

Food Safety Scoop



Brought to you by the Yavapai County Food Safety Industry Council

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Special Points of Interest

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This newsletter is brought to you by the Yavapai County Food Safety Industry Council, which is a joint collaboration between Yavapai County Community Health Services and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.

The FSIC meets bimonthly to discuss issues in the food service industry and ways to bring food safety information to the public.

For more information, please call 928-445-6590 ext. 227 or visit our website at: extension.arizona.edu/yavapai/

The Problem of Food Waste

How much food does your establishment throw out in a week? Most people don't think twice about cleaning out their refrigerator or pantry and throwing away food. All of that food adds up: about 40% or 62.5 million pounds of the total U.S. food supply ends up wasted each year! Food waste happens when wholesome edible food never gets eaten after harvest; often making its way into landfills each day. Food that can be used to feed 1 of the 36,000 people who lack consistent access to adequate food living in Yavapai County today.

The impact of wasted food extends beyond affecting the food insecure and into other areas like lost resources, waste, diversion and climate impact. To solve this issue, businesses and restaurants need to create a plan to reduce food waste.



Image from USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), *Let's Talk Trash*: www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash

Overall Solutions

The U.S. government has recognized the problem of food waste, and in 2015 set the goal to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.

Government agencies, USDA and EPA, have partnered to create several programs that allow the public to participate in reducing food waste. This includes the Food Recovery Challenge, the U.S. Food Waste Challenge, the U.S. Food Loss and Waste 2030 Champions. Participants in these programs pledge to reduce their organization's food waste, receive recognition, and are eligible for awards. The federal

government has also set up tax incentives to encourage businesses to donate extra food rather than throw it out. New laws passed in 2015 allow the deduction of up to 15% of a business's taxable income for qualified food donations.

A common concern that businesses have with donating extra food is the responsibility for any potential health hazards resulting from the donated food. The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, passed in 1996, offers civil protection from liability to food donors that meet specific requirements.

Other concerns about donating food include lack of regulation or guidance about safety procedures, knowledge of applicable laws the donor must comply with, and consistency of information from local regulatory agencies. However, many health departments, including Yavapai County, are advocates of developing food donation policies and procedures and would like to see donors develop and understand the process of donating food.

To find out more about these programs and laws, check out the resources list at the end of the issue

How Can You Help

Individuals and businesses can use many strategies to prevent food waste at the local level. Not only does reducing food waste help the environment, but it also saves valuable time and resources. The following strategies can help you and your business cut down on the amount of food you waste.

- Do not over-buy certain items to reduce spoilage from lack of use.
- Use a 'just-in-time' method of purchasing food. Only order items when they are needed.
- Organize food storage using the FIFO (first in, first out) method to

make sure older items are used first.

- Keep careful record of inventory levels to avoid over-buying or running out of an item.
- Use careful menu planning to allow leftover food from previous meals to be reused.
- Train kitchen staff appropriately in food prep and storage techniques; proper knife skills reduce excess trimmings.
- Try new plating strategies to reduce waste from uneaten garnishes and oversized portions.
- Decrease batch and portion sizes.

Making smaller batches means there will be less leftover food and making smaller portions means customers will be less likely to leave food on their plate.

- Remove trays from buffets to prevent food waste so customers will be less likely to take more food than they can eat.
- Train staff in all of the aforementioned areas to achieve food waste reduction.

For more staff training topics visit:
extension.arizona.edu/yavapai-food-safety-fact-sheets

Local Food Recovery

One of the best ways to reduce food waste is to donate leftover food to those who need it. In Yavapai and other rural Arizona counties, 1 in 3 children, 1 in 5 adults, and 1 in 6 seniors are food insecure.

In addition to food banks in Yavapai County, a new place to donate unused food is the Cornucopia Community Advocates Food Recovery Program. Cornucopia partnered with SEDI (Sustainable Economic Development Initiative of Northern Arizona) for the Verde Valley and funded by Arizona Community

Foundation of Yavapai County for the Quad Cities, has launched a Food Recovery program. The goal is to reduce food waste by farmers, grocery stores, restaurants, and facilities with central kitchens by transferring food to emergency food providers and residential programs in the Verde Valley and Quad City Areas.

Yavapai County Community Health is playing a key role in this endeavor by establishing the guidelines for best practices for safe food recovery.

In a short time, Cornucopia established 5 link agreements between sources (commercial food donors) and emergency food recipients (food banks) recovering over 179,000 lbs. of edible food from being wasted.

To find out more about Cornucopia and the work they do, visit their website at cornucopia.org, or call their county contacts. Leslie Fox, for the Verde Valley area, can be contacted at 928-592-3837. Miriel Manning, for the Quad Cities, can be reached at 928-592-7929.

Quiz

- How much of the U.S. food supply is wasted every year?
 - 20%
 - 40%
 - 78%
 - 15%
- By what year does the U.S. plan to reduce food waste by 50%?
 - 2060
 - 2020
 - 2050
 - 2030
- True or False? Removing trays from buffets can reduce food waste.

- What is the maximum amount that can be deducted from a business's taxable income for food donations?
 - 15%
 - 18%
 - 12%
 - 20%
- How many children in Yavapai County are food insecure?
 - 1 in 2
 - 1 in 5
 - 1 in 7
 - 1 in 3

Quiz Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. True 4. A 5. D

Resources

- United State Department of Agriculture. "U.S. Food Loss and Waste"—www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/index.htm
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. "Food Loss Prevention Options for Restaurants"—www.epa.gov/foodrecovery
- Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic—www.refed.com/downloads/Emerson-Act-Legal-Fact-Sheet.pdf
- U.S. Food Waste Policy Finder—www.refed.com/tools/food-waste-policy-finder/federal-policy/federal-liability-protection
- Cornucopia Community Advocates—cornucopia.org
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. "Sustainable Management of Food"—www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy