

Wasted Food: Lost Opportunities

Cheryl T Coleman, Director
Resource Conservation and Sustainability
Division

US EPA

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 **Rethink**

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What is Food Waste ?



The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines food waste for the United States as uneaten food and food preparation wastes from residences and commercial establishments such as grocery stores, restaurants, and produce stands, institutional cafeterias and kitchens, and industrial sources like employee lunchrooms.



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Economic losses due to Food Waste



- A United Nations study suggests that globally, up to \$300 billion is lost annually due to wasted food.
- The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) estimates the value of wasted food from grocery stores, universities, stadiums, and other retail venues at close to \$165 billion.



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34 million tons of food sent to landfills or incinerators every year



- In 2012, the United States generated almost 36 million tons of wasted food. 96% was landfilled or incinerated.
- That means that we threw away about 34 million tons of food. More food and food scraps go into landfills than any other type of material that we throw out, including plastics and paper.
- There's great potential for all of us to help reduce food waste, and compost or recover the energy from the food waste that is unavoidable.



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1 in 6 Americans are Food Insecure

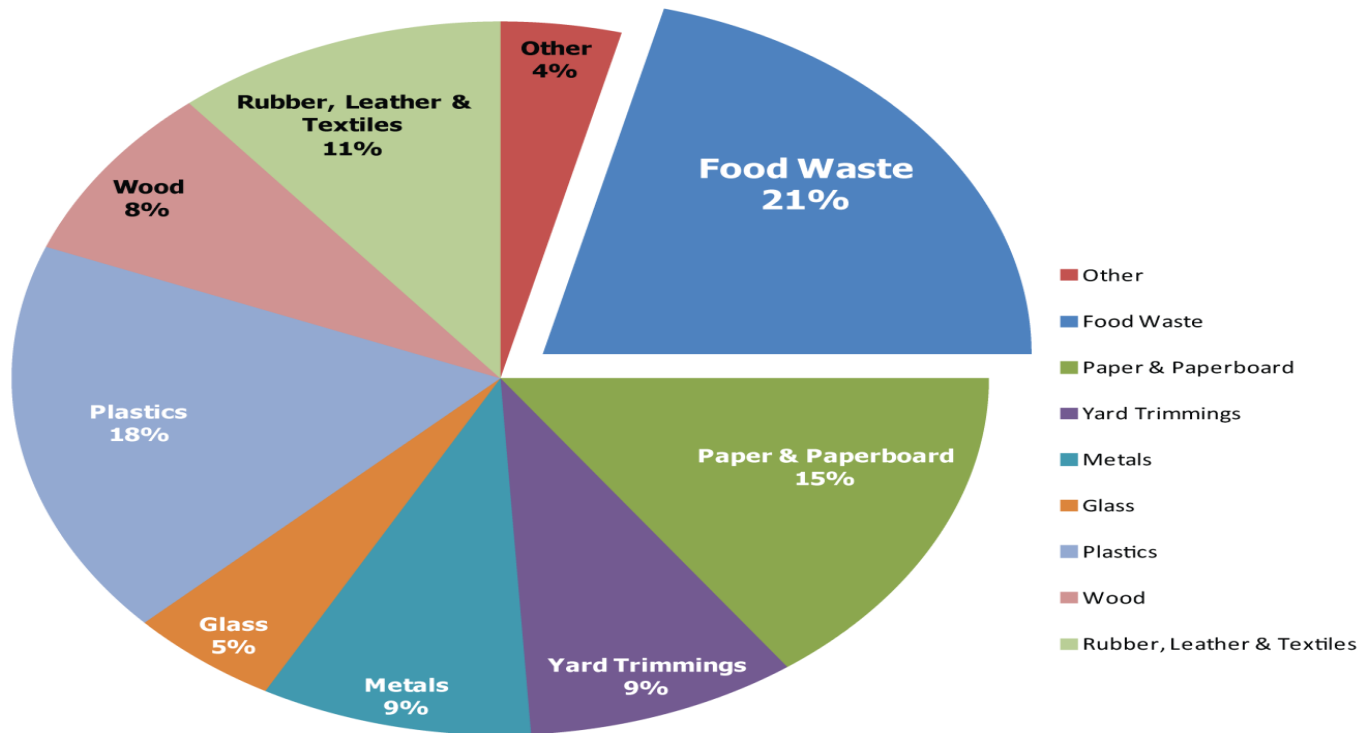


- USDA estimates that around 14% of Americans don't get enough food to live active, healthy lifestyles, and that about 700 million people in 76 low-and middle-income countries are food insecure.
- NRDC estimates that an American family of four throws away close to \$1600 of food every year.
- NRDC estimates that reducing food losses by just 15 percent would be enough food to feed more than 25 million Americans every year.
- Food insecurity has a direct, adverse impact on the well-being of children, adults (especially seniors), families, and communities.



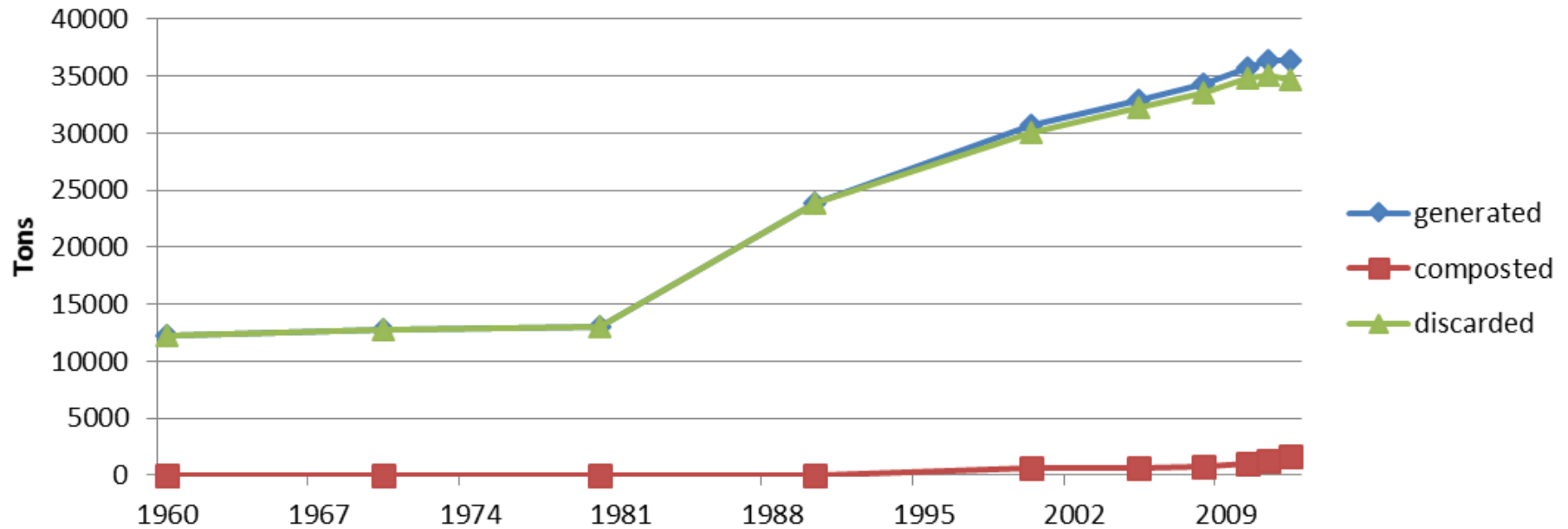
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Municipal Solid Waste Stream



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Food Waste in US Municipal Solid Waste



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Why Keep Food Out of Landfills?

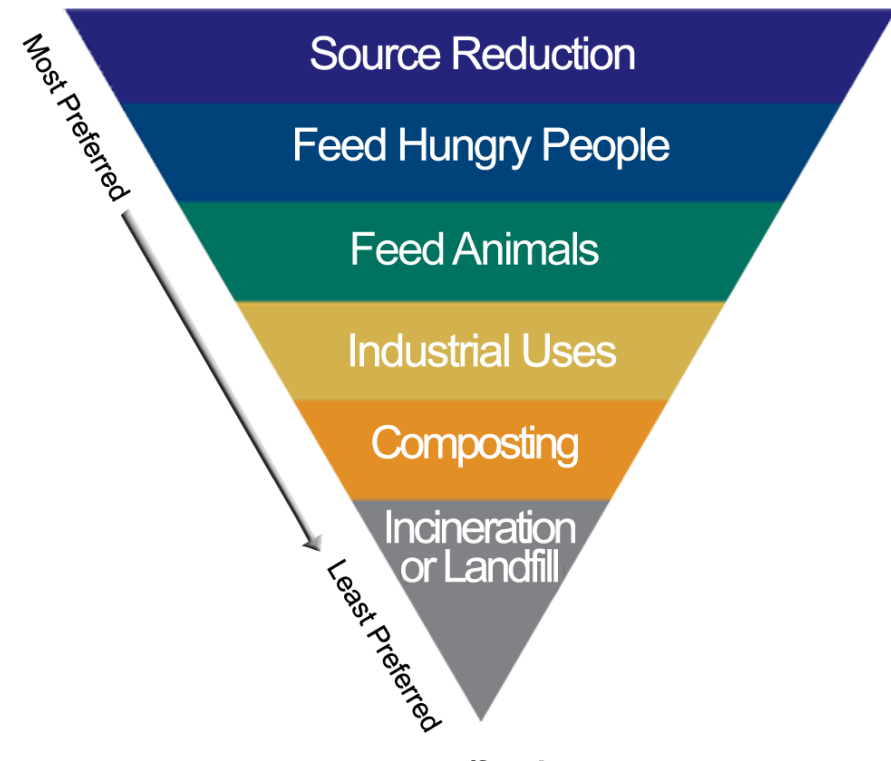


- The NRDC estimates that 40% of food in the United States today goes uneaten.
- Food placed in landfills decomposes and becomes a significant source of methane, a potent greenhouse gas with more than 20 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide.
- Landfills and the food waste in them account for more than 20 percent of all methane emissions in the U.S.



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Food Recovery Hierarchy



- Generate less waste by conducting a food assessment.
- Donate excess food to food banks, soup kitchens or shelters.
- Divert food waste to feed animals.
- Divert food waste for industrial uses, like anaerobic digestion.



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US EPA Food Recovery Challenge

US Food Waste Challenge



EPA launched the Food Recovery Challenge in 2011. The Challenge encourages participants to change practices to purchase leaner and minimize waste; donate edible food to local hunger relief organizations like Feeding America and Rock & Wrap It Up; and divert non-edible food waste to select environmentally beneficial options like composting and anaerobic digestion.

In 2013, EPA and USDA joined to create the US Food Waste Challenge to work with participants across the food chain – food producers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, communities, and government agencies – to reduce food loss and food waste by employing best practices in food management.

US EPA Food Recovery Challenge
<http://www.epa.gov/smm/foodrecovery/>

US Food Waste Challenge
<http://usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/index.htm>



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Summary



- Environmental Benefits:
 - Reduce landfill methane gas
 - Preserve valuable resources
 - Enrich soil
 - Improve sanitation
- Economic Benefits:
 - Lower disposal costs
 - Reduce purchasing and labor costs
 - Receive tax benefits through donation
- Social Benefits:
 - Feed people
 - Feed animals

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Thank You!!!

Cheryl Coleman, Director

US Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Resource Conservation & Recovery

Resource Conservation and Sustainability

Division

T: 703-308-8738

Coleman.Cheryl@epa.gov



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