



Food Waste by Sector: Farm

Loss and waste happen across the entire food system—this is a snapshot of food waste in the farm, or producers, sector. All estimates come from ReFED and are based on 2023 data (*the most recent year available*). For more facts and figures, visit the [ReFED Insights Engine](#).

Note: ReFED's on-farm estimates only cover loss and waste related to produce.

1

73.9 million tons of surplus food* were generated across the entire food system in 2023.

2

In the farm sector, 17.6 million tons of surplus food were generated, accounting for 23.8% of the total.

- Of that amount, 15.4 million tons became food waste.
- 94.3% of food waste in the farm sector—14.5 million tons—was not harvested.

3

Surplus food from the farm sector accounts for 3.69 million metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to CO₂e emissions from 800,000 cars.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the farm sector equal 15.8k MT.

4

Surplus food from farms was valued at \$13.2 billion dollars in 2023.

- That's equivalent to one quarter of produce crop cash recipients.
- Food not harvested has a valuation of \$11.5 billion.

5

The farm sector wasted 636 billion gallons of water in 2023.

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

6

The equivalent of 28.8 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the farm sector in 2023.

To see solutions for producers, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more about reducing food loss on farms, visit the [Producers Recommendations](#) page on the ReFED website.

*Surplus food is food that goes unsold or unused by a business or that goes uneaten at home—including food and inedible parts (e.g., peels, pits, bones) that are donated, fed to animals, repurposed to produce other products, composted, anaerobically digested, or otherwise wasted. ReFED bases its analysis on surplus food instead of food loss and waste in order to capture food that goes to donation, animal feed, and industrial uses, as a more holistic view of the food system.