

Climate Action in Practice: Actionable Insights to Reduce Food Loss & Waste

April 2025



With the support of





Welcome to the *Climate Action in Practice Guide*

The Consumer Goods Forum's Towards Net Zero Coalition has developed a new resource to help retailers and manufacturers turn climate ambition into action

This collection is organized into six focused packets, each addressing a specific challenge identified by our members. Every publication offers practical guidance, real-world examples, and actionable insights to accelerate progress toward a more sustainable future

Designed for companies at any stage of their climate journey, this guide provides the knowledge and support needed to drive meaningful change

Where to start | Six key challenges, one common framework

Six key challenges identified by our members:



For each key challenge, this publication provides the following resources:



This documents highlights one are of focus. Refer to the full Action in Practice Guide for a comprehensive view across all six challenges

Where to start | High-level impact and feasibility estimates can guide prioritization¹

Action area	Impact		Scope for action			
	Emissions reduction	Co-benefits (business, social, environmental)	Affordability	ease of implementation	Public sector support	Degree of control
Reduce deforestation	High	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium
Enhance sustainable agriculture	High	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Merchandise sustainable products	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	High
Reduce food loss...	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
...and food waste	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium
Increase low-carbon energy...	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High
...and low-carbon transportation	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Adopt circular or sustainable packaging	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium

1. The impact and feasibility estimates provided are relative assessments that evaluate each action area in comparison to the other areas in these materials. The ratings are based on high-level assessments of each action area as a whole and are not necessarily representative of each individual activity within a given area

**Reduce food
loss and waste**

Shared Vision of The Future:

*Retailers, suppliers, and consumers **work collaboratively to reduce waste at every stage of the supply chain, from sourcing to end consumption***

Return to key
challenges



Climate Action in Practice Guide | Preview of reducing food loss and waste insights, resources, and activities to consider

Topic resources to follow ...

Food Loss and Waste Overview

Overview | What to know about food loss and waste

Strategic Context

- Globally, ~30% of food is lost upstream of retail, ~8% is lost by retail, ~20% by food service, and ~42% by consumers^{1,2}.
- Food loss and waste generates 8-10% of annual global GHG emissions and costs the global economy ~\$1 trillion annually³.**

Key Challenges

- Retailers have **limited influence on behavior at the point of consumption**, where the largest portion of food waste occurs.
- It can be **difficult for retailers to precisely forecast food supply and demand**, causing a tendency towards overstocking to avoid stockouts.

Opportunity & Solutions

- Focusing on store operations and customer engagement can unlock new revenue streams and ability to differentiate/lead on a topic that is important to customers.**

1. "Over 10% of food is lost before leaving the farm" - WWF report (2021). WWF. 2. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024. 3. "World squanders over 1 billion meals a day", United Nations Environment Programme (2020).

Regional Considerations

Regional considerations

US & Canada | Downstream waste
Most food waste occurs at the point of consumption¹, but infrastructure exists (e.g., startups) for redistributing leftover food to people in need - US & Canada

Latin America | Infrastructure gaps
Inadequate storage and transport infrastructure causes pre-retail food losses, making supply chain improvements a priority for reducing food waste² - e.g., Colombia

Europe | Increasing regulations and disposal costs
Increasing regulation on reduction of food waste and separation of food waste for recycling. Increasing disposal costs incentivize value chain to reduce food loss and waste³ - EU

Asia | Upstream waste
Inadequate storage and transport infrastructure causes pre-retail food losses, making supply chain improvements a priority for reducing food waste⁴ - e.g., Southeast Asia

Africa | Infrastructure gaps
High post-harvest losses due to lack of storage mean retailers should support suppliers with better storage solutions to reduce waste⁵ - numerous countries

Oceania | Mandatory reductions
Australia's national goals to halve food waste require retailers to adopt waste reduction practices in their operations⁶ - Australia

Sources: 1. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024. 2. ODA, "Food waste: sustainable food supply chains: The case of Colombia" (2022). 3. BCG experts. 4. Green Network, Food Loss and Waste in Southeast Asia (2023). 5. AFD, "Value chain strategy: A solution to Africa's post-harvest loss" (2023). 6. Australia Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, "A Roadmap for reducing Australia's food waste by 2030" (2020).

Activities Retailers Should Consider

Actions | Retailers can start reducing food waste through operational shifts and scale impact with analytics and innovation

Early action should prioritize operational changes within retailer's control to minimize food waste

Example activities include

- Educate customers on reducing food waste at home by promoting intentional purchasing and proper storage techniques
- Reexamine promotional and marketing campaigns that may be encouraging overconsumption and replace with campaigns that reduce waste (e.g., discount lightly damaged products, reframe reduced-size yields as "miniature" versions)
- Mitigate food waste at the point of consumption by offering in-store compost collection and promoting products with increased shelf life

Leveraging advanced analytics and innovation can help scale most successful initiatives

Example activities include

- Leverage AI-driven demand forecasting for more precise inventory management to minimize surplus
- Utilize innovative packaging solutions to extend shelf life of fresh products and reduce spoilage
- Reduce minimum order quantities and maintain lower stock levels to decrease excess inventory
- Use dynamic pricing for perishable products near expiration, offer discounts to encourage sales
- Decrease length of steps in the distribution chain to preserve freshness and extend shelf life

Relative Impact & Feasibility

Relative impact & feasibility (food loss) | Upstream food loss represents significant opportunity, though progress can be challenging to achieve

	Impact		Feasibility		
	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Emissions reduction	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Co-benefits (business, social, environmental)	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Affordability	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Ease of implementation	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Public sector support	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
Degree of control	High	Low	High	Medium	Low

Notes:

- Upstream loss represents a major opportunity for emissions reduction
- Reducing food loss can benefit upstream communities, conserve natural resources, reduce emissions, improve supply chain resilience, and more
- Addressing upstream loss typically requires significant investment
- Mapping and mitigating upstream loss can be challenging for retailers given limited visibility and direct control
- Food loss does not have significant regulatory support
- Retailers have not historically had much direct control over upstream loss. However, new intermediaries are starting to bridge this gap

Retailer Case Studies

Case studies | Retailers repurpose food scraps and misshapen produce to minimize food waste and create value

Levers in action: Retail case studies

- Tesco works with suppliers to reduce food waste from misshapen or surplus produce through its "Perfectly Imperfect" initiative**
Working with suppliers to reduce food waste. Launched in 2016, has saved over 68 million packs of misshapen/surplus produce from going to waste by partnering with farmers to manage bumper crops, sell surplus at discount, and repurpose imperfect produce for suppliers (e.g., misshapen potatoes for ready meal manufacturers).
[See Tesco Press Release for more info](#)
- Walmart leverages de-packaging technology to enable more efficient diversion of waste from landfills**
In collaboration with Dorel, Walmart introduced de-packaging technology in over 1,400 stores and Sam's Clubs as of July 2024. This technology simplifies the process of separating unusable packaged foods from their packaging, facilitating recycling into animal feed, compost, or renewable energy, thereby diverting waste from landfill.
[See Walmart Press Release for more info](#)
- Aldi Austria launches "Rettenswert" brand to combat food waste**
In 2023, Aldi's Austrian division, Hefer, introduced their Rettenswert (meaning "worth saving") brand to address food waste by repurposing surplus and imperfect produce into new products. This initiative transforms items like misshapen pumpkins into pumpkin seeds and surplus seasonal tomatoes into Austria's only 100% locally grown and produced ketchup.
[See Aldi - Rettenswert for more info](#)

"Best Source of Truth" Resources

Resources | Regulations and frameworks will inform strategy for reducing food loss and waste

	Description	Relevant resource(s)
Regulations directly impacting organic waste disposal methods (mandatory)	French food waste regulation¹: Mandates the recycling of organic/bio waste by households and businesses in France under "compost obligatoire" rules as of January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Commission Food Waste Resource Library EU Commission Reduced Food Waste (RFW)
Frameworks and target-setting guidance (voluntary)	California State Legislature SB 1383²: Requires California cities and counties to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025 and requires all residents, businesses and multifamily complexes to recycle organics separately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA Mandatory Organic Waste Collection Regulation overview
Business guidance (voluntary)	10x20x30 (Champions 11.3): Retail-led initiative to engage 20 suppliers to halve food loss and waste by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10x20x30 Food Loss & Waste Protocol (WFL, Quantis) Food Loss & Waste Value Calculator (WFL, Quantis)
Business guidance (voluntary)	Actuarial recommendations and guidance for reducing food waste and loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chasing the Food Waste Gap (BCG) Food Loss and Waste: A Circular Piece of the Puzzle (Quantis, Just Food) A Recipe to Reduce Food Loss and Waste (BCG) CGI Food Waste Coalition of Action resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Loss & Waste Capability Assessment for Retailers Driving Emissions Down and Profit Up by Reducing Food Waste Food Waste Knowledge Sharing Sessions 2023 - Learnings Report

1. Includes an example. 2. Includes an example. 3. Includes an example. 4. Includes an example. 5. Includes an example. 6. Includes an example. 7. Includes an example. 8. Includes an example. 9. Includes an example. 10. Includes an example. 11. Includes an example. 12. Includes an example. 13. Includes an example. 14. Includes an example. 15. Includes an example. 16. Includes an example. 17. Includes an example. 18. Includes an example. 19. Includes an example. 20. Includes an example. 21. Includes an example. 22. Includes an example. 23. Includes an example. 24. Includes an example. 25. Includes an example. 26. Includes an example. 27. Includes an example. 28. Includes an example. 29. Includes an example. 30. Includes an example. 31. Includes an example. 32. Includes an example. 33. Includes an example. 34. Includes an example. 35. Includes an example. 36. Includes an example. 37. Includes an example. 38. Includes an example. 39. Includes an example. 40. Includes an example. 41. 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Overview | What to know about food loss and waste

Strategic Context



Food loss upstream of retail accounts for ~30%, with **~8% lost at retail**, ~20% by food service, and ~42% by consumers^{1,2}



Food loss and waste generate 8-10% of annual global GHG emissions and costs the global economy ~\$1 trillion annually³

Key Challenges



Retailers influence only part of the value chain, with **limited control over consumer behavior** and challenges **managing unsold food**



Forecasting food supply and demand is complex, often leading to overstocking to avoid stockouts

Opportunity & Solutions



Improving store operations and engaging customers can unlock **new revenue streams** and **strengthen brand leadership** on food waste

1. "Over 15% of food is lost before leaving the farm – WWF report" (2021), WWF; 2. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024; 3. "World squanders over 1 billion meals a day", United Nations Environment Programme (2024)



Regional considerations

Not exhaustive



US & Canada | Downstream waste

Most food waste occurs at the point of consumption¹, but infrastructure exists (e.g., startups) for redistributing leftover food to people in need - *US, Canada*



Latin America | Infrastructure gaps

Inadequate storage and transport infrastructure causes pre-retail food losses, making supply chain improvements a priority for reducing food waste² – *e.g., Colombia*



Europe | Increasing regulations and disposal costs

Increasing regulation on reduction of food waste and separation of food waste for recycling. Increasing disposal costs incentivize value chain to reduce food loss and waste³ - *EU*



Asia | Upstream waste

Inadequate storage and transport infrastructure causes pre-retail food losses, making supply chain improvements a priority for reducing food waste⁴ – *e.g., Southeast Asia*



Africa | Infrastructure gaps

High post-harvest losses due to lack of storage mean retailers should support suppliers with better storage solutions to reduce waste⁵ - *numerous countries*



Oceania | Mandatory reductions

Australia's national goals to halve food waste require retailers to adopt waste reduction practices in their operations⁶ - *Australia*

Sources: 1. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024; 2. DiVA, "Food loss in perishable food supply chains: The case of Colombia", 2022; 3. BCG experts; 4. Green Network, Food Loss and Waste in Southeast Asia, 2023; 5. All On, "Solar cold storage: A solution to Africa's post-harvest loss", 2023; 6. Australia Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, "A Roadmap for reducing Australia's food waste by half by 2030," 2018

Actions | Retailers can reduce food waste through operational shifts and start reducing food loss using analytics and innovation

Early action should prioritize operational changes within retailer's control to minimize food waste

Example activities include







- **Educate customers** on reducing food waste at home by promoting intentional purchasing and proper storage techniques
- **Reexamine promotional and marketing campaigns that may be encouraging overconsumption and replace with campaigns that reduce waste** (e.g., discount lightly damaged products, reframe reduced-size yields as "miniature" versions)
- **Mitigate food waste at the point of consumption** by offering in-store compost collection and promoting products with increased shelf life
- **Use dynamic pricing for perishable products** near expiration, offer discounts to encourage sales

Advanced actions should focus on innovation and partnerships to mitigate food loss upstream

Example activities include







- **Invest in technological solutions to reduce upstream food loss** (e.g., refrigeration, more advanced harvest methodology)
- **Identify where upstream food loss is coming from** through engaging intermediaries (e.g., Global Farm Loss Tool) to map value chain
- **Adjust produce standards** to accommodate more aesthetic variation and reduce unnecessary disposal upstream
- **Leverage AI-driven demand forecasting** for more precise inventory management to minimize surplus

Relative impact & feasibility (food loss) | Upstream food loss represents significant opportunity, though progress can be challenging to achieve

	Impact		Feasibility			
	High		Low			
						
	Emissions reduction	Co-benefits (business, social, environmental)	Affordability	Ease of implementation	Public sector support	Degree of control
Rating	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
Notes	Upstream loss represents a major opportunity for emissions reduction	Reducing food loss can benefit upstream communities, conserve natural resources, reduce emissions, improve supply chain resilience, and more	Upstream loss often requires better understanding rather than major investments or major infrastructure upgrades	Mapping and mitigating upstream loss can be challenging for retailers given limited visibility and direct control*	Food loss does not have significant regulatory support, though upcoming EU mandatory targets may change that	Retailers have not historically had much direct control over upstream loss. However, new intermediaries* are starting to bridge this gap

*. The Global Farm Loss Tool offers a methodology to enhance visibility and provides actionable solutions

Relative impact & feasibility (food waste) | Operational changes can be easy to implement, while consumer behavior is difficult to impact

	Impact		Feasibility			
	Medium		High			
Rating						
Notes						
						
	Emissions reduction	Co-benefits (business, social, environmental)	Affordability	Ease of implementation	Public sector support	Degree of control
	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	Medium
	Retailers can moderately reduce emissions by minimizing waste in operations, but consumer waste remains beyond direct control	Potential actions (e.g., discounting products close to sell date, donating excess inventory) can improve brand loyalty and benefit local communities	Consumer education is relatively low-cost. While operational changes may be costly, retailers may save money through selling a larger percent of product (due to less product going bad before being purchased)	Demand forecasting tech is improving rapidly, and consumer education is typically straightforward	US and EU have mandatory composting regulations, and some EU countries (e.g., Italy, France) have enacted regulations mandating food waste reduction	Retailers have high degree of control over waste in operations, though in developed markets the majority of waste occurs at the point of consumption (in the home), which is harder for retailers to influence

Case studies | Retailers repurpose food scraps and misshapen produce to minimize food waste and create value



Levers in action: Retail case studies

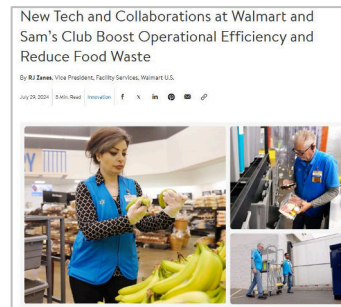
Tesco works with suppliers to reduce food waste from misshapen or surplus produce through its 'Perfectly Imperfect' initiative



Tesco's 'Perfectly Imperfect' initiative, launched in 2016, has **saved over 68 million packs of misshapen/surplus produce** from going to waste by partnering with farmers to **manage bumper crops, sell surplus at discount, and repurpose imperfect produce for suppliers** (e.g., misshapen potatoes for ready meal manufacturers)

See [Tesco Press Release](#) for more info

Walmart leverages de-packaging technology to enable more efficient diversion of waste from landfills



In collaboration with Denali, Walmart introduced **de-packaging technology in over 1,400 stores** and Sam's Clubs as of July 2024. This technology **simplifies the process of separating unsalable packaged foods from their packaging**, facilitating recycling into animal feed, compost, or renewable energy, thereby **diverting waste from landfill**

See [Walmart Press Release](#) for more info

Aldi Austria launches "Rettenswert" brand to combat food waste



In 2023, Aldi's Austrian division, Hofer, introduced their Rettenswert (meaning "worth saving") brand to address food waste by **repurposing surplus and imperfect produce into new products**. This initiative transforms items like misshapen pumpkins into pumpkin pesto and surplus seasonal tomatoes into Austria's only 100% locally grown and produced ketchup

See [Aldi – Rettenswert](#) for more info

Resources | Regulations and frameworks will inform strategy for reducing food loss and waste

(Non-exhaustive)	Description	Relevant resource(s)
Regulations directly impacting organic waste disposal methods (Mandatory)	<p>French food waste regulation¹: Mandates the recycling of organic/bio waste by households and businesses in France under "compost obligatoire" rules as of January 2024</p> <p>California State Legislature SB 1383²: Requires California cities and counties to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025 and requires all residents, businesses and multifamily-complexes to recycle organics separately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Commission Food Waste Resource Library • EU Commission Reducing Food Waste FAQ • CA Mandatory Organic Waste Collection Regulation overview
Frameworks and target-setting guidance (Voluntary)	<p>10x20x30 (Champions 12.3): Retail-led initiative to engage 20 suppliers to halve food loss and waste by 2030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10x20x30 • Food Loss & Waste Protocol (WRI, Quantis) • Food Loss & Waste Value Calculator (WRI, Quantis)
Business guidance (Voluntary)	<p>Actionable recommendations and guidance for reducing food waste and loss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing the Food Waste Gap (BCG) • Food Loss and Waste - A Crucial Piece of the Puzzle (Quantis, Just Food) • A Recipe to Reduce Food Loss and Waste (BCG) • CGF Food Waste Coalition of Action resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Loss & Waste Capability Assessment for Retailers • Driving Emissions Down and Profit Up by Reducing Food Waste • Food Waste Knowledge Sharing Sessions 2024: Learnings Report



Mandatory regulation

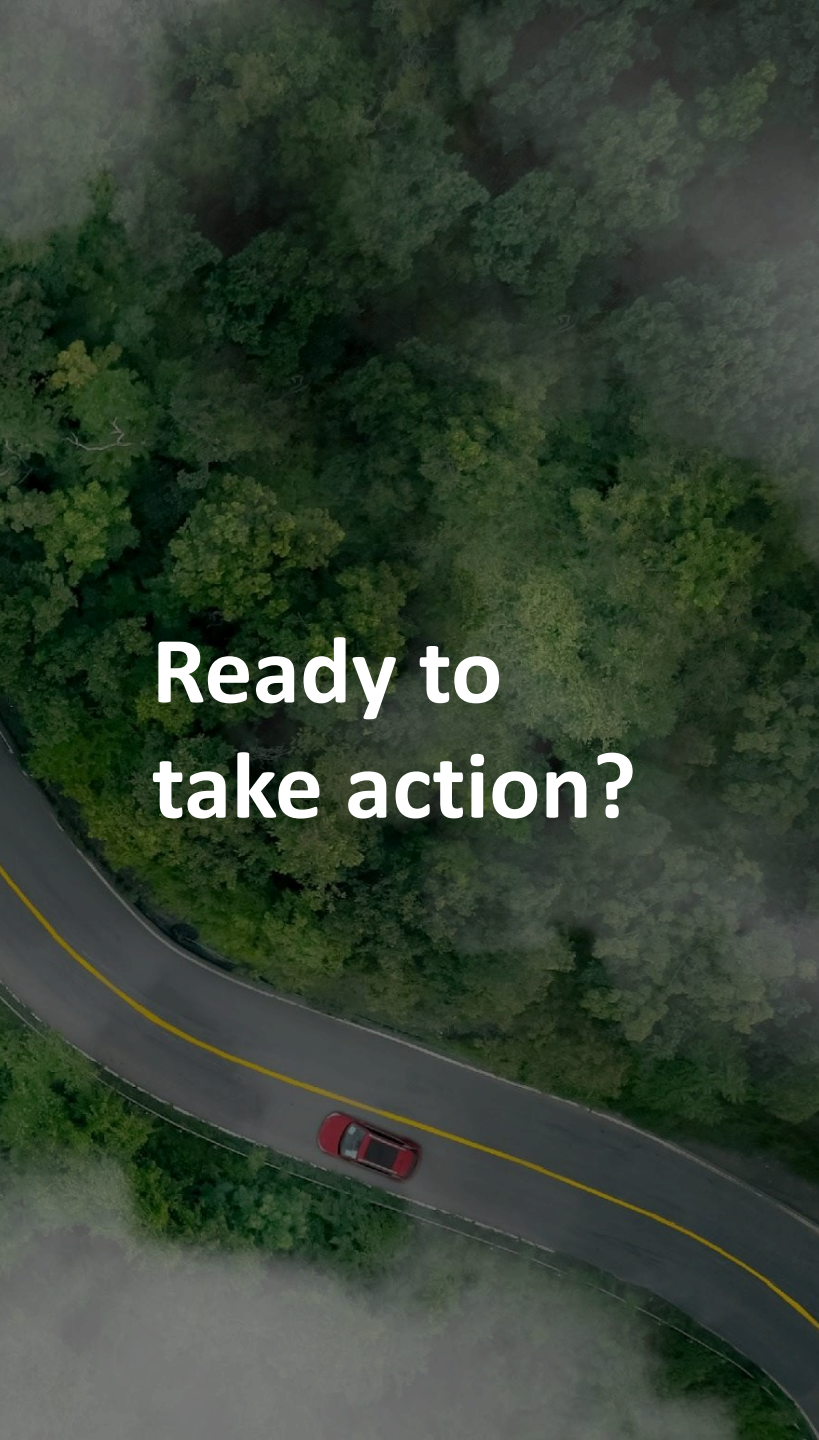


Voluntary standard, framework, or guidance

1. Included as an example, UK, Belgium and Spain among other countries in Europe that have passed food waste or organic waste recycling regulations; 2. Included as an example, other states that have passed mandatory composting city / state level laws include Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont and Washington

Return to key challenges





Ready to
take action?

How to become the next changemaker:

- 1 **Explore practical resources** to tackle key sustainability challenges
- 2 **Connect with our experts** to accelerate your sustainability journey
- 3 **Join the CGF** to collaborate with industry leaders and drive positive change

Thank you

