

Food waste: The need to adequately measure and evaluate progress before setting EU mandatory targets

Food waste is a missed opportunity to feed the growing world population, a major waste of resources and a needless source of emissions. The food and drink industry is committed to contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Target 12.3 to halve food waste by 2030. Our priority is to prevent food waste and surpluses from occurring in the first place and to drive out resource inefficiency within our supply chains. Where surpluses cannot be avoided, we work to redirect food to feed people in line with the food waste hierarchy.

Food waste features high in the European Green Deal and the future Farm-to-Fork Strategy. The Commission has announced its intention to set mandatory targets on food waste in 2023, based on the data annually reported by Member States (MS) from this year onwards¹. This reporting exercise will make an important contribution to achieving the current indicative EU wide food waste reduction target of 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030, which is aligned with SDG target 12.3.

Before setting a binding EU-wide target, we call on policymakers:

- To develop EU guidelines and training tools to help implement the Delegated Act on food waste measurement. These guidelines could encourage minimum sample size to measure for each stage of the supply chain and assist the different actors in the supply chain with interpreting the data and reporting to MS.
- To encourage and assist with the effective use of robust, coherent and comparable measurement methodologies in all MS, as recommended in the Delegated Act. This will ensure proper analysis and comparability of data before taking additional measures on food waste and potentially reduce any economic burden for the parties involved in this exercise.
- To promote the use of reliable existing measurement and reporting tools which facilitate reporting in a consistent and transparent way, such as the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#).
- To carefully assess the data collected within the two first reporting years (2020-2022) since it will be the first time MS, alongside organisations in the supply chain, will be engaged in such a comprehensive exercise. In this context, it is important to take into consideration the possible outcome of applying the most efficient measures or best practices.
- To further encourage, acknowledge and build upon the efforts undertaken by the various actors of the food supply chain to reduce and prevent food waste, including by the food and drink industry. It is important to note that some actors might have taken more waste reducing actions in the past which would result hard for them to implement further measures and be even more efficient.
- To ensure that any further European driven or funded research on food losses and food waste will be equally conducted for every actor in the supply chain. This will help further identify the specific challenges those different actors are faced with and develop solutions to adequately address those challenges. To this end, co-financing schemes of future European research and innovation programs such as Horizon Europe, LIFE should be supported.

FoodDrinkEurope and its members stand ready to contribute their knowledge and expertise in taking forward these measures as appropriate, either through the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and through separate discussions.

¹ Using the Commission's [Delegated Act](#) (EU) 2019/1597 providing EU harmonised methodology and minimum quality requirements for the uniform measurement of levels of food waste.