

Reduce Food Waste at Home

North Carolina generates about 3.5 billion pounds of food waste each year. Households are the largest contributor, accounting for 40% of the state's wasted food.



What are the costs of food waste?

ENVIRONMENTAL: Each year in the United States, the greenhouse gases generated to produce uneaten food are equal to the emissions from 42 coal-fired power plants. When food breaks down in landfills, it gives off methane — a powerful greenhouse gas.

FINANCIAL: Each year, the average American family of four wastes \$1,500 on uneaten food.

SOCIAL: One in eight Americans do not have reliable and consistent access to enough food even though food is wasted daily.



Why do we waste so much food?

Households throw food out for several reasons:

- Poor meal planning
- Improper food storage
- Over-buying at the grocery store
- Waiting too long to consume
- Confusion about "date labels"



How can we prevent food waste?

- Plan meals with ingredients you already have before buying more.
- Bring your shopping list to the grocery store and only buy what you need.
- Put older food items in the front of the fridge and newer items in the back.
- Portion the right amount of food, and learn to love leftovers.
- Freeze food you will not immediately eat.
- Trust your senses rather than relying on date labels.

With the exception of baby formula, food date labels refer to a product's best quality and not the point at which it is unsafe to eat.

- If possible, donate food you will not use. Visit Feeding the Carolinas at feedingthecarolinas.org to learn more.
- Compost food you cannot eat or donate.
 - Find a drop-off location
 - Use a compost company
 - Start a backyard compost pile

Sources: "Preventing Wasted Food at Home." EPA; "From Farm to Kitchen: The Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste." EPA; "ReFed, Insights Engine for NC." ReFed; "Hunger in the North Carolina." Feeding America.

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