



WINNING ON REDUCING FOOD WASTE

FY 2019-2020 FEDERAL INTERAGENCY STRATEGY

APRIL 2019

OVERVIEW

In the United States, 30-40 percent of all available food goes uneaten through loss or waste. Food is the single largest type of waste in our daily trash. The federal government has a role to play in reducing food loss and waste because food loss and waste adversely impacts food security, the economy, our communities, and the environment.

As a result, in October 2018, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launched the *Winning on Reducing Food Waste Initiative* (the Initiative).

As part of the Initiative, the agencies affirm their shared commitment to work towards the national goal of reducing food loss and waste by 50 percent by 2030. The agencies agree to coordinate food loss and waste actions such as: education and outreach, research, community investments, voluntary programs, public-private partnerships, tool development, technical assistance, event participation, and policy discussion on the impacts and importance of reducing food loss and waste.

To achieve the vision for the Initiative, the agencies developed a strategy to prioritize and coordinate their efforts. In development of this strategy, the agencies built on information from several sources, including, but not limited to:



- **[Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms](#)** (U.S. Government Accountability Office). This report highlights two key elements for successful collaboration: 1) clarity of roles and responsibilities and 2) written guidance and agreements.
- **[A Call to Action by Stakeholders: United States Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal](#)** developed by the EPA in consultation with USDA. The key activities identified by stakeholders in this report include: 1) seek prevention strategies and use the Food Recovery Hierarchy; 2) increase public awareness; 3) improve the data; 4) forge new partnerships and expand the existing ones; 5) clarify date labels and food safety; and 6) build food loss and waste infrastructure.
- **[A Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste](#)** (Rethink Food Waste through Economics and Data (ReFED)). The report finds that the most cost-effective solutions are: 1) standardized date labeling and 2) consumer education campaigns.
- **[Don't Waste, Donate: Enhancing Food Donations through Federal Policy](#)** (Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic and Natural Resources Defense Council). Recommendations in this report include: 1) enhance liability protections for food donations; 2) standardize and clarify expiration date labels; and 3) publish food safety guidance for food donations.



THE STRATEGY PRIORITIZES SIX ACTION AREAS:



PRIORITY AREA 1: Enhance Interagency Coordination

Improving interagency coordination will enable USDA, EPA and FDA to use government resources more efficiently and effectively. An interagency, collaborative mechanism will be established to reduce programmatic redundancies and leverage complimentary activities.



PRIORITY AREA 2: Increase Consumer Education and Outreach Efforts

Households are a major source of food loss and waste in the United States. Most consumers are unaware of the consequences of food loss and waste. A coordinated consumer education effort by USDA, EPA, and FDA in conjunction with public, private, or non-profit partners has the potential to raise awareness, motivate consumers to take action, and accelerate progress to reduce food loss and waste.



PRIORITY AREA 3: Improve Coordination and Guidance on Food Loss and Waste Measurement

Enhanced coordination and voluntary guidance regarding measurement of food loss and waste will reduce confusion and help establish clearer goals and strategies. Improved and coordinated methodologies can identify missed opportunities and better communicate progress.



PRIORITY AREA 4: Clarify and Communicate Information on Food Safety, Food Date Labels, and Food Donations

Confusion about food safety guidelines, date labels, and food donation results in food loss and waste at retailers and in homes across the country. Establishing and communicating clearer, coordinated voluntary guidance on food date labels and liability protection around food donation could help increase food recovery and lead to reductions in food waste and food insecurity.



PRIORITY AREA 5: Collaborate with Private Industry to Reduce Food Loss and Waste Across the Supply Chain

The food industry, including processors, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and foodservice establishments, has an important role in reducing food loss and waste. Showcasing and building partnerships through efforts such as the USDA/EPA U.S. Food Loss and Waste 2030 Champions, as well as connecting stakeholders with food waste reduction technologies, will help stimulate further efforts throughout the food supply chain.



PRIORITY AREA 6: Encourage Food Waste Reduction by Federal Agencies in their Respective Facilities

Federal facilities operate food service venues, including cafeterias and concessions, and manage events. Encouraging the reduction of food loss and waste at these facilities and events will demonstrate federal leadership and implementation of the administration's priorities.

