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**YOUR  
BUSINESS  
IS FOOD**

**DON'T THROW  
IT AWAY...**

Save money and boost  
profits by throwing  
away less food

## About Your Business is Food

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*Your Business is Food*, is a campaign designed to help your food manufacturing business **save money and boost profits**.

This starter pack outlines the simple three step process and includes free, easy-to-use resources that will help you **identify and reduce the amount of food your business throws away**.

**UK** FOOD MANUFACTURERS  
THROW AWAY

**£1.2bn**

WORTH OF FOOD EVERY YEAR



**GOOD TO KNOW:** As well as saving you money, this guide helps your business meet its legal obligations.

Check out the [Waste \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2012](#) and the [Waste \(Scotland\) Regulations 2012](#) for further information.



# A bit about food that's thrown away

## The Case for Action

Food waste can be generated across your business and in all stages of your operations. From purchasing and processing to storage and transport. Yet many manufacturers underestimate just how much waste is costing them.

It's not only food that's thrown away, but the money spent on ingredients, packaging, energy, water and labour to manufacture it. **These costs can be anywhere between five and twenty times the cost of disposal.**

By using the Your Business is Food materials you can reduce food thrown away and save money.

## The Benefits

1. Save money on purchasing and waste disposal
2. Less food thrown away means more profit and reduced costs
3. Reducing food waste benefits the environment and your company's reputation



# Act today and start saving money



Reducing food waste is easier than you might think



Review the food you throw away



Make an action plan



Keep it going!

## Worth Knowing

For every tonne of food waste prevented in manufacturing the average saving is

£1,200

# Review what's thrown away



## Why do a review?

It is an easy way to find out where food is being thrown away in your business. It will give you some clear ideas on how to throw away less food by finding 'hotspots', helping your business to make the biggest savings.

## I'm ready. Where do I start?

The easiest way to start is to take a walk around your site mid-shift, talk to staff and write down what you find out.

Use both our [Walk-Around Checklist](#) and [Food Waste Review Sheet](#) to help you investigate. Try to focus on the ingredients that would typically make it to final product. This is where your biggest savings will be.



## Start Today

1. Use our Walk-Around Checklist & Waste Review Sheet
2. Talk to your staff; ask for their help
3. Take photos; make a record of what you find

# Review what's thrown away



## How do I track food waste?

Use both the [Walk-Around Checklist](#) and the [Food Waste Review Sheet](#) to guide you through the process and quickly identify where the greatest cost savings are.

There is both a paper [Food Waste Review Sheet](#) and a [Food Waste Review Cost Calculator](#), so that you can use the one that is easiest!

## Example Waste Review – Pie Production Site

Food type	Location	Immediate reasons/root causes	How much?	Cost (approx)	Ideas for prevention
Chicken pieces	Delivery hall	Bags slit down one side, cut does not go all the way to corner, some pieces trapped	50g in each 10kg bag	<b>£3,000</b>	Change cutting method to remove entire edge of bag to improve emptying
Pastry	Pie lines 1&2	<i>Immediate:</i> filling runs out - surplus pastry scrapped <i>Root:</i> part-filled container used at end of batch = hard to predict when filling will run out	1% of total pastry input	<b>£10,000</b>	Improve sequencing of containers and adjust pastry mixing to give minimum surplus
High level of reject cooked pies	Packing room	Wrong settings on checkweigher falsely rejecting good product. <i>Other causes</i> – filling issues? Packaging seals?	1/3 all rejects 2/3 rejects	<b>£10,000</b> <b>£20,000</b>	Correct settings on checkweigher Investigate further

# Review what's thrown away



## Measuring in more detail

Having completed a walk-around of your site you should now have a clear snapshot of the food being thrown away. To improve this picture, you can **measure the food thrown away at each stage of your manufacturing process over a set period.**

Over time, ideally, you'll track food thrown away as part of your regular operational process.

- Start with a 2 week initial review to set your starting point for savings or 'baseline'
- Link to production cycles and avoid shutdowns
- Select dates for your review that represent 'business as usual'
- Repeat regularly to track improvements



# Review what's thrown away



## Gathering more information

Add to your review findings with more information taken from production records, utility and waste collection bills, as well as working with finance and quality control colleagues. If there are gaps in your data, try to make estimates.

## Building a clear picture of potential cost savings

- Use existing accounts or purchasing records to track raw material costs.
- Use production records to find out how much raw material is actually used, rather than how much is ordered and delivered.
- When calculating what is lost from the main production process, include trimmings, damaged finished product, etc.
- Use utility bills to assess and record energy and water usage so you can assign a proportion of the cost to ingredients and finished product.



# Review what's thrown away

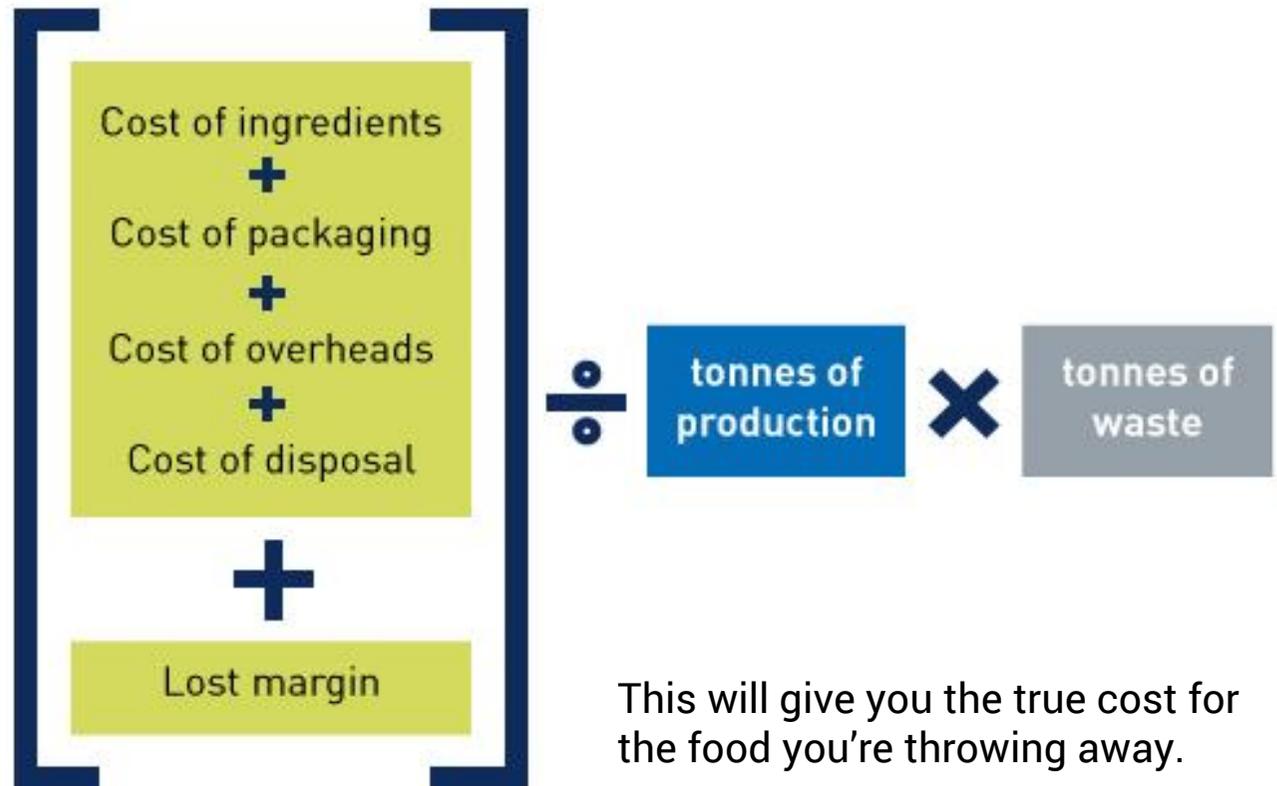


## How much is it costing?

The cost of throwing away food is often considered to be just that of disposal. To work out the true cost to your business, add on the cost of ingredients, packaging, energy, water, labour, storage, transport and lost profit margin.

## Calculating the true cost to your business

If working out this calculation is proving tricky, do an estimate that's more than just the waste collection cost, such as waste collection plus the ingredients cost.



This will give you the true cost for the food you're throwing away.

# Review what's thrown away



## Where are your food waste hotspots?

From your review findings, or from more detailed measurement, you can use the [IGD's Waste Identification Matrix](#) to log both the amount and cost of wasted food by product area, product, location or time period.

## How does this help?

Finding out which ingredients and products are most often thrown away, and what value each of these have, will help you identify your site's waste hotspots. These are where the greatest savings can be made.



Find your hotspots

Start saving

**WHERE?** - the specific location in the site.

**WHICH?** - particular products where more food is thrown away than other lines.

**WHEN?** - particular days / period of promotion cycle / particular season cause more food to be thrown away

# Make an Action Plan

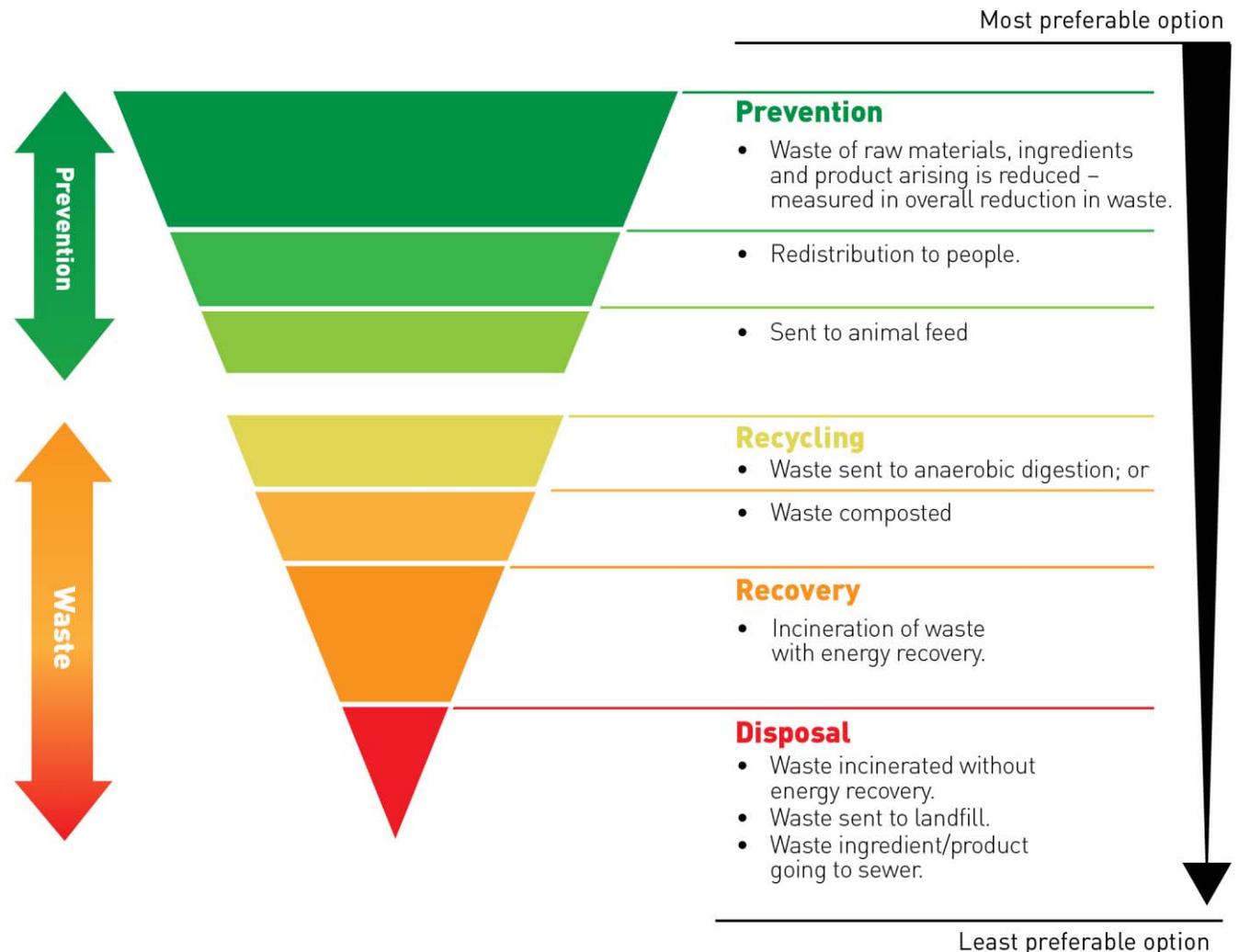


## The Food Waste Hierarchy

Interested in the bigger picture of throwing away less food? The food waste hierarchy is a guide to management priorities. It prioritises the prevention of food becoming waste in the first place but can also help you meet your business's legal obligations.

If you do have surplus food that is safe for human consumption, consider redistribution. If not, could it be used for animal feed?

After that, consider recycling (e.g. Anaerobic Digestion or composting) before disposing of food waste responsibly.



Most preferable option

### Prevention

- Waste of raw materials, ingredients and product arising is reduced – measured in overall reduction in waste.
- Redistribution to people.
- Sent to animal feed

### Recycling

- Waste sent to anaerobic digestion; or
- Waste composted

### Recovery

- Incineration of waste with energy recovery.

### Disposal

- Waste incinerated without energy recovery.
- Waste sent to landfill.
- Waste ingredient/product going to sewer.

Least preferable option

# Make an Action Plan



## Attention on prevention

Solutions that can be implemented at no or low cost, or with relative ease, offer the greatest direct savings to your business. Get a team together, including production line staff. **Focus on three hotspots**, ask why and where your team believe food is thrown away.

## Work together. Start saving

Get to the **root causes** of the food being thrown away, **identify possible solutions** and test them out. Pull all this together in an **Action Plan** and implement it to start saving your business money.



- Appoint a *Your Business is Food Champion* to lead your food waste action team
- Bring your team together
- Identify the root causes of food waste
- Develop an Action Plan and start saving

# Make an Action Plan



## Example Action Plan

Projects identified with scope to save				Action plan		Monitoring		
Project	Scope to save £	Resource or cost required	Benefits	Actions	Responsibility	% Complete	Savings achieved	Next review
Changeover waste	10,000	Staff team to investigate improved method	Reduced waste, reduced clean-up/ changeover time	<p>Trial of changed sequencing of filling mixes to ensure run ends on full container.</p> <p>Establish maximum work in progress for pastry to ensure coordination of end of run</p>	Production manager	0		
Check-weigher losses	10,000	Technical team	Improved checkweigher reliability; avoid potential false positives (underweight products) reaching market	Change settings on checkweigher 3 to avoid false negatives (unnecessary rejects)	Technical manager	10		
Chicken bags	3,000	Staff team to investigate improved method for emptying	Reduced chicken waste	Devise improved method of cutting bags	Production manager	20		

# Make an Action Plan



## Putting 'surplus' food to good use

Make it a priority to keep as much edible food as possible in the production process. When this can't happen and the food could still be eaten, redistribute it through partners such as FareShare, Company Shop or Olio.

## Secondary markets for edible food waste

Secondary markets for edible food and food redistribution charities can put what would otherwise be wasted to good use feeding people. Many organisations accept food that is past its 'best before' date or getting close to its 'use by' date (but not *after* its 'use by' date). And for food that can't be eaten by people, see if there are any opportunities to use it for animal feed, which could even give you extra income. Though be sure to [check out the rules](#).

## Making the most of waste food

Check with your waste management contractor whether food waste can be sent for anaerobic digestion or for composting so even the waste is put to good use. Check prices of various waste contractors to ensure you are getting the best deal.



# Keep it going!



## Make measuring the norm

Build food waste measurement into your regular business procedures or review these every few months to help your business to throw less food away. Once you have an estimate of the value of the food thrown away, investigate in more detail to fill in data gaps. Focus on the next biggest hotspots and keep adding to your action plan to make more savings.

## Share the results with your team

- Talk about why you did a food waste review and how you did it
- Explain the actions in place to reduce the food thrown away, and what you plan to do next
- Encourage your team to get involved.



## Be Ambitious!

- Share progress at meetings
- Highlight the best ideas from your staff
- Celebrate reaching goals and targets
- Recognise and reward your team

# Keep it going!



## Maximise the saving potential

If your business operates more than one site, be sure to talk about your successes with colleagues so that you make the most of savings.

## It all helps...

- Gain support from colleagues, including those in departments who may not see how much food is being saved but can help
- Boost team morale by helping your staff feel good about doing the right thing and making an impact
- Improve the reputation of your business.



## More help

1. [Self-Assessment Review for Food and Drink Manufacturers](#)
2. [Waste Mapping: Your Route to More Profit](#)
3. [Driving out waste in food and drink manufacturing](#)

# Tell us what you think

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Give us your feedback

Your feedback is vital to us at WRAP and won't take more than a couple of minutes to complete.

All information is treated confidentially.





[wrap.org.uk/ybifmanu](https://wrap.org.uk/ybifmanu)

Your Business is Food has been developed by WRAP under the Courtauld Commitment 2025. We would like to thank Love Food Hate Waste New South Wales and FoodSave London for their permission to reproduce material.