



Food Waste by Sector: Manufacturing

Food waste happens across the entire food system—this is a snapshot of food waste in the manufacturing sector. All estimates come from ReFED and are based on 2024 data (*the most recent year available*). For more facts and figures, visit the [ReFED Insights Engine](#).

1

70.7 million tons of surplus food* were generated across the entire food system in 2024.

2

In the manufacturing sector, 13.2 million tons of surplus food were generated, accounting for 18.6% of the total.

- Of that amount, 6.67 million tons became food waste.
- 7.2% of food waste in the manufacturing sector—482,000 tons—went to landfill.

3

Surplus food from manufacturing accounts for 38.6 million metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to CO₂e emissions from nine million cars.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the manufacturing sector equal 492,000 MT.

4

Surplus food from manufacturing was valued at \$42.7 billion dollars in 2024.

- That's equivalent to 7% of manufacturing sales.
- Food sent to landfill has a valuation of \$2.13 billion.

5

The water required to produce the food lost at the manufacturing stage equaled 3.86 trillion gallons in 2024.

- That's equivalent to the amount of water in nearly six million Olympic-sized swimming pools.

6

The equivalent of 21.1 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the manufacturing sector in 2024.

- The top three food types that go to waste are:
 - *Dairy & Eggs*: 4.93 million tons
 - *Produce*: 919,000 tons
 - *Dry Goods*: 615,000 tons

To see solutions for manufacturers, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more about reducing manufacturing food waste, visit the [Manufacturer Recommendations](#) page on the ReFED website.

*Surplus food is all food that goes unsold or unused by a business or that goes uneaten at home or restaurants—including food and inedible parts that are donated, fed to livestock animals, repurposed to produce other products, or go to any of the destinations represented in food waste.