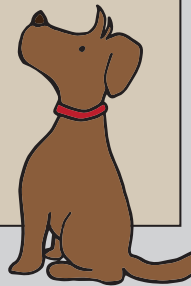


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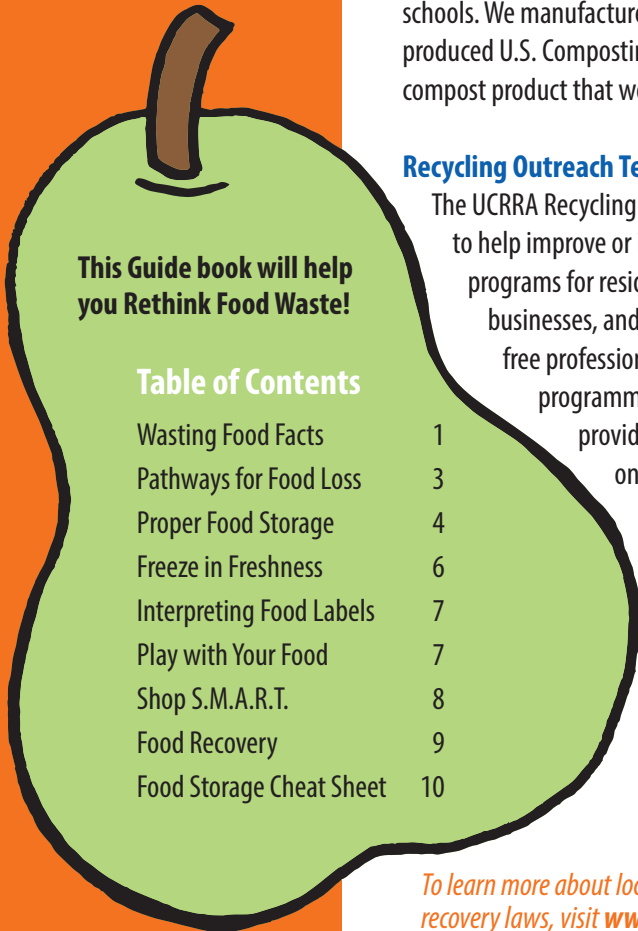
Home Guide to Reducing Food Waste



This booklet was created by Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, made possible with the support of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency

Our mission is to protect public health and the environment and to promote sustainable materials management practices in Ulster County by efficiently managing solid waste materials with a focus on resource conservation.



This Guide book will help you Rethink Food Waste!

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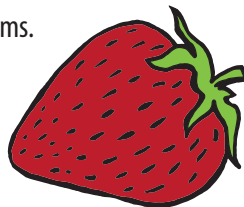
For over 30 years, Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) has been developing and implementing sustainable waste management programs for Ulster County. UCRRA is a solid waste authority, public benefit corporation, and permitted solid waste facility with commercial Transfer Stations in Kingston and New Paltz, NY. UCRRA manages all municipal solid waste generated in Ulster County and offers many programs and services in pursuit of our mission.

UCRRA Organics Recovery Facility

UCRRA operates an industrial composting operation that opened in 2012 as a small pilot project. The Organics Recovery Facility processes food scraps from commercial partners like restaurants, businesses, and schools. We manufacture a high quality, sustainably-produced U.S. Composting Council STA certified compost product that we sell in bulk and in 1 cf bags.

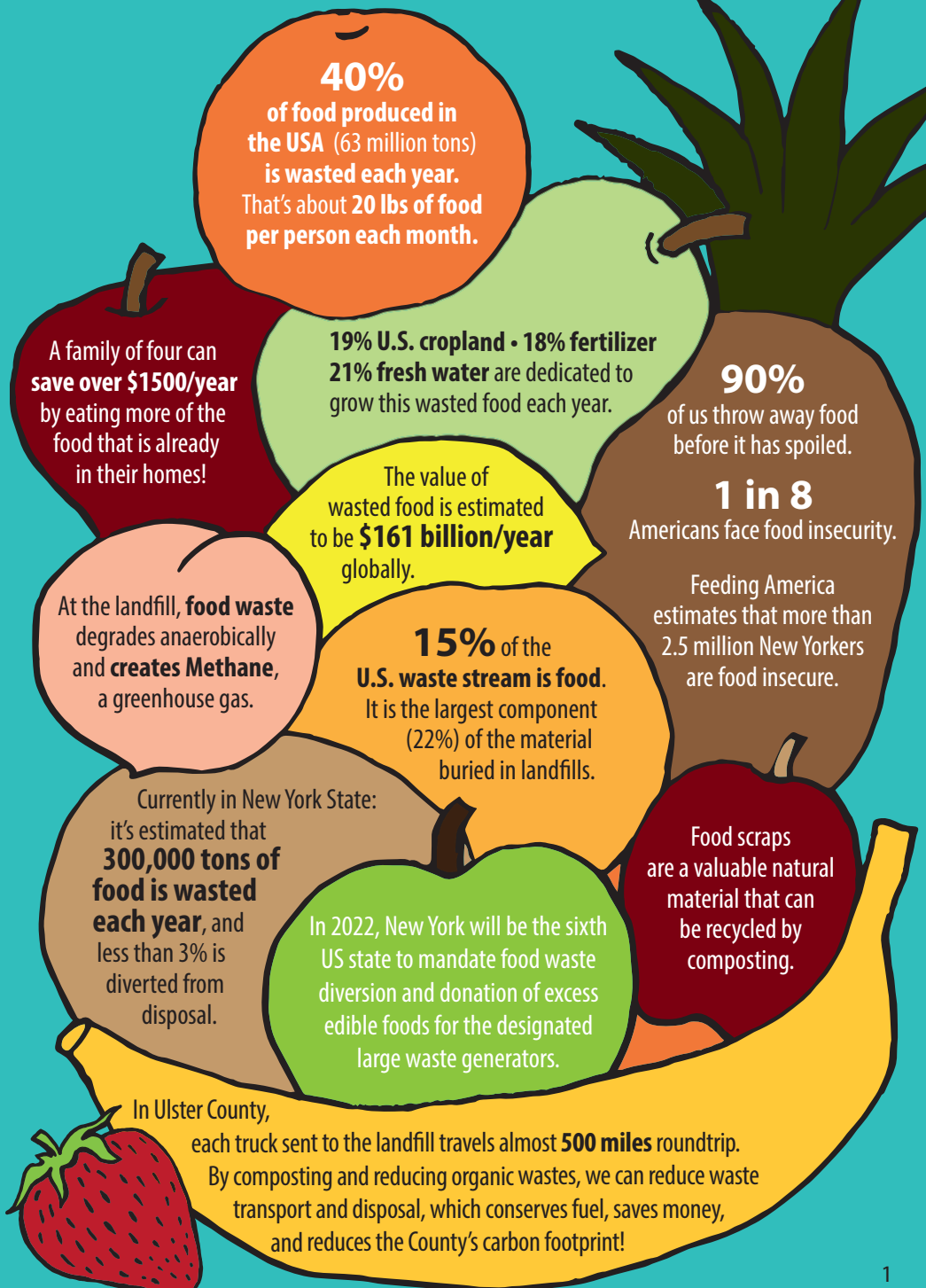
Recycling Outreach Team

The UCRRA Recycling Outreach Team is available to help improve or implement waste reduction programs for residents, apartment buildings, businesses, and schools! Our team provides free professional and knowledgeable programming, and is dedicated to providing essential services to not only *manage waste*, but to reduce, reuse, and rethink waste. Please contact UCRRA at 845-336-0600 to ask about our programs.



To learn more about local and state-wide organics recovery laws, visit www.ucrra.org/about-us/laws

Wasting Food Wastes Everything



Pathways for Food Loss

Everyone has a role to play in preventing food loss!

On the Farm – Food is wasted before it ever leaves the farm! Feeding America estimates 3 million tons of food goes unharvested each year because it doesn't meet quality, size, or cosmetic standards. Farmers can make a difference by partnering with gleaning groups to harvest and donate 'imperfect' produce – they're just as delicious and nutritious!

During Transportation and Distribution

The average American meal travels 1500 miles before reaching your dinner plate! This system is inefficient and leads to spoilage due to improper refrigeration, or damage during transport. A long distribution chain also means a larger carbon footprint!

Food Service – Restaurants generate 11 million tons of food waste every year in America. Over preparing, large portion sizes, over purchasing, and improper storage can lead to food loss. Restaurants can make a difference by donating food to local meal centers (at no risk to them under liability protection laws), and by training culinary staff with better skills to utilize the entire plant when cooking. Restaurants can incorporate blemished or bruised foods into prepared meals or value added products. Composting food scraps is also a key solution!

Food Processing – Food waste at this point of the food supply chain is generally low, due to high efficiency in food product manufacturing processes. Waste occurs from trimming off edible or inedible portions of food, and from cleaning machinery. Food processors can do more by composting their food!

Retail Centers – Grocery stores and distribution centers generate 8 million tons of food waste every year in America. Rejected shipments, overstocking and outdated products, or damaged and mislabeled packaging are some of the reasons why food gets wasted in retail centers. Food retailers can make a difference by reducing the prices of imperfect produce, by creating smaller food displays, and by donating surplus food to feed hungry people, and farm animals.

At Home – Certain shopping and cooking habits contribute to food loss. Americans tend to impulse-buy and do not plan meals or shopping lists. Confusion about food labels causes people to discard food that's still safe to eat. Poor storage and food prep skills also lead to food loss that can easily be avoided.



Learn more at www.refed.com and www.feedingamerica.org

Practice Proper Food Storage

Your Fridge and Food Safety

Keeping your refrigerator clean and organized helps minimize food spoilage and reduces your risk of food borne illness. Clean refrigerator surfaces with hot, soapy water and diluted vinegar solution. Keep your fridge smelling fresh by placing an opened box of baking soda on a shelf.

Do not overfill your refrigerator.

The fridge needs air to circulate to be efficient. Allow enough space in between foods so that cold air can circulate all around.

Cooked Leftovers

Leftovers are safe for 3 to 4 days in the refrigerator.

Doors

The refrigerator door is the warmest part of the fridge. This is a good place for condiments. It is not a good place for anything that is even moderately perishable. Though models may have a compartment for eggs in the door, it's probably a better idea to keep them on one of the main shelves.

Raw Meat

Prevent juices from leaking by storing on a wrapped plate or in a sealed container.

Temperature

Bacteria grow most rapidly between 40°F and 140°F so your refrigerator should be set at 34°F -40°F. Your freezer should be set at 0°F or below. The thermometers let you know your appliance is set at the right temperatures.



The Upper Shelves

The upper shelves are slightly warmer than below, and are a great place to store items that don't have a high safety risk. Great for leftovers, drinks, ready-to-eat foods like yogurt and cheese.

The Lower Shelves

Foods with a higher safety risk are better off in the coldest section. The bottom shelf is the coldest place in the fridge. Store meat, poultry and fish here in trays to prevent them from dripping.

Humidity Drawers

Put most veggies, particularly those that might wilt, in the high humidity drawer. Put fruits in the low humidity drawer along with vegetables that have a tendency to breakdown and rot.

High Humidity

Carrots, leafy greens, spinach, arugula, basil, broccoli, etc.

Low Humidity

Pears, apples, grapes, avocados, peppers, mushrooms, berries, etc.

Freezer

Frozen food stays safe longer, though quality may suffer with lengthy storage. Wrap and label meat, fish and poultry that you plan to freeze.

Freeze in Freshness



Freeze your leftovers! Follow directions for each type of food. Prepare food at your convenience and have it ready to reheat or thaw and use.



Choose the right container to protect flavor, color, moisture; use flexible freezer bags, aluminum foil, or rigid plastic or glass containers like canning jars. Lids/covers should close tightly! Leave extra headspace to allow for expansion during freezing. Some foods may need to thaw completely before removing from its container.



Label each container with the type of food, date, number of servings, etc.



Don't overload the freezer, which can slow down the freezing rate and can affect quality. Leave space between packages so air can circulate freely. Once frozen, you can stack packages close together.



Foods that do not freeze well: cucumbers, celery, lettuce, potatoes, cooked pasta, sour cream, cheese, mayo, fried foods, fruit jelly.

Visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation to learn more <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>

Interpreting Food Labels

Are you throwing out food that is still safe to eat? Most date labels indicate peak freshness, not food safety.



BEST IF USED BY
04/22/2020

A "Best if Used By/Before" date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality.



SELL BY
11/15/2021

A "Sell-By" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management purposes.



USE BY
04/22/22

A "Use-By" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is not a safety date except for when used on infant formula.



FREEZE BY
11/15/2023

A "Freeze-By" date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

Visit www.USDA.gov to learn more.

Play with your food! Re-invent your food scraps & leftovers

- Make a quiche, soup, stirfry, frittata, or a bruschetta to use up veggies.
- Cook 'root to leaf'. Transform herb stems or leafy greens of veggies into a pesto, sauce, or salad dressing.
- Save onion/garlic skins, vegetable ends, etc. in a container in the freezer until you're ready to make a vegetable soup broth!
- Make potato chips from potato peelings.



- Brown bananas "past-their-prime" can be delicious as breads or pancakes.
- Sheet pan hash (utilize leftover veggies)

Hero ingredients
Stock up on these to help use leftovers/veggies: rice, pasta, eggs, onions, diced tomatoes, and chicken or veggie stock.



Find recipes & more at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Shop S.M.A.R.T.

Save Money And Reduce Trash

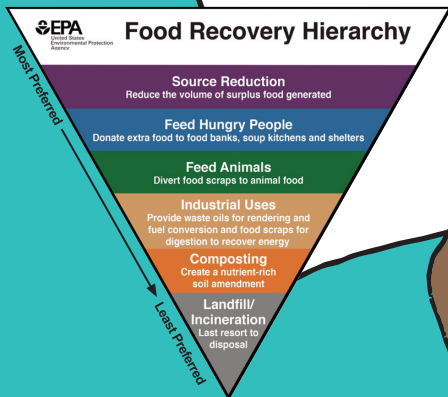
It's as easy as 1, 2, 3

1. Consider what meals you'd like to enjoy for the next seven days. Consult with your family members as a fun dinner table conversation.
Write down the menu!

2. With your menu in hand, go on a scavenger hunt in your kitchen! Take an inventory of ingredients you already have, and make note of the items you need to buy according to your menu. Check to find food that needs to be used up first – and use them in your menu.

3. Write it down! Making a grocery shopping list helps you avoid impulse-buys that can lead to wasted food, and also helps you save time and money once in the store!

Don't forget reusable shopping bags!



Check out the Dinner Party Guestimator to calculate portion sizes and servings!
Visit www.savethefood.com/guestimator

Food Recovery & Helping Your Neighbors

Many families struggle to have access to fresh, healthy foods. Re-gifting (donating) is one of the 7R's and is an important zero-waste strategy that can help mitigate hunger while also reducing waste!

How You Can Help:

- Volunteer to harvest fresh produce donated by local farms (gleaning)
- Volunteer to pick up and distribute produce to our community's food pantries, shelters and feeding programs
- Help out at your local food pantry or soup kitchen
- Help prepare & deliver meals to the homebound
- Donate produce from your farm or garden directly to your local food pantry, or contact Ulster Corps for help with distribution
- Purchase a share from your local CSA to be donated to your local food pantry



These foods are always good to donate:

- Non perishable shelf stable dry goods, sealed and in original packaging, not past expiration date.
- Canned items such as fruits and veggies, beans, tuna, soups, juices.
- Packaged foods such as breads, cereals, flour, sugar, nuts, dry beans, lentils, pastas, coffee, and tea.
- Perishable, fresh foods (based on the storage capability of the donation center)
 - dry fruits
 - popcorn kernels
 - shelf stable milk alternatives such as soy, almond, rice, etc.
 - dry herbs, spices, & non salt spice blends
 - seeds like sunflower, sesame, & pumpkin
 - healthy oils such as olive, grapeseed, etc.
 - natural sweeteners such as honey
 - Easy to open (pop top cans)
 - Puree foods such as apple sauce, sweet potato, pumpkin, etc.

Avoid: spoiled food, candy or soda, no home-canned foods, pet foods

To learn more about volunteering, gleaning, or to find a food pantry near you, visit www.ulstercorps.org

Food Storage Cheat Sheet

It's Good To Know...

- ✓ Generally, once a condiment bottle or food jar is opened, it should be refrigerated.
- ✓ Spices stay at peak freshness for up to 2 years!
- ✓ Eggs stay fresh 3 to 5 weeks after sell-by date; up to 12 months in a freezer; or 1 week if hard-boiled.
- ✓ White flour stays fresh for 1 year in your pantry; or 2 years in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Place apples and ripe avocados in the fridge – they'll last longer!
- ✓ Citrus - Store loose in the low humidity crisper drawer.
- ✓ All fruits – don't wash until you're ready to eat.
- ✓ Cheese - Wrap leftover cheese loosely in wax paper, not plastic.
- ✓ Wrap celery in aluminum foil so it stays fresh longer!
- ✓ Salad greens - Store with a damp cloth in an airtight container in the high-humidity drawer of the refrigerator.
- ✓ Tender herbs (basil, cilantro, parsley, dill) - place in a cup with water, like you would display fresh cut flowers. Place a sandwich bag over the jar of herbs. Store in the fridge. *Keep basil on the counter!
- ✓ Hardy herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme, chives) - arrange into a single layer on a damp paper towel, roll them up, then transfer to a sandwich bag in the fridge.
- ✓ Mushrooms should be used as quickly as possible. Do not wash until ready to use. Store on the lower shelf in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Potatoes and onions need cool, dark, dry, well-ventilated storage but should not be stored together. Storing in hanging sacks is a great idea, it encourages ventilation.

Learn more tips at www.SAVETHEFOOD.COM

