

Statement on UK-wide mandatory food waste reporting

An estimated 40% of food is wasted globally¹, causing an estimated 8-10% of global emissions² and using an estimated 28% of the world's agricultural land area, larger than China and India combined³.

An estimated 10.4 to 13 million tonnes of food are wasted in the UK annually⁴ - equivalent to approximately 26-33% of the UK's 40 million tonnes of food imports per year⁵.

UK food waste causes an estimated 36 million tonnes CO₂eq in emissions domestically and overseas⁶, costs businesses and citizens approximately £19 billion⁷, and UK on-farm food waste alone is estimated to use an area of agricultural land half the size of Wales⁸ - land which could be used to help sustainably feed the UK and restore nature to address the biodiversity and climate crises.

At a time of climate crisis, food inflation and food insecurity, this food waste is a scandal.

The UK has a historic opportunity to halve its food waste by 2030, under its international commitments to Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.

The first step to dealing with this problem is food waste transparency, without which we cannot know how much food is wasted in the UK, or meaningfully assess progress.

There is over a decade of evidence to show that voluntary food waste reporting has failed – with a tiny minority of businesses publicly reporting their food waste figures.

We need mandatory food waste reporting.

We, the undersigned, call on the UK government to:

- 1. Urgently deliver a response to the Consultation on improved reporting of food waste by large food businesses in England⁹ – which closed in September 2022.**
- 2. Put forward a legislative proposal for mandatory public reporting of food waste for businesses, to be introduced by the end of 2023, including:**
 - a. Coverage of all food business sectors, including primary production, manufacturing, retail and hospitality and food service – to ensure coverage from farm to fork.**
 - b. Coverage of medium and large-sized businesses¹⁰, to ensure adequate coverage within each sector.**
 - c. Mandatory measurement for all medium and large food businesses to be introduced from 2024 (for mandatory reporting by 2025, preferably by Q1).**

We also call for the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to implement mandatory food waste reporting legislation for medium and large food businesses, from farm to fork.

We urge MPs, Lords and other policymakers within the UK government and devolved administrations to take action to indicate their support for mandatory food waste reporting for medium and large food businesses, from farm to fork including primary production.

Signatories:



Organisational signatories:

1. [Feedback](#)
2. [The Sustainable Restaurant Association](#)
3. [Olio](#)
4. [Friends of the Earth](#)
5. [This Is Rubbish](#)
6. [Greenpeace UK](#)
7. [Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming](#)
8. [Nature Friendly Farming Network \(NFFN\)](#)
9. [Green Alliance](#)
10. [Too Good To Go](#)
11. [Soil Association](#)
12. [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#)
13. [Landworkers Alliance](#)
14. [LEAF \(Linking Environment And Farming\)](#)
15. [Toast Ale](#)
16. [FoodCycle](#)
17. [FareShare](#)

18. [Feeding Britain](#)
19. [Plan Zheroes](#)
20. [Winnow](#)
21. [Oddbox](#)
22. [Slow Food in the UK](#)
23. [Hubbub](#)
24. [The Community Supported Agriculture Network UK](#)
25. [Riverford Organic Farmers](#)
26. [Sodexo](#)
27. [CH&CO](#)
28. [The Felix Project](#)
29. [Power Knot \(UK\) Ltd](#)

Public figures/academic signatories:

1. [Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall](#)
2. [Dr Carrie Bradshaw \(University of Leeds\)](#)
3. [Dr Dave Beck \(University of Salford\)](#)
4. [Dr Jordon Lazell \(University of Essex\)](#)
5. [Dr Maddy Power \(University of York\)](#)
6. [Prof Bob Doherty \(School for Business and Society, University of York\)](#)

References

¹ WWF, 'Driven to Waste: The Global Impact of Food Loss and Waste on Farms', 2021, https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_uk_driven_to_waste___the_global_impact_of_food_loss_and_waste_on_farms.pdf.

² IPCC, 'Climate Change and Land: An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems' (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2019), <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>.

³ FAO, 'Food Wastage Footprint: Impacts on Natural Resources - Summary Report', 2013, 37, <http://www.fao.org/3/i3347e/i3347e.pdf>.

⁴ WRAP, 'Food Surplus and Waste in the UK – Key Facts (Updated December 2022)' (WRAP, 2022), 5, <https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/Food%20Surplus%20and%20Waste%20in%20the%20UK%20Key%20Facts%20December%202022.pdf>.

⁵ Food Standards Agency, 'Our Food 2021: An Annual Review of Food Standards across the UK - Chapter 2: Going Global, Food Imports and Their Impact on the Standards', Food Standards Agency, 2022, <https://www.food.gov.uk/our-work/chapter-2-going-global-food-imports-and-their-impact-on-the-standards>.

⁶ WRAP, 'Pathway 2030' (WRAP, 2021), https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/WRAP-Pathway-2030-Delivering-a-50%25-reduction-in-the-GHG-footprint-of-UK-food-and-drink-summary-report_0.pdf.

⁷ Defra, 'Impact Assessment: Food Waste Measurement and Reporting for Food Businesses in England' (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022), https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/improved-reporting-of-food-waste/supporting_documents/Impact%20Assessment_Improved%20Food%20Waste%20Reporting%202022.pdf.

⁸ WWF-UK, 'Hidden Waste: The Scale and Impact of Food Waste in Primary Production' (WWF-UK, 2022), https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-10/WWF-UK%20HIDDEN%20WASTE%20REPORT%202022_2.pdf.

⁹ Defra, 'Consultation on Improved Reporting of Food Waste by Large Food Businesses in England' (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2022), https://consult.defra.gov.uk/environmental-quality/improved-reporting-of-food-waste/supporting_documents/Consultation%20document.pdf.

¹⁰ We use the government's definition, which states that businesses will be considered large if at least two of the following criteria are satisfied: 1) Turnover of £36m or more, 2) Balance sheet of £18m or more, or 3) 250 employees or more. A business will be considered medium if at least two of the following criteria are satisfied: 1) between 50 and 249 employees, 2) Annual turnover between £10.2 million and £35.9 million, or 3) Annual balance sheet total between £5.1 million and £17.9 million.