastenotwaste

## HUNGRY FOR MORE?

### NRDC Report on Food Waste in America, Second Edition:

 <https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-executive-summary.pdf>

### Shareable Assets for Social Media Use:

 <https://www.savethefood.com/share-it>

### Consumer Tips to Reduce Food Waste:

 <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/consumers.htm>

 <https://www.savethefood.com/tips/shopping-guideline>

### General Mills #tastenotwaste Resources:

 <https://www.bettycrocker.com/how-to/taste-not-waste>

## BROUGHT TO YOU BY



1. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0195405>

2. <https://eatrightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-State-of-Americas-Food-Waste-Report.pdf>

3. <http://savethefood.com>

## FOOD WASTE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

## READ SMART



One of the key drivers of food waste at the consumer level is confusion over product date labels on packages. Date labels on food are generally not regulated and are not meant to indicate food safety. Give your audience a basic understanding of what these labels mean.

## KEY MESSAGES

## Confusion on the Label

- ✓ **Reducing consumer confusion** over product date labels could help reduce food waste.
- ✓ More than **10 different date labels** currently appear on packages — such as *Sell By*, *Use By*, *Expires On*, *Best Before*, *Better if Used By* or *Best By* — which can be confusing for consumers to understand.
- ✓ Consumers' misinterpretation of what the product date label means can lead to food waste. **Over one third of the population (37%)** says they always or usually throw away food because it is close to or past the date that appears on the package. **Eighty four percent of consumers** throw out food based on date labels at least occasionally.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Standardizing date labeling has been identified as the most cost-effective solution for reducing food waste, and it's estimated that it could help to divert **398,000 tons of the food** that is wasted each year.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ **Good news!** A new voluntary initiative developed by a coalition of U.S. retailers and manufacturers streamlines product date labels on consumer products down to two standard phrases<sup>3</sup>:
  - **Best If Used By** describes **product quality**, where the product may not taste or perform as expected but is safe to use or consume after the specified date.
  - **Use By** applies to the few products that are highly perishable and/or have a food safety concern over time; **these products should be consumed by the date listed on the package** — and disposed of after that date.
  - **Note:** Other date labels may still appear for some time as manufacturers adopt and roll out these changes on product packages.
- ✓ **Food safety is always important!** Food should be thrown out when spoilage is evident. Spoiled foods will develop an off odor, flavor or texture due to naturally occurring spoilage bacteria and should not be eaten.<sup>4</sup>

## DRIVE ACTION

- **#Knowbeforeyouthrow.** Quality versus safety.
- **Look at labels.** Watch for *Best If Used By* and *Use By* labels while grocery shopping. Choose items with the furthest date out and avoid items that will spoil before you're able to use them.
- **Sniff and taste.** Test items before you toss — remember, the *Best If Used By* date is an indicator of quality, not safety.

## WAYS TO CUSTOMIZE

- ✓ Share how you manage your food inventory.
- ✓ Share your tips for proper food storage to maximize shelf life of perishable items.

## SUGGESTED HASHTAGS



#wastenotwednesday

#knowbeforeyouthrow

#foodwastewarrior

#stopfoodwaste

#savethefood

#tastenotwaste

## HUNGRY FOR MORE?

### US Food Waste Policy Finder

 <http://www.refed.com/tools/food-waste-policy-finder/>

### Shelf Life Guide

 <http://www.stilltasty.com/>

 <https://www.savethefood.com/tips/deciphering-dates-on-products>

### Shareable Assets for Social Media Use:

 <https://www.savethefood.com/share-it>

### General Mills #tastenotwaste Resources:

 <https://www.bettycrocker.com/how-to/taste-not-waste>

## BROUGHT TO YOU BY



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1. [https://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Consumer-Perceptions-on-Date-Labels\\_May-2016.pdf](https://www.chlpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Consumer-Perceptions-on-Date-Labels_May-2016.pdf)
2. ReFED. A Roadmap to reduce consumer food waste by 20 percent. 2016. [www.refed.com](http://www.refed.com)
3. <https://www.gmaonline.org/news-events/newsroom/grocery-industry-launches-new-initiative-to-reduce-consumer-confusion-on-pr/>
4. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>

## FOOD WASTE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

# STORE SMART



**Why should we care about food waste? Wasted food is the single largest component of our landfills, with the greatest contribution coming from us — the consumer.**

### KEY MESSAGES

**Consumers tend not to notice the food they throw out** and they underestimate the implications of food waste.

On average, studies have found that nearly **three-quarters of people believe they waste less food** than the average American.<sup>1</sup>

Households are responsible for over **40% of the food wasted** in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Food is the **number one thing in U.S. landfills** and contributes to more climate pollution than all the cars in the state of Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

Every year, **52 million tons of food is sent to landfills**, and another 10 million tons are discarded or left unharvested on farms. In contrast, **one in seven Americans is food insecure**.<sup>4</sup>

**Each year, the average family of four wastes about 1,000 pounds** of food at home, resulting in **\$1,500 lost**. Why not take a few steps to reduce food waste and save money?<sup>3</sup>

**Properly storing food** to extend its shelf life is a key step that everyone can take to reduce food waste.

### DRIVE ACTION

- Practice good food safety. Extend shelf life by refrigerating perishable foods within 2 hours of purchasing.
- Be mindful of food inventory. Keeping more perishable foods at eye level and visible makes them more accessible versus at the back of the refrigerator or shelf.
- Become a food storage pro! The more you know, the less you throw:
  - Easy tools can help people store food for maximum quality and shelf life:
    -  Foodkeeper App: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html>
    -  <https://www.savethefood.com/food-storage>
- Food “scraps”, leftovers, and past-their-prime fruits and vegetables can transform into a delicious dish. Find tips on how to use up just about anything:
  -  <https://www.savethefood.com/cook-it>

### WAYS TO CUSTOMIZE

- ✓ Share your favorite food storage hack and encourage followers to share theirs.
- ✓ Keep a Food Waste Journal: Track any food that you waste and add up how much money you’ve “thrown out”. Make a goal to reduce that amount.
- ✓ Share a photo of your own refrigerator or pantry “inventory management” system. What tips do you have that others can learn from?

## SUGGESTED HASHTAGS



#wastenotwednesday

#conserveandpreserve

#foodwastewarrior

#stopfoodwaste

#savethefood

#tastenotwaste

## HUNGRY FOR MORE?

### Interactive Food Storage Guides:

 <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/index.html>

 <https://www.savethefood.com/food-storage>

### Shareable Assets for Social Media Use:

 <https://www.savethefood.com/share-it>

### The Extraordinary Life and Times of Strawberry (Video):

 <https://youtu.be/NjcwFF31cDo>

### General Mills #tastenotwaste Resources:

 <https://www.bettycrocker.com/how-to/taste-not-waste>

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1. Roni A. Neff, Marie L. Spiker, Patricia L. Truant "Wasted Food: US Consumers' Reported Awareness, Attitudes, and Behaviors", PLoS ONE (June 10, 2015) doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0127881. As referenced in: [https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf?\\_ga=2.30190143.1062818468.1532635758-1787036108.1532635758](https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf?_ga=2.30190143.1062818468.1532635758-1787036108.1532635758)
2. ReFED, A Roadmap to Reduce US Food Waste by 20 Percent, (2016), www.refed.com. As referenced in: [https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf?\\_ga=2.30190143.1062818468.1532635758-1787036108.1532635758](https://assets.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf?_ga=2.30190143.1062818468.1532635758-1787036108.1532635758)
3. <http://savethefood.com>
4. <http://www.refed.com/?sort=economic-value-per-ton>

## FOOD WASTE COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

# COOK SMART



Cooking smart is one of the best ways to prevent food waste. Not to mention, planning what you purchase and prepare saves time and money. Inspire your audience to take small steps that will help them reduce food waste.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ Dairy products and Vegetables are estimated to make up almost **40% of the food wasted** by consumers. Fruit, Grain Products, and Meat, Poultry, and Fish are the other leading categories that contribute to food wasted by consumers.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Each year, the average **family of four wastes an average of 1,000 pounds of food** at home, resulting in **\$1,500 lost**.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ **Meal planning** is a great way to help you reduce food waste.

### DRIVE ACTION

- **Share your best tips for meal planning.** It all starts with a plan! Identify small steps to get started — meal planning does not have to be labor intensive.
- **Encourage mindful shopping.** Consider: Will you be eating out for any meals? What are food needs for lunches? How will you incorporate these foods into breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the week?
- **Share tips for easy prep.** After grocery shopping take the time to chop, wash, and portion your fruits, vegetables, and meats. Whatever you don't plan on using in the next few days can go right in the freezer.
- **Tout the benefits of batch cooking.** To save time and energy, portion out meals and freeze for later.
  - Tablespoon.com How-Tos can help get the meal plan wavy started:  
<https://www.tablespoon.com/meals/chicken-meal-prep-plan-grocery-list-easy-recipes-storage-tips>
- **Become a leftovers pro.** Reinvent as soups, salads, stews, dips, salsa, wraps.
- **Inspire kids** to become food waste warriors. Find tips here:  
<https://www.savethefood.com/tips/how-to-waste-less-with-kids>

### WAYS TO CUSTOMIZE

- ✓ **Use those leftovers!** Share with your audience your favorite leftover meal makeover.
- ✓ **Focus on the top items of foods wasted** (dairy, fruits, vegetables and meat) and highlight how you minimize food waste.

## SUGGESTED HASHTAGS



#wastenotwednesday

#choosetouse

#foodwastewarrior

#stopfoodwaste

#savethefood

#tastenotwaste

## HUNGRY FOR MORE?

### For More Tips on Reducing Food Waste:

 <http://foodshift.net/reduce-your-waste/>

### Food Waste Resources from the EPA:

 <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-too-good-waste-implementation-guide-and-toolkit>

### General Mills #tastenotwaste Resources:

 <https://www.bettycrocker.com/how-to/taste-not-waste>

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1. Jean C. Buzby, Hodan F. Wells, and Jeffrey Hyman, The Estimated Amount, Value, and Calories of Postharvest Food Losses at the Retail and Consumer Levels in the United States, USDA Economic Research Service Economic Information Bulletin No. EIB-121 (February 2014), P.13 [www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/eib121/43680\\_eib121.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/eib121/43680_eib121.pdf). As referenced in page 10: <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/wasted-how-america-losing-40-percent-its-food-farm-fork-landfill>
2. [www.savethefood.com](http://www.savethefood.com)