

Grocery Stores Report Significant Progress In Reducing Food Waste, New Report Finds

From 2019-2022, grocery retailers decreased the number of tons of unsold food in their regional operations by 25%—190,000 tons of food valued at \$311 million.

NEW YORK, NY, USA, April 17, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new report from the [Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment](#) shows that grocery retailers



This is hands down the largest progress in reducing food waste we've ever seen reported. We see prevention numbers that far exceeded our expectations, plus increases in donations and composting. "

Dana Gunders, Executive Director, ReFED

made the most significant progress ever reported in the United States on reducing food waste in the retail sector. The analysis shows that over the period from 2019 to 2022 (the latest year for which data is available), grocery retailers decreased the number of tons of unsold food in their regional operations by 25%—nearly 190,000 tons of food valued at \$311 million—which represents a decrease in the amount of food at risk of going to waste. Most unsold food typically ends up going to waste destinations like landfill, where it decomposes and generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Yet in addition to the decrease in the amount of unsold food, the study also identified

positive trends for where that unsold food ended up, including a 20% increase in the rate of unsold food being donated and a 28% increase in the rate of unsold food getting composted. Significantly, the analysis found that the four-year decline in unsold food led to an estimated 30% decrease in the total carbon footprint of unsold food in the region—the equivalent to taking nearly 270,000 passenger vehicles off the road annually.

In the United States, 38% of food goes unsold or uneaten throughout the food system, with the majority of this becoming food waste. Across the country, the grocery retail sector generates nearly six million tons of unsold food, which includes all food that went unsold in each grocery store food department, including both edible food and inedible scraps (pits, peels, etc.). The data in this study serves as the most recent analysis of retail food waste, as well as the longest year-over-year aggregated dataset in the country, making it “best in class” for benchmarking and tracking progress for food waste reduction initiatives in the U.S. grocery retail sector.

“This is hands down the largest progress in reducing food waste we've ever seen reported. It demonstrates that the national goal to cut food waste in half by 2030 may, in fact, be possible—but we would need dramatically more action across all food system sectors for that to

happen,” said Dana Gunders, Executive Director at [ReFED](#). “It’s also particularly exciting to see the holistic nature of this progress. We’re not only seeing prevention numbers that far exceeded our expectations, but we’re also seeing increases in donations and composting. I really applaud our retail partners for the enormous effort they’ve put in—individually and as part of the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment—to achieve this win for people and the planet.”

Using anonymized data provided by reporting retail signatories of the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment—a public-private partnership between food businesses and jurisdictions along the Pacific Coast of the U.S.—the study determined Unsold Food Rates, Tons of Unsold Food, and the subsequent impacts, including lost sales and meal equivalents, as well as footprints for carbon and water usage. The study’s reported decline in unsold food occurred alongside many operational changes within the retail sector during the study period due to the Covid pandemic, global supply chain disruptions, and significant inflation that raised food prices. In addition, many of the retailers in the study implemented specific strategies to reduce their waste—including sharing best practices with their peers in working groups hosted by the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment and testing food waste solutions in their operations.

“Reducing food waste throughout our supply chain has been a long-standing priority for Albertsons Companies, which is why we’re proud to partner with the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment on this important issue to our industry and society,” said Suzanne Long, Chief Sustainability and Transformation Officer for Albertsons Cos. “As part of our Recipe for Change framework, we’re working to eliminate food waste going to landfill in our operations. In addition to donating unsold food, we’ve implemented several tactics to reach this goal such as working with Afresh to implement their artificial intelligence-based technology to help us order the right produce in the right quantities; partnering with Uber to address local donation pickup challenges through sponsored delivery at select stores; and for food that can’t sold or donated, diverting that food to animal feed, anaerobic digestion or composting. By working together with our suppliers and our industry, we can make significant strides to reduce food waste in our country.”

According to the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment study, the food departments with the most unsold food were Prepared Foods (8.33% of total) and Breads & Bakery (8.06%). The high retail value of food from these departments represents an important opportunity for retailers to save money through food waste reduction; indeed, Prepared Foods accounted for 22.4% and Breads & Bakery for 15.8% of the total retail value of unsold food. The study’s analysis of unsold food destinations identified a 20% increase in the amount of unsold food being donated, which suggests an encouraging trend—that even as the overall amount of unsold food decreases, donations have remained an important priority for retailers. Also encouraging is the decrease in the amount of food reported as going to an “unknown” destination rate, which indicates that retailers are becoming more accurate in tracking and reporting waste within their operations.

[Read the full data results here.](#)

Jeffrey Costantino

ReFED

jeffrey.costantino@refed.org

Visit us on social media:

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/704394297>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.