

What Food Waste Reductions Strategies do Americans Think Could Actually Work?

How can the U.S. achieve a 50% reduction in household food waste by 2030? In 2017, Penn State, Purdue, and Duke University asked 1,271 people about nine frequently considered food waste reduction strategies. We asked respondents to tell us which strategies they would personally support, and if the strategy could actually reduce food waste. Here's what we learned:

Strategy Rankings

Support the strategy ✓

Think strategy would be effective ✓

#1 Make Food Donation Easier

Tax incentives for food donation, donation matching software to help find a home for the food, standard law of safe handling and donation of food

73% Support this idea
23% Might support idea
3% Would not support

55% say Yes!
35% Maybe
10% Nope

#2 Standardize Date Labels on Packages

Create standard definitions for date labeling such as "best if used by" and "sell by" terms that currently cause some confusion among consumers

56% Support this idea
38% Might support idea
6% Would not support

41% say Yes!
40% Maybe
19% Nope

#3 Use Uneaten Food for Animal Feed

Food waste could be treated and dehydrated and then fed to animals

53% Support this idea
38% Might support idea
10% Would not support

38% say Yes!
45% Maybe
18% Nope

#4 Change Food Packaging

More options for package sizes to suit consumer needs, new packaging tech to slow down food spoilage

50% Support this idea
39% Might support idea
11% Would not support

37% say Yes!
37% Maybe
26% Nope

#5 Educate Consumers about Food Waste

Education campaigns to inform consumers about food waste and strategies to reduce their own food waste

49% Support this idea
41% Might support idea
10% Would not support

35% say Yes!
50% Maybe
15% Nope

#6 Change Food Portion Sizes

Restaurants offer half size or smaller portions, or all you can eat buffets use smaller plates

49% Support this idea
37% Might support idea
14% Would not support

50% say Yes!
33% Maybe
17% Nope

#7 Implement Community-level Food Composting

Provide compost bins for individual households or setting up a community compost facility for household food disposal

43% Support this idea
43% Might support idea
14% Would not support

29% say Yes!
51% Maybe
20% Nope

#8 Sell Imperfect (Ugly) Produce in Stores

Sell oddly shaped, sized, or colored foods that are considered "ugly" but still edible in grocery stores

42% Support this idea
33% Might support idea
25% Would not support

28% say Yes!
42% Maybe
30% Nope

#9 Tax Food Waste

Charging households and businesses a tax (or fee) for the amount of food they waste

13% Support this idea
23% Might support idea
64% Would not support

20% say Yes!
23% Maybe
57% Nope

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