

FOOD WASTE





"If we combine the problem of wasting food with hunger, which according to statistics now affects over 800 million people worldwide, it is quite irresponsible on the part of consumers and business that we continue to allow ourselves to waste resources" - says Dr. Agata Rudnicka from the Faculty of Management of the University of Lodz.

The United Nations estimates that one in nine people in the world do not have access to sufficient food to lead a healthy life. More people are reported to die from hunger every day than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. But at the same time, nearly one-third of the food that is produced in the world is lost or wasted due to one reason or the other. Food wastage, which includes both food loss and food waste, is not only morally irresponsible, but also causes huge economical losses as well as severe damage to the world around us.

food loss vs food waste

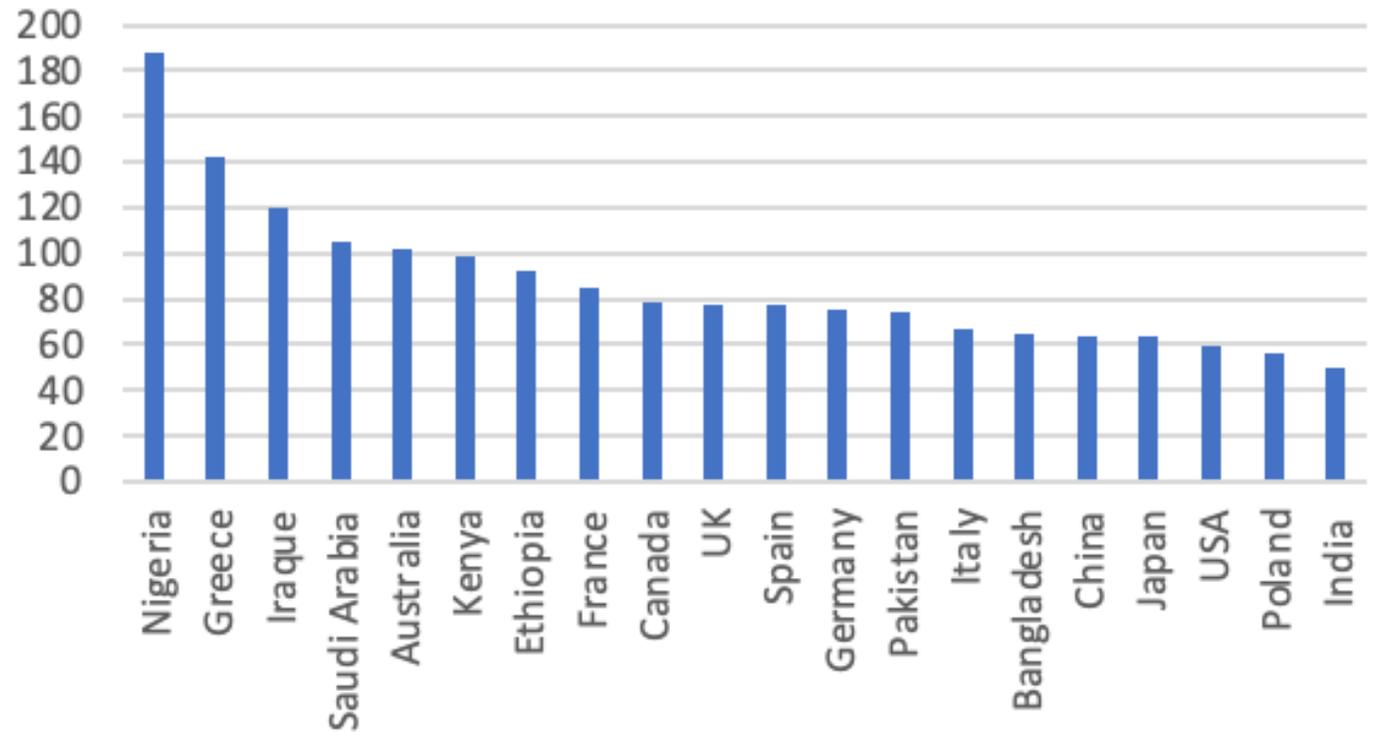
While food loss happens mainly at the production stage due to insufficient skills, natural calamities, lack of proper infrastructure and poor practices, food waste occurs when edible food is intentionally discarded by consumers after they fail to plan their meals properly and store food till it spoils or goes past the expiry date. At times, food waste can also happen due to oversupply in markets. Retailers also tend to reject a lot of food because it doesn't conform to their quality and aesthetic standards.



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service data. | GAO-19-391

While it has often been believed that food waste is more of a problem in wealthier countries, estimates show that the problem is also prevalent in developing nations too.

Annual per capita household food waste of selected countries worldwide as of 2020 in kilograms per year



The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) reports that there is a clear pattern in food waste at the global level. While, middle and higher income regions showed greater food loss and waste during the “downstream” phase (during processing, distribution and consumption stages), developing countries were more likely to lose or waste food at the “upstream” (or the production) phase due to lack of proper harvest techniques and infrastructure.

Environmental impact of food waste





It goes without saying that the later food is wasted along the chain, the more energy and natural resources are used up in processing, transporting, storing and cooking it. Food waste that ends up in landfills produces a large amount of **methane** – a more powerful greenhouse gas than even CO₂. Excess amounts of greenhouse gases such as **methane, CO₂ and chlorofluorocarbons** absorb infrared radiation and heat up the Earth's atmosphere, causing global warming and climate change.

WATER

With agriculture accounting for 70 percent of the water used throughout the world, food waste also represents a great waste of freshwater and ground water resources. It is said that a volume of water roughly **three times the volume of Lake Geneva** is used just to produce food that is not eaten. By throwing out **one kilogram of beef**, you are essentially wasting **50,000 liters of water** that were used to produce that meat. In the same way, nearly **1000 liters** of water are wasted when you pour one glass of milk down the drain.

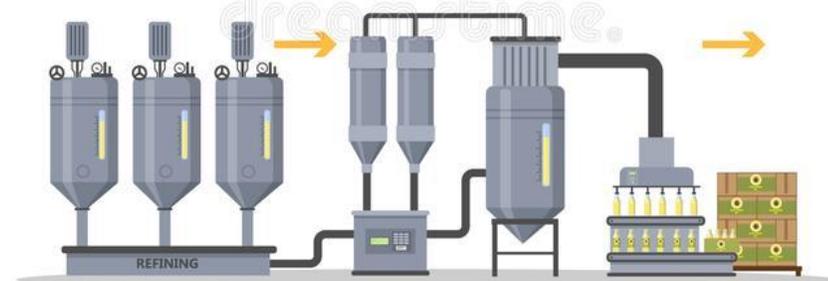
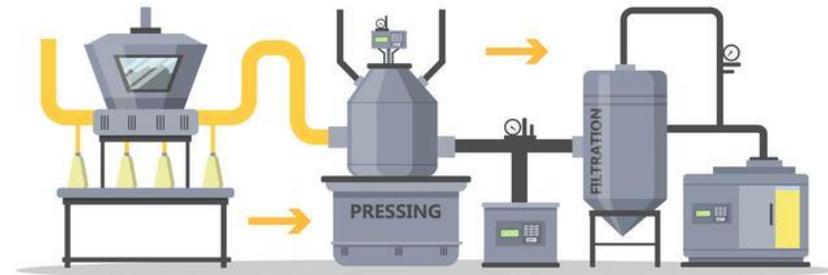
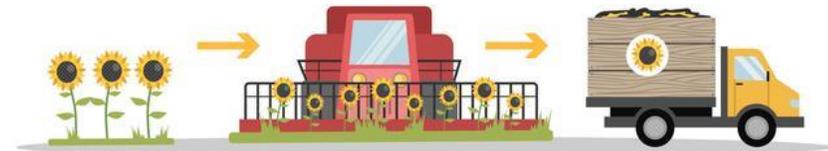


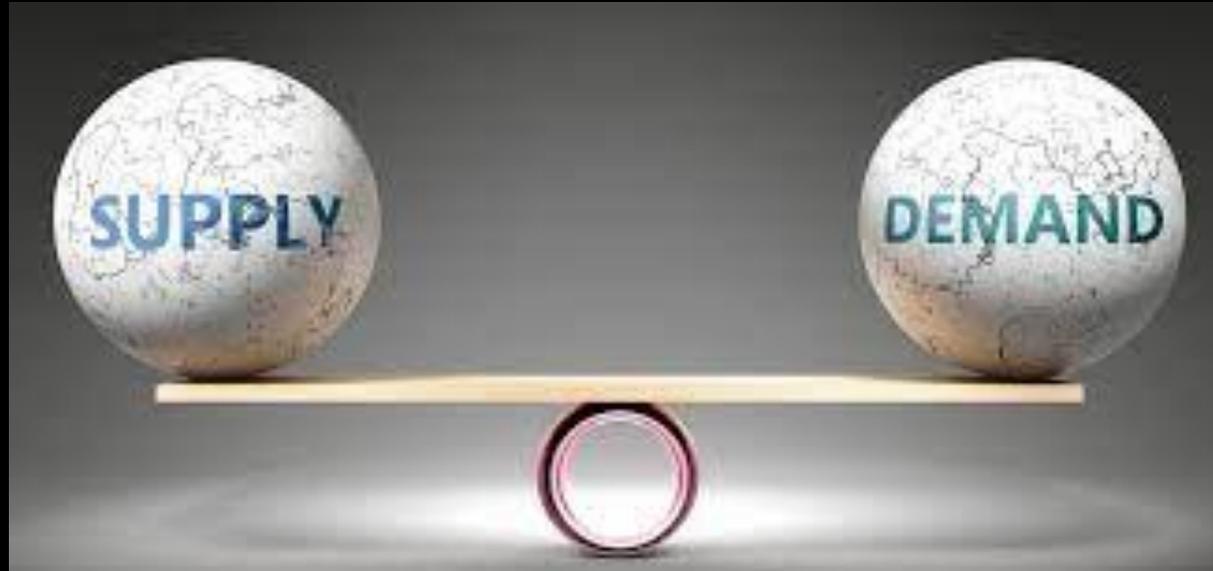
LAND

Around 1.4 billion hectares of land, which is roughly one-third the world's total agricultural land area, is used to grow food that is wasted. Millions of gallons of oil are also wasted every year to produce food that is not eaten. It also has the negative impacts on biodiversity due to activities like monocropping and converting wild lands into agricultural areas.

What can be done to tackle food waste?

To stop food waste, changes have to be brought in at every stage of the process – from farmers and food processors to supermarkets and individual customers

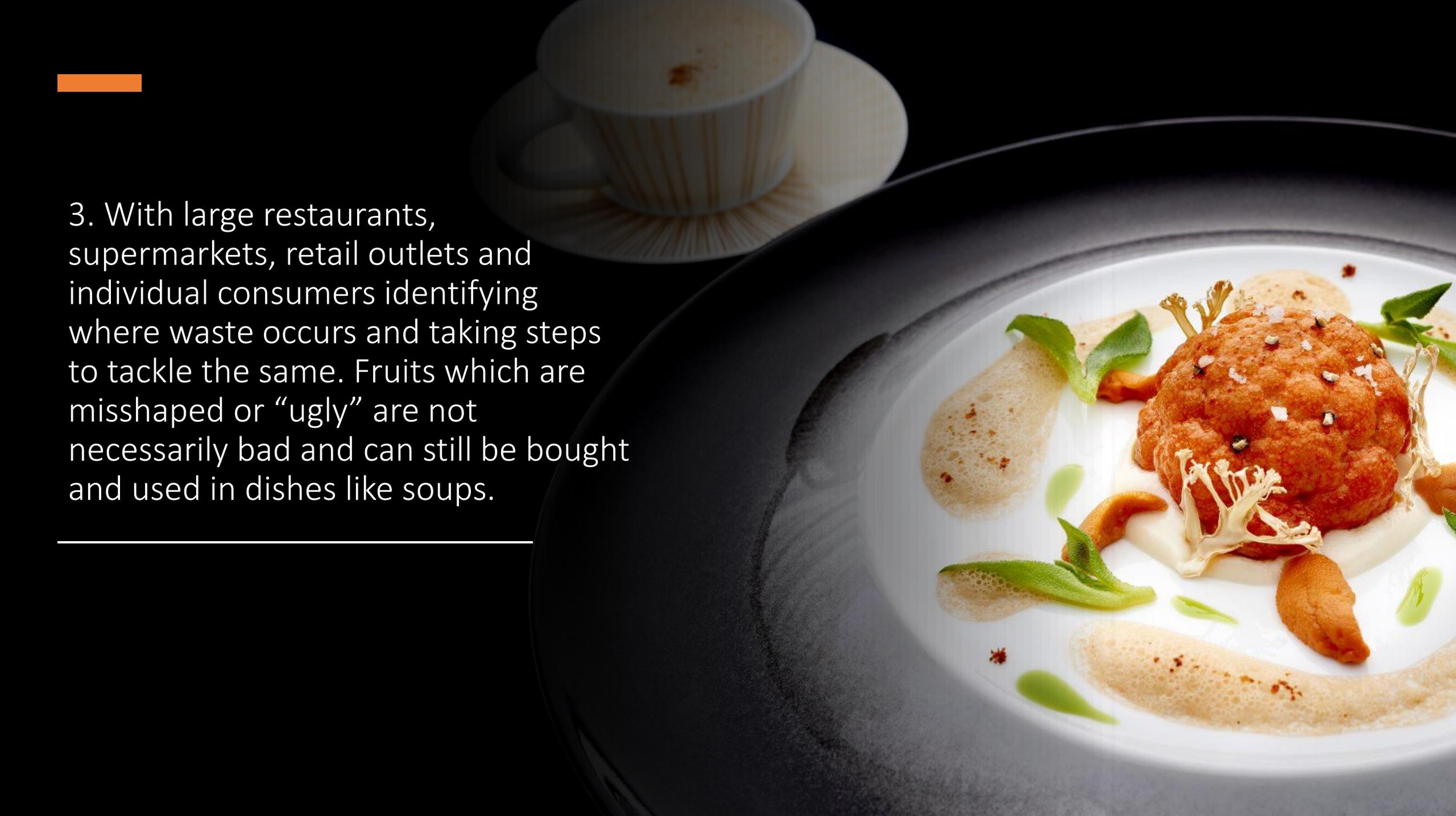




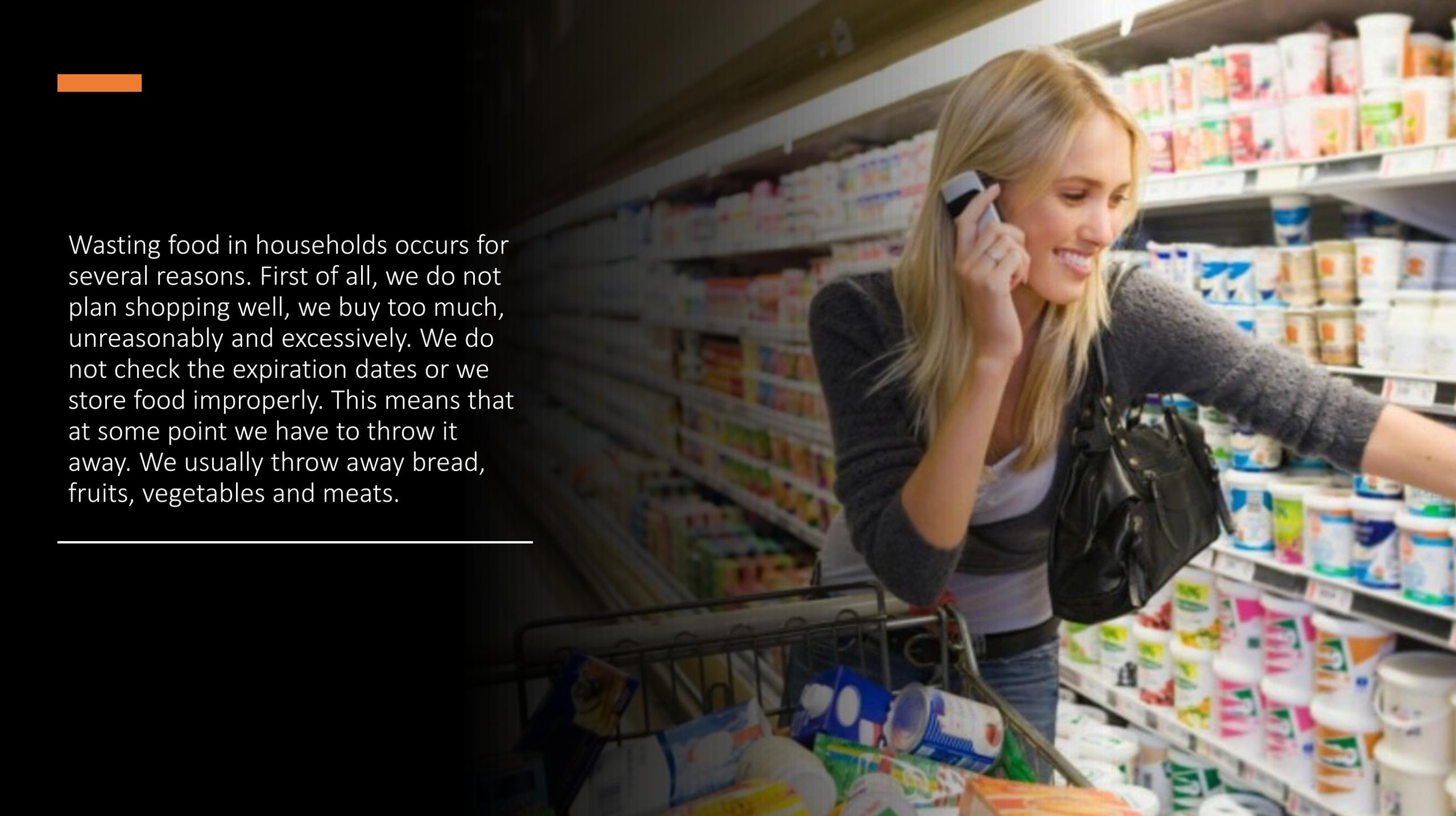
1 By balancing production with demand - lessening use of natural resources to produce food which is not needed.



2. By developing better food harvesting, storing, processing and distributing processes. If oversupply happens, steps should be taken to redistribute the food or to divert it to people who are in need.



3. With large restaurants, supermarkets, retail outlets and individual consumers identifying where waste occurs and taking steps to tackle the same. Fruits which are misshaped or “ugly” are not necessarily bad and can still be bought and used in dishes like soups.



Wasting food in households occurs for several reasons. First of all, we do not plan shopping well, we buy too much, unreasonably and excessively. We do not check the expiration dates or we store food improperly. This means that at some point we have to throw it away. We usually throw away bread, fruits, vegetables and meats.

It's up to us to change our habits to make not wasting food a way of life! Here are some easy actions you can take :

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a piece of paper, possibly a receipt or a label, over a red plastic basket filled with fresh produce. The basket contains several heads of green broccoli and a few lemons. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a grocery store or market setting.

Buy only what you need

Try to buy food in accordance with a meal plan so that you don't end up wasting edible food.

Understand food labelling

There's a big difference between "best before" and "use-by" dates. Sometimes food is still safe to eat after the "best before" date, whereas it's the "use-by" date that tells you when it is no longer safe to eat.



Pick ugly fruit and vegetables

We have become accustomed to buying beautiful fruits and vegetables that are supposed to meet the highest aesthetic standards, meaning they should be straight, shiny, without any spots or marks that could disqualify a product.

Don't judge food by its appearance!
Don't worry - they taste the same! Use mature fruit for smoothies, juices and desserts.





Store food wisely

Move older products to the front of your cupboard or fridge and new ones to the back. Use airtight containers to keep open food fresh in the fridge

Love your leftovers

If you don't eat everything you make, freeze it for later or use the leftovers as an ingredient in another meal.





Feed the livestock

Use the food, which is unfit for human consumption, to feed livestock, saving precious resources that would have otherwise been used for producing commercial feed.





Put your food waste to use

Instead of throwing away your food scraps, compost them. This way you are giving nutrients back to the soil and reducing your carbon footprint.

Did you know that an average home can divert about 150 kg of food waste a year from local waste disposal facilities by adopting home composting?



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a metal can over a cardboard box. The box is labeled "DONATIONS" in large, dark letters. The person is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. In the background, another person is holding a metal can, and a white plastic container with compartments of food (orange slices, purple grapes, and yellow crackers) is visible. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an indoor setting like a food bank or community center.

Sharing is caring

Donate food that would otherwise be wasted. For example, Apps can connect neighbours with each other and with local businesses so surplus food can be shared, not thrown away.



STOP FOOD LOSS
AND FOOD WASTE.
FOR THE PEOPLE.
FOR THE PLANET.

- Thank you for your attention.

- Resources:

Kliknij, aby dodać tekst

- <https://moveforhunger.org/the-environmental-impact-of-food-waste>

- <https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1309609/>

- <https://www.statista.com/statistics/933059/per-capita-food-waste-of-selected-countries/>