

Press release: Feedback supports MPs call for national food waste target

For immediate release

Feedback welcomes the publication of the recent Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee [report on food waste in England](#). As expert witnesses to the Committee, we are pleased that the Committee clearly recognises the high environmental cost of food waste, and has taken up many of our recommendations.

We particularly welcome the Committee's recommendation on the adoption of a national food waste reduction target. In setting this target, we call for a target that exceeds the UN's global goal of halving food waste and reducing food loss, by 2030. With existing private and third sector initiatives on food waste, we believe England is well-placed to show global leadership in combatting food waste and its environmental consequences, and meet this target by 2025.

We also welcome the Committee's reaffirming of the need to uphold the [food waste pyramid](#) and an incentive system that encourages its implementation, putting prevention first, redistributing where possible and transforming unavoidable waste using the least environmentally damaging methods available.

While we applaud the leadership shown by some retailers in food waste reduction, we share the Committee's view on the limits of voluntary approaches to food waste reduction in the private sector. We welcome the Committee's call for transparency on food waste, and mandatory, comparable reporting on food waste for businesses above a certain size. We believe reporting should cover both operational and key supply hotspots, and highlight how trading practices drive food waste across the supply chain. Our research suggests that one of the main causes of farm-level waste in the UK is overly rigid aesthetic specifications for produce; we welcome the Committee's recommendation to loosen these. In this regard, we further call for supermarkets to disclose their cosmetic specifications for fresh produce.

In combating household-level food waste, we share the Committee's view that much work remains to be done. We believe that the laudable initiatives to date in this area have shown the limits of awareness raising in achieving household behaviour change; we urge the government to further explore how supermarkets marketing, promotional and packaging practices drive overconsumption and waste. A study of household waste according to where households shop could usefully inform work in this area.

The report highlights that separation of food waste from other wastes remains woefully inadequate for English household waste, and non-existent for business waste: we urge the government to work closely with local authorities to urgently increase food waste separation, a necessary condition for recovery for animal feed or energy from waste.

Despite the Committee's highlighting of the waste hierarchy, the report is disappointingly quiet on the possibility of diverting food waste away from anaerobic digestion and landfill for animal feed. We urge the government to investigate the large-scale feeding of food waste to livestock, a measure that would have

considerable environmental benefit in England and internationally, and would help English farmers save costs.

-ENDS

Notes to editor:

1. Feedback was founded in 2009 to catalyse public understanding and support for ending food waste. Since then it has delivered over 40 food waste feast events worldwide, as well as launching two other campaigns The Pig Idea, and the Gleaning Network. www.feedbackglobal.org