



Food Waste.

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Prague

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**Up to 50% of
our food is
wasted or lost.**



Scandal!



Should we
care?



**Why does
this matter?**



What are the causes?



**What can be
done?**

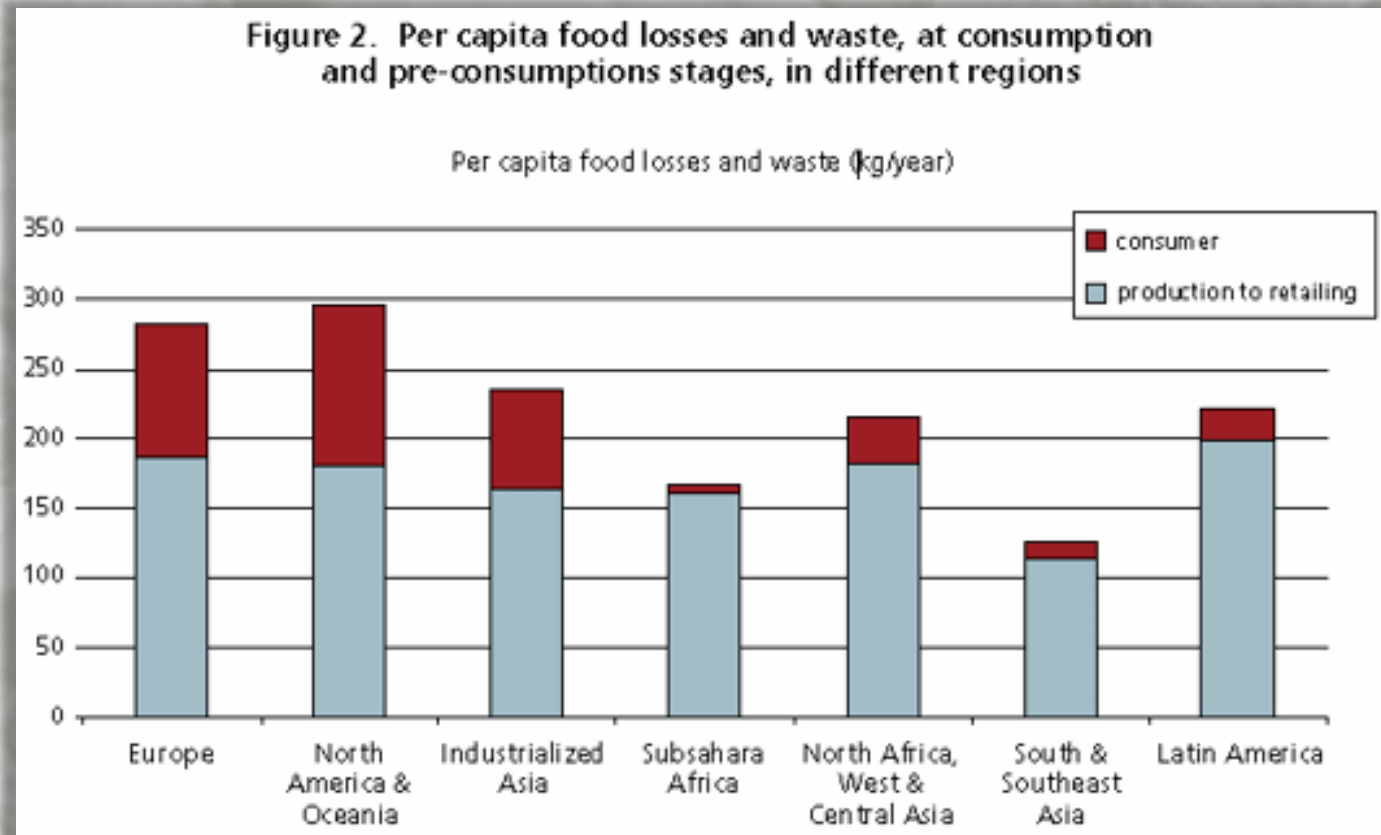
Should we care?



Background

- ❑ About **90 million tonnes of food waste per year** in Europe - agricultural food waste & fish discards not included;
- ❑ About **126 million tonnes by 2020** without additional prevention policies food waste;
- ❑ Food is wasted **at all stages of the food chain** - for various reasons;
- ❑ **Efforts to reduce food waste** should focus on **all levels** of the food chain and **targeting the causes per sector**.

Should we care?



UN Food and Agriculture Organization

Should we care?

Food Waste

SAVING VALUABLE RESOURCES

sustainable development



Jonathan Woolfitt is a former Director of Greenpeace International, a sustainability consultant in Prague. Photo: Archiv of Author

A recent news report caught my attention about socially-minded Prague students rummaging in dumpsters behind a major supermarket for discarded food that was still usable. Tereza and Barbora are part of a group of young people who take turns to retrieve still-edible produce that's been thrown away.

In Prague 3-Zůžkov, the Ježek & Čížek organization helps homeless people survive and find jobs. The valiant efforts of these volunteers saves all kinds of nutritious foods that they use for making tasty meals for the needy.

There are no precise statistics in this country, but Miroslava Egerová of Pražské služby (Prague Services) says that the capital's hotels and restaurants alone throw out 3,000 tonnes of food every year, which is around eight tonnes per day. Supermarkets throw away considerably more.

If we add in Czech households, much more food ends up in the garbage with estimates that an average family throws away more than five tonnes per year.

As the world's population is expected to reach 9.5 billion by 2075, we need to ensure there are sufficient food resources available to feed all these people. With current practices wasting up to an astounding half of all food produced, we must surely act now and promote sustainable ways to reduce waste from the farm to the supermarket and to the consumer.

Today, we produce about four billion metric tonnes of food per annum. Yet due to poor practices in harvesting, storage and transportation, as well as market and consumer waste, it is estimated that 30-50 percent of all food produced never reaches a human stomach.

And this figure does not reflect the large amounts of land, energy, fertilisers and water lost in the production of foodstuffs which simply end up as rubbish. Surely that cannot continue if we are to succeed in the challenge of sustainably meeting our future food demands.

In developed countries such as the Czech Republic, more-efficient farming practices and better transportation, storage and processing facilities ensure that a larger proportion of the food produced reaches markets and consumers. However, characteristics associated with modern consumer culture mean produce is often wasted through retail and customer behaviour.

Major supermarkets will often reject entire crops of perfectly edible fruit and vegetables at the farm because they do not meet exacting standards for their physical characteristics. It's estimated that some 1.6 million tonnes of perfectly edible food is discarded each year simply because it doesn't look pretty enough.

Of the produce that does appear in the supermarket, alluring sales promotions frequently encourage customers to purchase more than they need. In the case of perishable foodstuffs, this inevitably creates waste and contributes to up to half of the food we buy ending up in the bin.

Reducing wastage is frequently beyond the capability of the individual farmer, distributor or consumer, since it depends on market philosophies, security of energy supply, quality of roads and transport hubs. These are all related more to societal, political and economic practices, as well as better-engineered infrastructure, rather than together all parts of the food change are urgently needed to stop this futile loss.

In less-developed countries, such as those of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia, wastage tends to occur primarily at the farmer-producer end of the supply chain. Inefficient harvesting, inadequate transportation and poor infrastructure mean that produce is frequently handled badly and stored under unsuitable farm conditions.

The growth in world population and increasing demand for food is placing significant stress on our land resources. We are running out of places where crops can be grown and are already seriously threatening the wellbeing of our ecosystem. With agricultural areas having increased by 12 percent over the past 50 years, efficiency is vital. Forests and other ecologically-sensitive land is being cleared for farming at an alarming rate. Water is also wasted when food is thrown away.

In the past century, the use of water increased at more than twice the rate of increase in population. Incredibly, over 15,000 litres of water is required to produce just 1kg of beef, 280 litres for a kilo of potatoes and nearly 200 litres for a single egg. And energy is wasted in food production, which accounts for over three percent of world consumption, with roughly 7-10 calories required to manufacture a single calorie of food.

It's bad enough that discarded items take up space in landfills. But rotting food also releases methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

In financial terms, using our food more efficiently would have a dramatic impact of prices. So, in addition to environmental protection, reducing food waste will save us money.

Government should be working with farmers, food giants and multinational retailers to stem this terrible wastage. Major companies that promote impressively-worded corporate responsibility strategies, need to translate these into concrete sustainable actions.

But there is also much that ordinary consumers can do. One valuable step is to differentiate between "sell-by" and "use-by" dates printed on packaging. It is quite possible to determine for ourselves whether something has actually gone off or is still fit for use. Common sense and instinct should rule.

Households need to have a better understanding of how much food is purchased, consumed and discarded. More awareness of exactly how much food is wasted will inevitably help. Leftovers should be kept for future meals. And we need to improve the way in which we store our food, keeping it properly in sealed containers, refrigerating perishables and freezing items that can be used some time later.

Food waste is undoubtedly one of the world's biggest sustainability challenges. Government and the private sector must acknowledge their responsibility to find solutions, with consumers also playing a role in treating our food more sensibly, more respectfully and more efficiently.

Jonathan Woolfitt - a former Director of Greenpeace International, he lives in Prague and works throughout the world as a sustainability consultant to business. He has advised many large corporations including Palmolive and Whirlpool. With particular expertise in climate change, energy policy, forestry, and supply chains, he helps companies to develop sustainability strategies that benefit the environment, society and business. Among his many activities, he advises on stakeholder relationships, resolves conflicts between companies and non-governmental organisations and develops sustainability reports. Jonathan is a special advisor to the Czech Business Council for Sustainable Development. He can be contacted at Jonathan@woolfitt.com.

IN COOPERATION WITH LEADERS MAGAZINE

By Jonathan Woolfitt

Why does it matter?

- Cost
- Land conversion
- Climate change
- Disposal
- Toxic run-off
- Malnutrition
- Unsustainable



Why does it matter?

- Reputation
- Competition
- Legislation
- Opportunities
- Relationships
- Savings



What are the reasons?

- Farmers
- Wholesalers
- Retailers
- Caterers
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Consumers



What can be done?

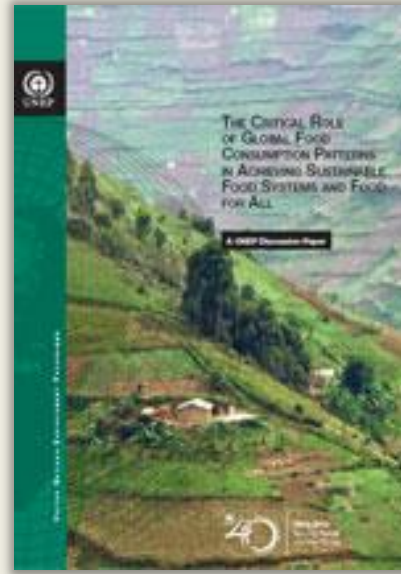
- Information
- Education
- Marketing
- Packaging
- Labelling
- Pricing
- Portion control
- Dispensing
- Behaviour



What can be done?



Awareness is growing.



Pressure is increasing.

FOOD WASTAGE

ABOUT 1/3 OF THE FOOD PRODUCED IN THE WORLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION EVERY YEAR; APPROXIMATELY 1.3 BILLION TONNES GETS LOST OR WASTED.

Industrialized and developing countries waste roughly the same quantities of food – respectively 100 and 100 million tonnes.

Every year, consumers in industrialized waste about 100 million tonnes of the entire net food production of rich-Saharan Africa (200 million tonnes).

Fruits and vegetables, plus roots and tubers have the highest wastage rates of any food.

The amount of food (and/or wasted every year) is equivalent to more than half of the world's annual cereal crop (2.5 billion tonnes in 2009/2010).

Per capita waste by consumers is between 60-100 kg a year in Europe and North America, while consumers in rich-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia each throw away only 6-10 kg a year.

Tristram Stuart



Uncovering the Global Food Scandal



STOP WASTING FOOD



WE THROW AWAY OVER 4 MILLION APPLES EVERY DAY

STOP FRESH FOOD WASTE!

Did you know American families waste approximately 100 pounds of spoiled fruits, vegetables and leftovers a week? That's more than \$100 billion in sound money down the drain every year. You can do something to help reduce this waste.

The Green Kidpactor Nozzle™ by The Clorox™ is a better option for your family refrigerator. It's the science of food that's fresh longer. It's keeping every responsible food. Be a Hero! Always fresh food starts with the Green Kidpactor Machine by Clorox. www.nozzle.com

LOVE FOOD hate waste

Key questions?

- Is this a concern to your organization?
- Are you doing anything about it?
- Do you have any information
- Should we be concerned?
- How can we work together?

