WHY & HOW

Prevent
Rescue
Recycle

The Wasted Food Action Alliance seeks to apply the ReFED Roadmap in Illinois through collaboration to bring organizations and businesses together to create greater collective impact.

From the farm to our refrigerators, food is wasted throughout the supply chain.

- Illinois has more than 74,000 farms covering some 27 million acres, or about 75% of the state's total land area.
- In Illinois, food insecurity is a problem that makes it troubling that so much good edible food is being thrown into the landfill, rather than to people's plates.
- Wasted food also degrades the environment and wastes resources such as fresh water and soil nutrients.

PREVENT

Illinois landfills receive 14 million tons of waste annually.

Nearly **20% of that is food scraps.**

That's 2.8 million tons of food scraps each year!

RESCUE/DONATE

40% of all food in the US gets wasted, while 1 out of 7 Americans are food insecure.

In Illinois, more than one million people struggle with hunger and food insecurity.

RECYCLE/COMPOST

Decomposing food in landfills releases methane, a greenhouse gas 84x more powerful than carbon dioxide.

Compost is vital to developing healthier soil for Illinois farmers.

Illinois

2015 Illinois Commodity/ Waste Generation and Characterization Study Update

Table 2-3. Top Ten Individual Material Categories in Landfilled Residential MSW

Category	Waste Composition %	Cum. %
Food Scraps	20.2%	20.2%
Yard Waste - Compostable	4.7%	24.9%
Uncoated OCC/Kraft	4.4%	29.3%
Compostable Paper	4.3%	33.6%
Mixed Paper - Recyclable	4.2%	37.8%
Recyclable Glass Bottles & J	3.4%	41.2%
Other Organic	3.3%	44.5%
Diapers	3.2%	47.7%
Other Film	3.0%	50.4%
Painted Wood	3.0%	53.3%
Total	**53.3%**	

Category	Waste Composition %
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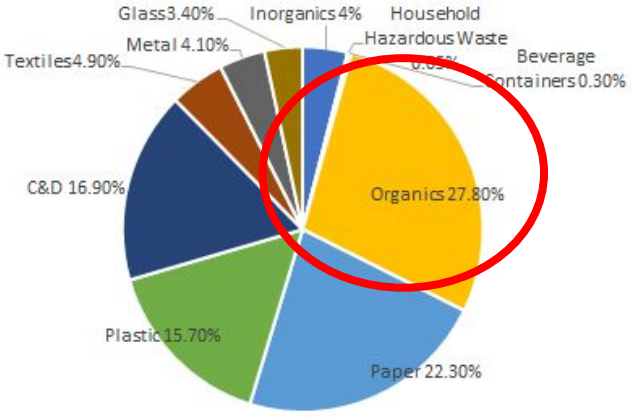

We need your input to help guide collaborative ACTION and POLICY through:

- ➢ **Governor Pritzker's appointed Statewide Materials Management Task Force**
- ➢ **Illinois EPA development of an Illinois Organics Management Plan**
- ➢ **Collaboration to develop an Illinois Good Food Policy**
- ➢ **Illinois Environmental Council's work on local and state policy and ordinance**

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MORE THAN JUST FOOD

THE U.S. WASTES TONS OF RESOURCES WHEN WE WASTE FOOD

2.6% OF ALL U.S. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ANUALLY

37 MILLION PASSENGER VEHICLES' WORTH

21% OF THE U.S. AGRICULTURAL WATER USAGE

MORE THAN: TEXAS + CALIFORNIA + OHIO

1,250 CALORIES PER PERSON PER DAY
THAT IS HALF OF THE RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE FOR ADULTS

19% OF ALL U.S. CROPLANDS
THAT IS MORE LAND THAN ALL OF NEW MEXICO

21% OF U.S. LANDFILL CONTENT

THE NO. 1 CONTRIBUTOR BY WEIGHT

18% OF ALL FARMING FERTILIZER
WHICH CONTAINS 3.9 BILLION POUNDS OF NUTRIENTS

$218,000,000,000
WHICH IS EQUAL TO 1.3% OF THE U.S. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

NRDC

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A ROADMAP TO REDUCE U.S. FOOD WASTE BY 20 PERCENT

According to the 2016 ReFED *A Roadmap to Reduce U.S.Food Waste by 20 Percent*,

"Climate change and resource utilization are closely linked, and food is one of the most important resources in that equation. This puts food waste squarely at the center of many global challenges. Reducing food waste would have a game-changing impact on natural resources depletion and degradation, food insecurity, national security, and climate change. As one of the largest economies and agricultural producers in the world, we believe the United States has a major role to play in setting an example and contributing to significant food waste reduction."

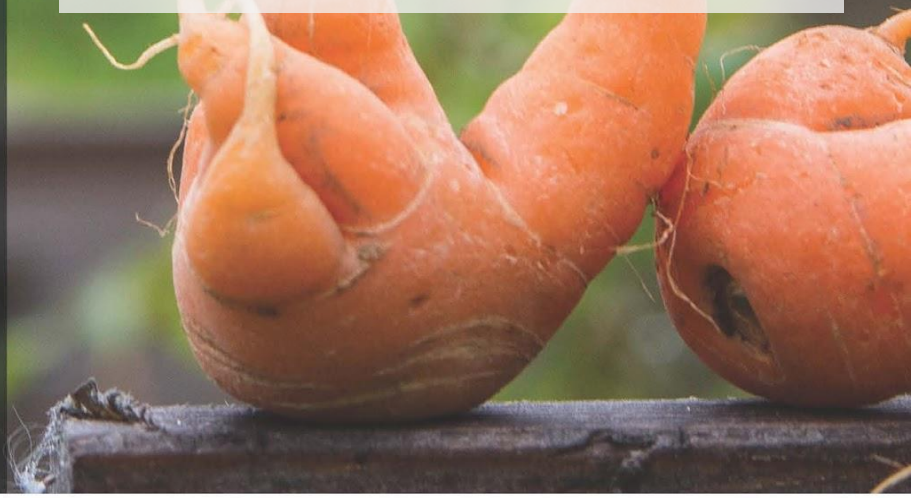
2016

ReFED: "Rethinking Food Waste through Economics and Data: A Roadmap to Reduce Food Waste" maps a path for action and solutions. This roadmap identified three key areas in which to focus efforts:

Policy – Commonsense policy adjustments are needed to scale federal food donation tax incentives, standardize safe handling regulations, and boost recycling infrastructure by expanding state and local incentives and reducing permitting barriers. The biggest lever to accelerate change is comprehensive federal legislation.

Innovation – Key technology and business-model innovations are needed around packaging and labeling, IT-enabled transportation and storage, logistics software, value-added compost products, and distributed recycling. These could be accelerated through a national network of food waste innovation incubators.

Education – Launching a widespread training effort to change the behavior of food business employees is critical. In addition, campaigns to raise food waste awareness among consumers need to attract additional funding and support to expand to the scale of anti littering and anti-smoking efforts.



AMERICANS THROW AWAY AN ESTIMATED 25% OF THE FOOD THEY BRING HOME

that is more than

20 LBS

of food per person

EVERY MONTH

ENOUGH TO FILL THE ROSE BOWL A 90,000 SEAT STADIUM

EVERY DAY

In his book “American Wasteland,” activist and author Jonathan Bloom estimated that the United States could fill a college stadium with the amount of food it wastes … in a day.

Wasted Food vs. Food Scraps - a Food Justice Perspective

- **WASTED FOOD** refers to perfectly edible food that can be recovered for food banks and shelters.
- **FOOD SCRAPS** are the inedible scraps that are destined for other uses, like animal feed or composting.

Changing language helps change mindsets. People are less likely to throw away wasted food if they understand its value to feed others or return nutrients to the soil. Also, food rescue is an issue of respect, equity, and problem solving. No one wants to be given something called “waste” to eat for their next meal.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Food Waste

Our food system is impacted at all levels by the global coronavirus pandemic that required rapid food supply chain adaption.

- More food has been going to waste throughout the system.
- Food insecurity has dramatically risen.

In a University of Illinois report, Food Waste and Covid-19: Impacts along the Supply Chain, it was reported: “The Covid-19 pandemic has created massive disruptions in the food system, from farm to fork. In some cases, we have observed and experienced severe food shortages. In others, food cannot reach end consumers and is ultimately wasted.”[8]

Producers largely dependent on the foodservice sector saw increases in food waste due to Covid-19 (milk[9], chicken[10] and onions[11] are examples). This food was not easily able to be repurposed due to limited processing capacity and cold storage.

Processors - Covid-19 impacted food processing facilities, including meat processors[12] and produce packing plants[13]. Processors did not see significant increases in food waste. Rather the producers did, when they could not get the product off the farm and to a processing facility.

Food Service - unexpected closures of businesses and institutions led to significant food loss. In some cases those food service businesses closed completely. In others there was a shift to supporting food rescue systems to feed people at home.

Retail - Many stores have been consistently overwhelmed with consumer purchases, especially in the early months of the pandemic when stock-up shopping resulted in many stores running out of product. Though panic buying has the potential to lead to wasted food when consumers' increased spending leads to surplus, the consensus is that food waste from grocery purchasing behaviors was not significantly impacted by COVID-19[14].

Households - COVID-19 has led to a rise in unemployment and reduction in income for many households. Reduced income will often lead to less waste, as food waste is positively related to income. Further, rising food prices during the pandemic are also likely to reduce waste for households at all income levels[15]. The net effect on household food waste is unclear.

More than ever, there is a need to convene and build a collaborative local and regional response to support a sustainable and equitable food system. While emergency actions are imperative, longer term policy and system changes are needed to build a more resilient, fair, and equitable food system – a circular food system that reduces the amount of wasted food and ensures food scraps are processed and return nutrients to our soil.

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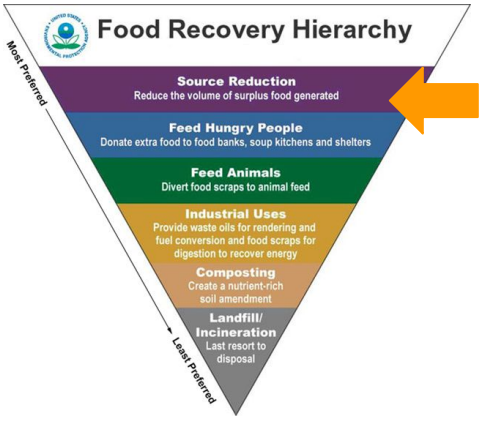
WHY PREVENT

Source reduction, the prevention of wasted food, occupies the first spot on the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy. Food waste prevention results in greater environmental, social, and economic benefits than any other solution on the hierarchy. Prevention is also the most cost effective and least resource intensive strategy to reduce wasted food. Stopping food waste from occurring in the first place:

- **Lowers the amount of greenhouse gases emitted** and lowers the carbon footprint of the manufacturing, transportation and decomposition of food materials.
- **Saves money** through buying less food, decreasing synthetic and chemical fertilizers and reducing landfill hauling costs. (less food waste=less in the landfill).
- **Conserves energy** and resources in the growing, manufacturing, transporting, and selling food (not to mention hauling the food waste and then landfilling it).
- **Teaches people** to respect the value of their food.

According to ReFED, "Prevention, which avoids unnecessary fertilizer and fuel use on farms, has twice the lifecycle greenhouse gas benefit per ton compared to food recycling…Solutions that prevent waste in businesses and homes have the greatest Economic Value per ton and net environmental benefit, diverting 2.6 million tons of annual waste."



HOW TO PREVENT

Food wasted at the consumer level means food that was intended for people to eat but was thrown away by consumers. Throwing away food is a behavior that is a consequence of individual and interpersonal factors as well as food system policies, food marketing, and the media.[16] The ReFED Roadmap presented three solutions with the greatest economic value per ton. All three address prevention:

- Standardized Date Labeling
- Consumer Education Campaigns
- Packaging Adjustments

Date labeling and packaging adjustments need to be addressed on a national level AND supported locally. And consumer education should be approached consistently and from multiple sources. See the next page for more details.

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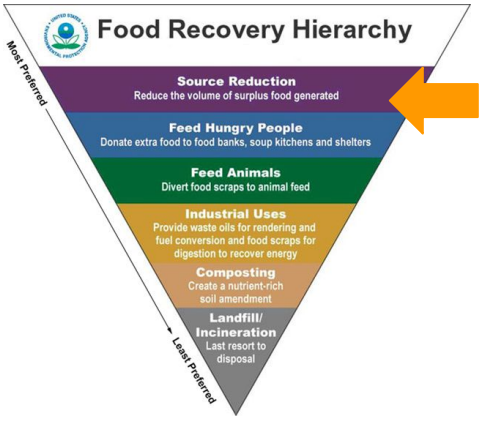
ReFED found that standardizing date labels nationally was the most cost-effective solution to this country's food waste problem. The fairly simple solution has the potential to divert 398,000 tons of food waste per year and provide $1.8 billion in annual economic value[17].



Date Labeling

Other than infant formula, the federal government does not regulate food date labels. According to ReFed, "currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia require at least some foods to have date labels. These state date label regulations vary widely…This patchwork state regulatory system, as well as the wide array of date labels that appear on products, contributes to confusion among consumers and regulators and ultimately results in the significant waste of safe, wholesome food." [18]

ILLINOIS POLICY (2020)
Date label required - none (optional for eggs)
Sale after date restricted for - eggs
Donation after date restricted - none

Understanding date labels will help consumers avoid wasting safe, usable food based on those labels alone. And consistent labeling will require work on the national and state level.

Packaging

Packaging serves an important role in physically protecting food from damage and spoilage. Packaging technologies delay food spoilage, giving consumers a wider window of time to use them. Rethink Food Waste through Economics and Data (ReFED) estimates that greater adoption of food packaging technologies to prolong the shelf life of fruits and meats have the annual potential to divert 72,000 tons of food waste from landfills in the U.S. alone, which is equivalent to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 329,000 tons per year.[19]

Consumer Education

Educating producers, distributors, retailers and consumers about preventing wasted food is a critical step in achieving food waste reduction goals. Learn more at www.wastedfoodaction .org and www.illinoiscomposts.org.

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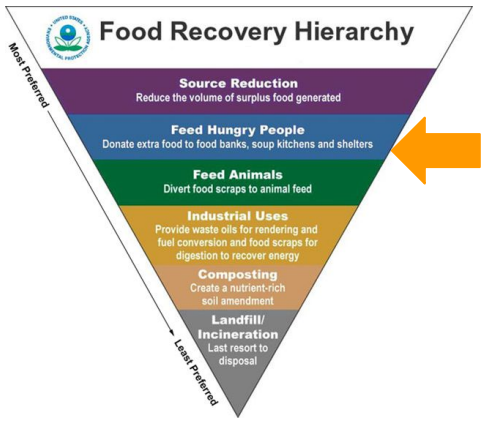
WHY RESCUE



Food recovery rescues edible food that has been produced for consumption, but never served or sold, and gives it to those in need. Rescue efforts help to address and reduce widespread food insecurity. The ReFED Report estimates within the next decade, “Food recovery can increase by 1.8 billion meals annually, nearly doubling the amount of meals rescued today and diverting 1.1 million tons of waste.”[20]

HOW TO RESCUE

For food rescue programs to expand, three key elements must be taken into account:

- Business Education - produce surpluses on farms and at packinghouses accounts for almost half of new rescue opportunities - these sectors have lower levels of donations today than food retailers.
- Policy - including the maintenance and expansion of tax incentives for business donations and the standardization of food handling safety regulations.
- Infrastructure - available and efficient transportation and cold storage.

Liability Protection - The federal bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act shields donors and recovery organizations from criminal and civil liability arising from the age, packaging or condition of donated food. All 50 states have passed their own liability laws, many of which include greater protections.

Tax Incentives - Small farmers and businesses bear a significant expense to harvest, prepare and store food for donation that would otherwise be discarded. While federal tax incentives exist, they can be difficult to claim. State tax incentives can help offset costs for donors of all sizes.

State Funding - States can also fund food banks directly.

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HOW TO RECYCLE / COMPOST

COMPOSTING

Composting can occur in urban, suburban and rural communities. There are a number of models and businesses that exist to support composting, from haulers to processors to sales of finished compost. This list is not all inclusive, nor does WFAA promote any of these businesses above others. For a complete list and additional resources, go to learn more at Illinois Food Scrap Coalition.

Backyard

Community Garden

Commercial Composting

Ride-Along with Yard Waste
3rd Bin Year Round
- Block Bins (neighborhood-level option)
- Collective Resource Compost Neighbor Totes

Drop Off
- Better Earth Logistics drop-off kiosks in Peoria
- Green City Market in Chicago
- Prairieland Disposal in McHenry County, Lake County, northern Kane County, northwestern Cook County

Container Swap
- Collective Resource Compost
- Healthy Soil Compost LLC
- The Urban Canopy
- WasteNot Compost

Anaerobic Digestion

URBAN COMPOSTING

Green City Market in Chicago partners with Healthy Soil Compost to process the local, organic waste produced at the market back into nutrient-rich energy for increasing soil health and community urban farming.

"By composting and recycling, we reduced our waste at markets from about thirty garbage bins per day to just six! Shoppers can use their own container or bag of organic waste (up to 5 gallons) and drop it off for a small fee at select sites."[21]

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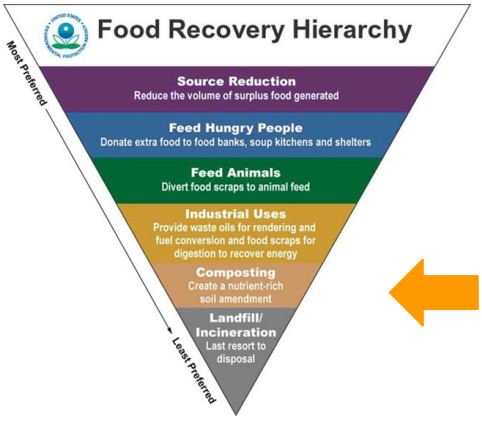
WHY RECYCLE



Recycling food scraps reduces landfill methane emissions, while also offering the opportunity to return nutrients to degraded soils. Composting is nature's way of recycling. It is the process that converts organic material, including food scraps and yard waste, into nutrient-rich soil amendment that can be used to grow more food and plants. By composting our wasted food, we transform these scraps from waste into a vital resource.

Composting is vital to implement because it provides many benefits to people, the environment and the economy. Across the nation, composting is developing as a viable, locally-based industry that achieves multiple objectives related to economic development, job creation, cost savings, and environmental sustainability.

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