

# The U.S. Food Waste Challenge



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# Food Waste and the Future of Food

How will we feed 2 billion more people by 2050 while preserving our natural resources?



# Reducing Food Waste is Part of the Answer

National Geographic (Jonathan Foley) May 2014

Five solutions:

- Freeze agriculture's footprint
- Grow more on the farms we've got
- Use resources more efficiently
- Shift diets
- **Reduce waste: “Of all of the options for boosting food availability, tackling waste would be one of the most effective.”**

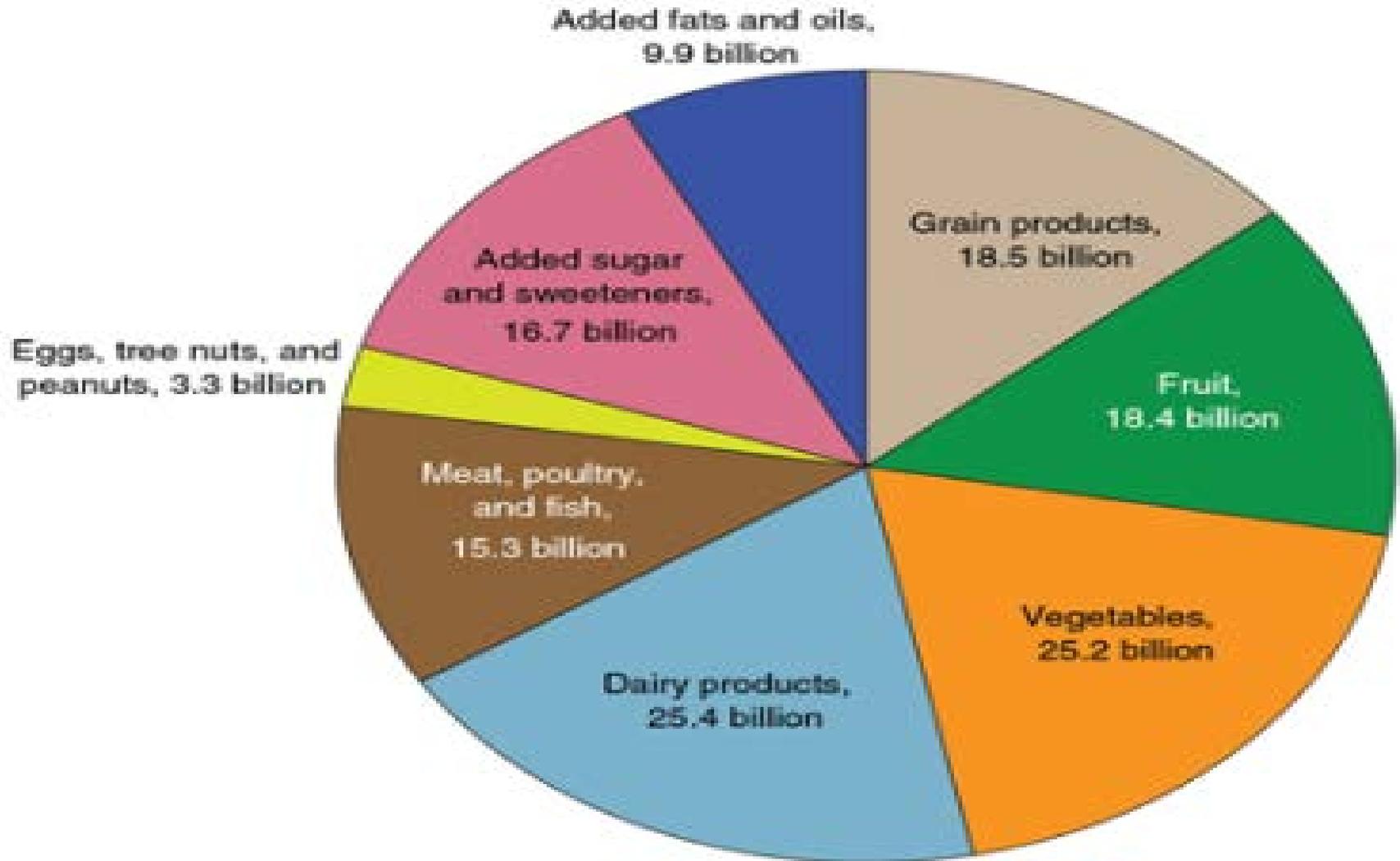
# Food waste in the United States is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply

Primary source of U.S. food waste estimates:

- Extrapolation from USDA's Economic Research Service's estimate of food loss at the retail and consumer level of 31 percent in 2010 (ERS's Loss-Adjusted Food Availability Data Series)

**ERS definition: Food loss is the edible amount of food that is available for consumption but is not consumed for any reason**

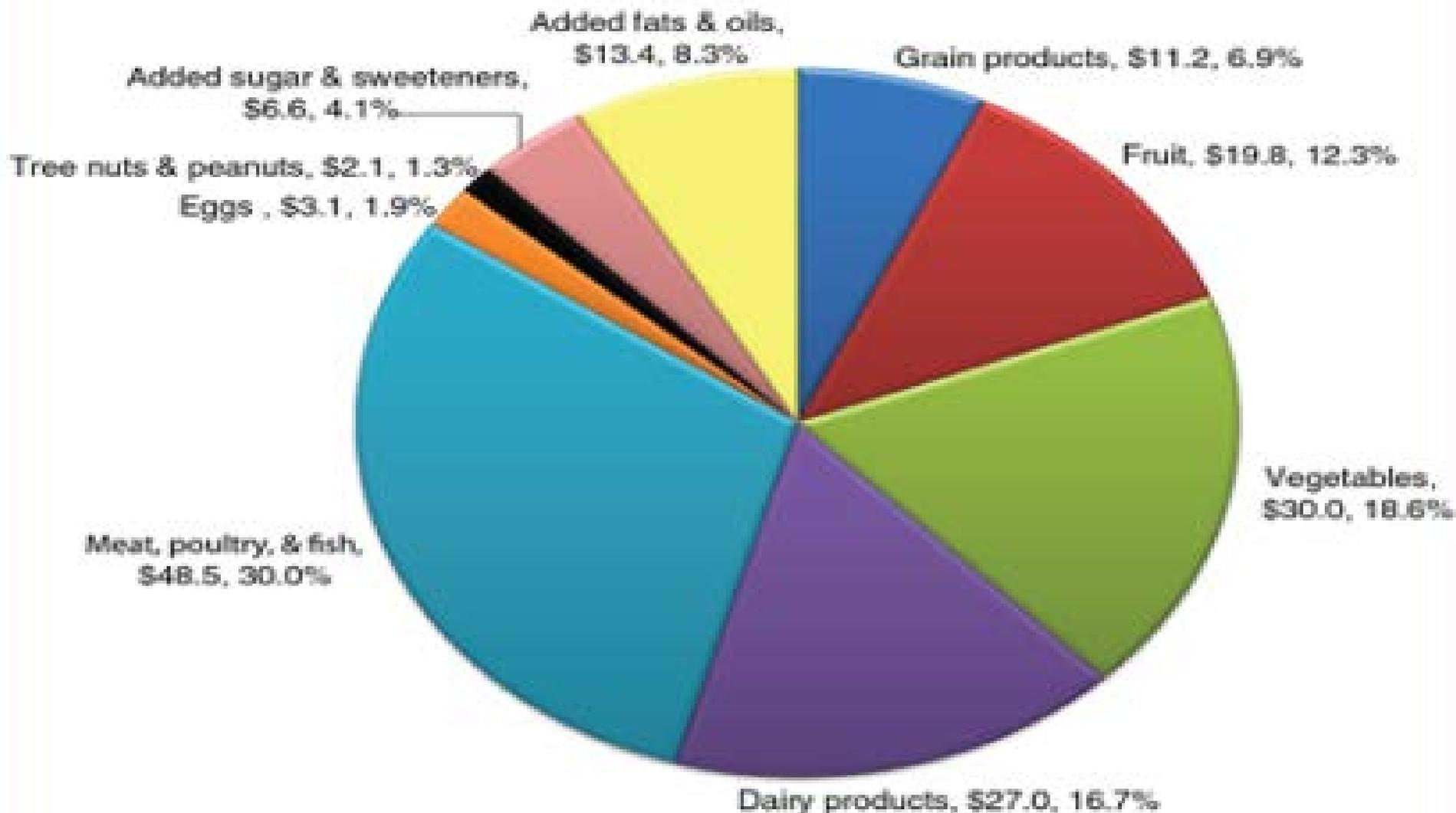
# Food Loss at retail and homes 133 billion lbs in 2010



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Loss-Adjusted Food Availability Data.

# Food Loss at retail and homes valued at \$162 billion in 2010

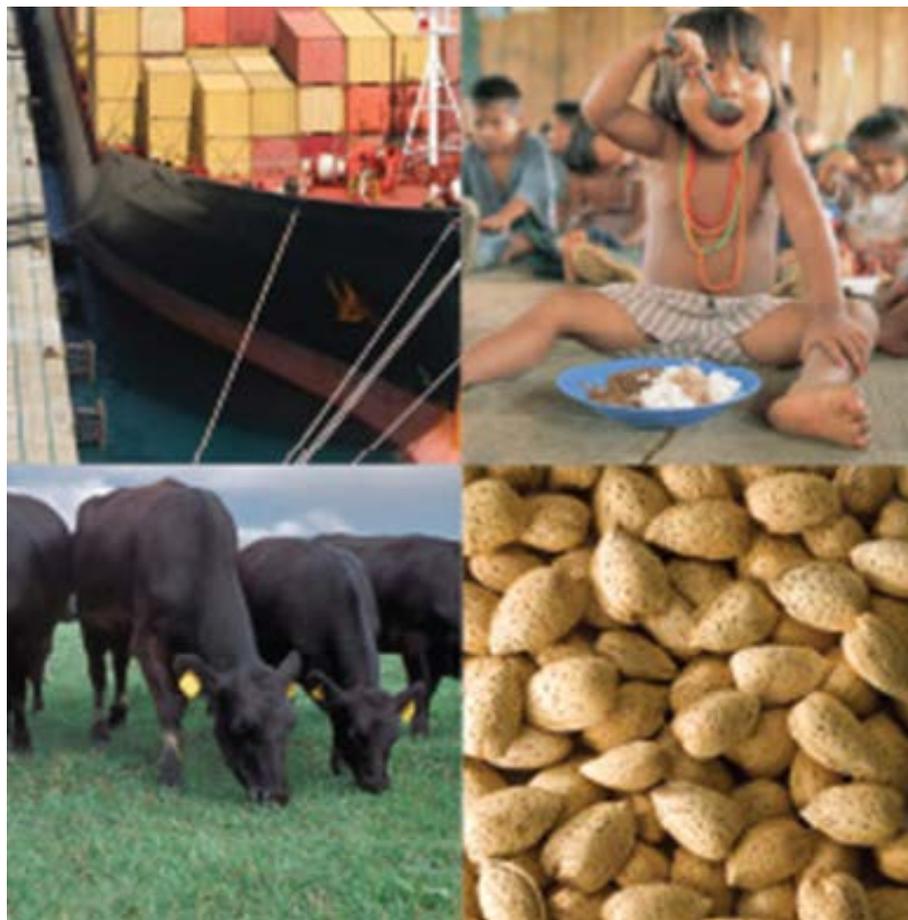
Billion dollars



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Loss-Adjusted Food Availability Data.

# Food waste has widespread ramifications

- Food security
- Environment
- Climate change



# Food waste is a food security issue

Wholesome food that is wasted could help feed families in need through donations to food pantries and soup kitchens



# Getting wholesome food to those in need

- ***The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act*** provides liability protection to food donors to help encourage the donation of food and grocery products to qualified nonprofit organizations.
- ***Internal Revenue Code 170e3*** provides enhanced tax deductions to businesses to encourage donations of fit and wholesome food to qualified nonprofit organizations serving the poor and needy.

Feeding America, a leading domestic hunger-relief charity, estimates that food donations supplied 2.7 billion meals to its clientele in 2010

# Food waste is a food security issue

Wasted food distorts attitudes about the affordability of healthy diets

In 2010, the amount of uneaten food in homes and restaurants was valued at roughly \$371 per U.S. consumer – more than an average month's worth of food expenditures and about 3 times average SNAP benefits



**That money could help families afford healthier diets**

# Food waste is an natural resource issue

In 2010, an estimated 133 billion pounds of food from U.S. retail food stores, restaurants, and homes went uneaten

All of the resources that went into producing that wasted food – including the land, labor, water, pesticides, and fertilizers – could have been saved or gone to uses of higher value to society.

- 44 Sears Towers of food waste
- A mega city of natural resources wasted



# Food waste is a climate change issue

By reducing the amount of food we toss into the trash, we can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions

*EPA estimates that in the United States:*

- Food is the single largest component of municipal solid waste going to landfills
- Food waste generates methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide
- Landfills are the third largest source of methane in the U.S.

# U.S. Food Waste Challenge

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency challenge producers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, counties, and other government agencies to join the effort to:

**Reduce** food loss and waste

**Recover** wholesome food for human consumption

**Recycle** discards to other uses

See  
17  
27  
W

**Keep Good Food Out of Your Garbage Pail and Kitchen Sink  
Don't Feed High-Priced Human Food to Hogs or Chickens**

# WASTE NO FOOD!

## HOUSEHOLD WASTE ABOUT 700 MILLION DOLLARS

"For partial immediate relief, every individual and community should consider seriously the matter of food conservation and the limitation of waste. As a nation we seem to have a disinclination to economize. In many homes there is a strong feeling that it is "only decent" to provide more food than will be eaten and that it is degrading to eat less. The experts of the Department of Agriculture report to us that the dietary studies made by them point to an annual food waste of about \$700,000,000. Of course, the waste in families of very limited means is slight, but in the families of moderate

and ample means the waste is considerable. Even if the waste were reduced by half, the waste would still be enormous. "The food waste in the household, the experts assert, results in large measure from food preparation and food cooking, from improper care and handling, and, in well-to-do families, from serving an undue number of courses and an over-abundant supply and failing to save and utilize the food not consumed. As an instance of improper handling, it is illustrated that in the preparation of potatoes 20 per cent of the edible portion in many cases is discarded."—*Journal of Agriculture, March 1, 1917.*

# FOOD IS WASTED

**When anything edible is allowed to go to the garbage pail or allowed to spoil for lack of proper handling**

### FOOD IS WASTED

When too much is served at a meal. Uneaten portions are left on the plate and later thrown into the garbage pail. Learn to know the needs of your family and serve such as more than you think he will want.

When too much is prepared for a meal. Unserved portions are likely to be thrown into the garbage pail or allowed to spoil. Many housewives do not know how to use left-over foods to make appetizing dishes.

### FOOD IS WASTED

When burned or spoiled in cooking. Improperly prepared or poorly seasoned food will be left on the table and probably wasted. Buy food wisely and then prepare it carefully.

When handled carelessly. Buy clean food, keep it clean until used, and be neat in all details of cooking and serving. This means waste and is a valuable health measure as well.

# FOOD IS WASTED

**When we eat more than our bodies need for growth and repair and to supply energy for our work**

Overeating tends to poor health and fat instead of firm, makes us sluggish and indolent instead of energetic and successful. Eat enough and no more. Eat for physical and mental efficiency.



**DEMONSTRATE THRIFT IN YOUR HOME**  
MAKE SAVING, RATHER THAN SPENDING, YOUR SOCIAL STANDARD



Begin to save today. For practical advice on how to feed your family efficiently and make the most of the food you buy or raise write to-day to your State Agricultural College, to your county agent, or to the

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

WWI era

LICK THE PLATTER CLEAN



Don't Waste **FOOD**

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**CAN**

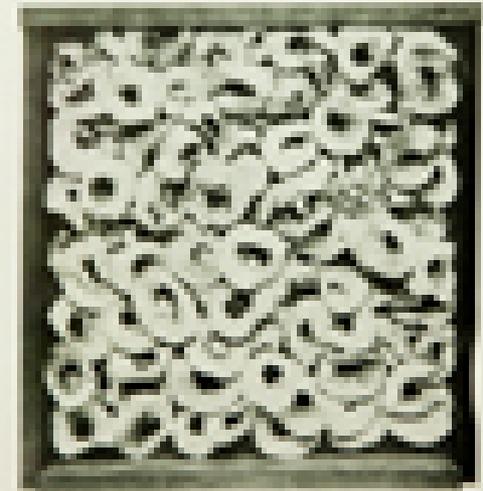
**FRUITS AND  
VEGETABLES**

**DRY**



**DON'T LET GOOD  
FOOD SPOIL**

**SEND FOR FREE BULLETINS:  
839-HOME CANNING  
841-HOME DRYING**



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

WWII era



# Food

- 1 - buy it with thought
- 2 - cook it with care
- 3 - serve just enough
- 4 - save what will keep
- 5 - eat what would spoil
- 6 - home-grown is best

*don't waste it*

WWI era

# U.S. Food Waste Challenge

Lead a fundamental shift in how we think about and manage food and food waste in this country

**400 participants by 2015**  
**1,000 by 2020**



# USDA's commitments

- Reduce food waste in the school-meals programs
- Educate consumers about food waste and food storage
- Streamline procedures for recovering misbranded meat and poultry
- Facilitate recovery of out-of-standard imported produce
- Pilot a meat composting program for inspection samples
- Update estimates the amount of food loss
- Increase food composting at headquarters
- Conduct research on new technologies for reducing food waste

**For more information**

**<http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste>**

