

Reducing & Preventing Food Waste

POSITION PAPER

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Acknowledging the challenge and embracing its role in the fight against food waste, the European food and drink industry is firmly committed to supporting the implementation of the UN SDG Target 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030.

Globally we waste 1.3 billion tonnes of food per year while in the EU, this represents 88 million tonnes. Wasting food represents a major loss of natural resources and a needless source of greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. It will also make it harder to feed a growing global population.

A transition to halve food waste by 2030

As part of the 2015 Circular Economy Action Plan, the Commission has focused on the prevention of food losses and food waste. This has been done over the years by embracing UN Sustainable Development Goals Target 12.3 (adopted in 2015) which aims to halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chains.

Through a series of initiatives stemming from the 2015 Circular Economy Action Plan and through the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, the Commission developed EU food donations guidelines and a common EU methodology to measure food waste so to support SDG Target 12.3.

FoodDrinkEurope has been an active member of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste since its establishment and supports its multi-stakeholder approach.

Europe's food and drink industry is committed to adopting and promoting sustainable practices across the entire supply chain and is determined more than ever to help address global challenges in the transition towards more [sustainable food systems](#).

Food losses and food waste impact the sustainability and resilience of our food systems and their ability to ensure food security and nutrition for current and future generations.

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO HELP INDUSTRY PREVENT AND REDUCE FOOD WASTE

- **Target, measure, act**
Set targets to raise awareness, focus attention, and mobilise resources towards reducing food loss and waste. See the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap developed by WRAP UK¹. Focus action on preventing food waste in the first place using a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging with consumers and improving packaging and date marking.
- **Internal Processes**
Improve training and raise awareness within the organisation on how to prevent food wastage at all levels of operation such as production, marketing, procurement and logistics.
- **Food redistribution**
When surpluses occur, ensure any safe food is redistributed to people in need. The Covid-19 crisis demonstrated the importance to reach vulnerable individuals through redistribution channels such as Food Banks.
- **Packaging**
Find the balance between the circular economy objectives of reducing and recycling packaging materials and ensuring food safety and waste prevention, using packaging in a more sustainable and resource efficient manner.
- **Empowering consumers**
Provide information to inform and educate consumers about the product characteristics, proper storage, date marking and shelf-life, meal planning (e.g. possibility of freezing), safe food handling, and cooking recipes for preparing the food in multiple ways can further help avoid food waste. Additionally, we will continue to offer consumers a range of different packaging sizes including in-pack portioning to cater for consumer's different needs.
- **Co-products²**
It is important to create more innovative products that utilise co-products. This can be achieved by expanding opportunities for research and innovation through public and private funding across the supply chain, ultimately benefitting SME's.

¹ Food Waste Reduction Roadmap

² For example, the use of carrot peels for producing food colours

We are committed to help **halving food waste** by 2030 in line with SGD Target 12.3

We are actively contributing to the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and support the European Commission's goal to become the first **climate neutral** region in the world by 2050

When food waste cannot be avoided, we favour **food redistribution** to humans, in line with the food waste hierarchy

OUR CORE POLICY ASKS

1 Support EU guidelines on food waste measurement

Call for the development of EU guidelines to help member states and food business operators implement regulation³ on food waste measurement in order to interpret the data and reporting requirements consistently.

2 Build reporting and measurement tools

Support the already-recognised measurement tools to report on food waste in a consistent and transparent way, as per the example of the UK Food Waste Reduction Roadmap (WRAP)⁴. This can help ensure that further measures are based on analysis of comparable data.

3 Empower consumers

Improve consumer understanding of optimal food storage and date markings ('use by' and 'best before') jointly with other stakeholders, in line with the Food Information to Consumers Regulation⁵. Support awareness raising among consumers on ways to reduce food waste at home, in the workplace, and on buying habits in food retail stores.

4 Invest in research and innovation

European-funded research on food loss and food waste should be conducted for every actor in the supply chain to help identify the specific challenges of the various sectors and identify and develop tailored-made solutions. Co-financing schemes of future European research and innovation programs such as Horizon Europe, LIFE should be supported.

5 Ensure policy coherence

Ensure that future EU policies relating to food waste are coherent with other key policy initiatives under the European Green Deal such as the Climate Law, Biodiversity Strategy, and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

ABOUT FOODDRINKEUROPE

FoodDrinkEurope represents Europe's food and drink industry, Europe's largest manufacturing sector in terms of turnover, employment and value added.

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³ Delegated act on Food waste measurement <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2019/EN/C-2019-3211-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

⁴ WRAP UK – Food Waste Reduction Roadmap <https://wrap.org.uk/food-waste-reduction-roadmap>

⁵ Food Information to Consumers Regulation <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02011R1169-20180101&from=EN>