



Food Waste in the U.S.

This is a snapshot of the extent and impact of food waste across the United States. All estimates come from ReFED and are based on 2024 data (*the most recent available*) except where noted. For more facts and figures, visit the [ReFED Insights Engine](#).

1

29% of food produced in the U.S. goes unsold or uneaten annually. Most of this “surplus food” goes to waste destinations like landfill, incineration, or down the drain, or is left in fields to rot.

- That’s 70 million tons of food each year.
- Of this surplus food, less than 2% is donated.
- Almost 86% of surplus food—60 million tons of food each year—becomes “food waste.”

2

The value of surplus food in the U.S. is \$380 billion.

- 85%—\$325 billion—is due to food waste.
- Food businesses lose \$240 billion worth of revenue due to unsold and uneaten food.

3

The amount of surplus food in the U.S. is equivalent to 114 billion meals.

4

Surplus food has a negative impact on the environment.

- 3.5% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from surplus food, making reducing it a top solution for climate change.

5

Surplus food uses 16% of U.S. cropland and 15.5% of U.S. freshwater consumption.

- This amount of cropland—140 million acres—is equivalent to an area the size of California and New York combined.
- This amount of freshwater is equivalent to nearly all of the water consumed in a year by California and Idaho combined.

6

24% of inputs to landfill are wasted food, making it the number one product entering landfills. There it generates methane, a greenhouse gas that’s 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide in a 20-year time frame.

- 58% of all landfill methane emissions come from food waste.
- 2.6 million MTCH₄ of methane is generated from surplus food, nearly 10% of the country’s total methane emissions.



Food Waste by Sector: Retail

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

1

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

2

In the retail sector, 3.98 million tons of surplus food were generated, accounting for 5.7% of the total.

- Of that amount, 2.72 million tons became food waste.
- 36.3% of food wasted in the retail sector—989k thousand tons—went to landfill.

3

Surplus food from retail accounts for 13.7 million metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to CO₂e emissions from 3.2 million cars driven for one year.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the retail sector equal 156,000 MT per year.

4

Surplus food from retail was valued at \$26.9 billion dollars in 2024.

- That's equivalent to 3% of food & beverage retail sales.
- Food sent to landfill is valued at \$6.69 billion.

5

The water required to produce the food lost at the retail stage equaled 1.09 trillion gallons in 2024.

- That's equivalent to nearly 190 showers per person in the U.S.

6

The equivalent of 5.21 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the retail sector in 2024.

- The top three food types that go to waste are:
 - *Produce*: 902,000 tons
 - *Fresh Meat & Seafood*: 369,000 tons
 - *Prepared Foods*: 347,000 tons

To see solutions for retailers, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more about reducing retail food waste, visit the [Retailer 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.*



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

2

In the manufacturing sector, 13.1 million tons of surplus food were generated, accounting for 18.8% of the total.

- Of that amount, 6.66 million tons became food waste.
- 7.2% of food waste in the manufacturing sector—481,000 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 driven for one year.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the manufacturing sector equal 491,000 MT.

4

Surplus food from manufacturing was valued at \$42.6 billion dollars in 2024.

- That's equivalent to 4% of manufacturing sales.
- Food sent to landfill has a valuation of \$2.12 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*: 4.92 million tons
 - *Produce*: 917,000 tons
 - *Dry Goods*: 614,000 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.*



Food Waste by Sector: Foodservice

Food waste happens across the entire food system—this is a snapshot of food waste in the foodservice 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 million tons of surplus food* were generated across the entire food system in 2024.

2

In the foodservice sector, 12.5 million tons were generated, accounting for 17.9% of the total.

- Of that amount, 12.4 million became food waste.
- 78.4% of food waste in the foodservice sector—9.73 million tons—went to landfill.

3

Surplus food from foodservice accounts for 63.6M metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to eight billion 10-mile food delivery trips.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the foodservice sector equal 793,000 MT.

4

Surplus food from foodservice was valued at \$156 billion dollars in 2024.

- That's equivalent to 11% of foodservice sales.
- Food sent to landfill has a valuation of \$122 billion.

5

The water required to produce the food lost in foodservice equaled 5.73 trillion gallons in 2024.

- That's equivalent to nearly 1000 showers per person in the U.S.

6

The equivalent of 20.7 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the foodservice sector in 2024.

- The top three food types that go to waste are:
 - *Prepared Foods*: 11.2 million tons
 - *Dry Goods*: 268,000 tons
 - *Dairy & Eggs*: 223,000 tons

To see solutions for foodservice, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more about reducing foodservice food waste, visit the [Foodservice 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.



Food Waste by Sector: Residential

Food waste happens across the entire food system—this is a snapshot of food waste in the residential 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 million tons of surplus food* were generated across the entire food system in 2024.

2

23.4 million tons of surplus food were generated in homes, accounting for 33.5% of the total.

- Of that amount, 23.1 million tons became food waste.
- 48.4% of food waste in the residential sector—11.2 million tons—went to landfill.

3

Surplus food from homes accounts for 99.8 million metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to CO₂e emissions from nearly 13 million homes' electricity.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the residential sector equal 1.13 million MT.

4

Consumers spent \$141 billion dollars on uneaten food in 2024.

- That's equivalent to 13% of food-at-home spending.
- Food sent to landfill has a valuation of \$70.6 billion.

5

The water required to grow food not eaten in homes was 4.53 trillion gallons in 2024.

- That's equivalent to nearly 800 showers per person in the U.S.

6

The equivalent of 39 billion meals went uneaten as a result of surplus food in the residential sector in 2024.

- The top three food types that go to waste are:
 - *Produce*: 10.5 million tons
 - *Dry Goods*: 3.45 million tons
 - *Dairy & Eggs*: 2.31 million tons

To see solutions for consumers, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more, visit the [Consumer Food Waste](#) 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.*





Food Waste by Sector: Farm

Food waste happens 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 2024 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

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

2

In the farm sector, 16.9 million tons of surplus food were generated, accounting for 24.2% of the total.

- Of that amount, 14.8 million tons became food waste.
- 94.2% of food waste in the farm sector—14 million tons—was not harvested.

3

Surplus food from the farm sector accounts for 3.56 million metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to CO₂e emissions from 830,000 cars driven for one year.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the farm sector equal 15,200 MT.

4

Surplus food from farms was valued at \$13.4 billion dollars in 2024.

- That's equivalent to nearly one-fourth of national crop farm input expenditures.
- Food not harvested has a valuation of \$11.6 billion.

5

The farm sector wasted 621 billion gallons of water in 2024.

- That's equivalent to the amount of water in over 940,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

6

The equivalent of 27.8 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the farm sector in 2024.

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 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.*