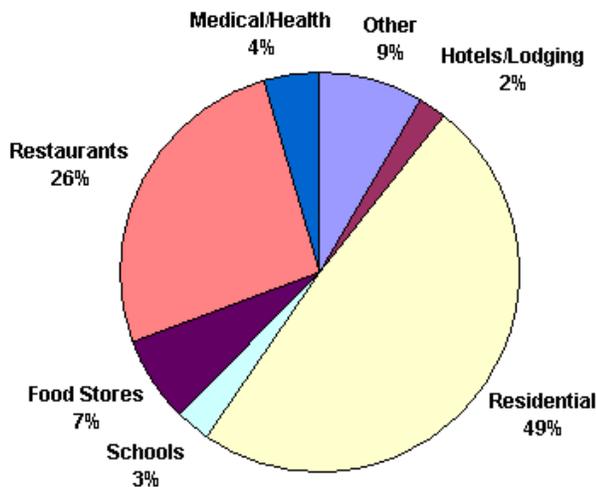


Food Scrap Management Overview

We Eat, Therefore, We Waste (But We Can Change That)

Nearly 6 million tons of food scraps are sent to California's landfills each year. That's 16 percent of all materials disposed into landfills. The primary sources of this food are shown below.

Food Scrap Generators



Source: 1999 CIWMB Statewide Waste Characterization Study.

Get Your Priorities Straight

Food is a terrible thing to waste. A tremendous amount of water, labor, and energy is required to grow, harvest, process, and transport food to the marketplace. Despite its long journey, food doesn't always make it to its intended use before spoiling. Even food that makes it onto our plates isn't always eaten. Businesses and consumers can use a number of strategies to minimize waste and get the best use from this valuable resource.

Food Waste Management Hierarchy

When economic and environmental priorities of food scrap use are placed in order of importance, the following "food waste management hierarchy" is established:

- 1) Waste prevention,
- 2) Donation for human consumption
- 3) Animal feed and rendering,
- 4) Composting,
- 5) Environmentally safe disposal.



Waste Prevention

Did you ever buy a crate of strawberries because they were on sale, but mold got to them before you did? Is your refrigerator vegetable freshener more of a "vegetable rotter?" It's cheaper, more sanitary, and less wasteful to buy only what you can eat or drink before spoilage.

Food retailers also can increase their cost savings through proper purchasing, handling, preparation and storage of food. Schools can practice "offer versus serve" to minimize lunch waste.

More information on this topic, as well as methods to reduce packaging waste, is available on the CIWMB Web site at www.ciwmb.ca.gov/FoodWaste/.

Donation

Food banks are community-based, professional organizations that collect food from a variety of sources, store it in a warehouse, and then distribute the food to hungry families and individuals through local human service agencies. Most food banks tend to collect less perishable foods such as canned goods, because they can be stored for a longer time.

Food rescue programs take excess perishable and prepared food and distribute it to agencies that serve hungry people. This is typically done in

temperature-controlled containers within a four-hour period in order to prevent foodborne illness.

Donation Is Risk Free! The Good Samaritan Act (Public Law 104-210) protects donors from liability as long as they donate in good faith. Please see the CIWMB Web site for more information on food donation.

Animal Feed and Rendering

Some foods that are not suitable for human consumption may be a delicacy for animals. Farmers and ranchers can use surplus food to feed pigs, cattle, and other livestock. Animal feed manufacturers use food residuals as a feedstock. These include bakery and other uniform processing wastes, particularly those high in protein or carbohydrates.

Rendering companies process animal by-products into saleable commodities. Grease from restaurants is a common by-product collected and processed by rendering or tallow companies. Many companies will also collect or accept meat, fat, bone, and animal carcasses.

For more detailed information on animal feed programs and rendering, see www.ciwmb.ca.gov/FoodWaste/.

Composting

Food that can't be donated or fed to livestock, such as rotting fruits and vegetables, stale bakery items, spoiled kitchen prep trimmings, and most leftover plate scrapings, can be composted or vermicomposted with earthworms into a beneficial soil amendment. Restaurants, grocery stores, schools, hospitals, prisons, and other facilities can benefit from composting food scraps either on-site or at a compost facility.

Food composting is a much better use of organic resources than landfilling, and it can also decrease garbage collection costs over the long term. For more information on food scrap composting, see www.ciwmb.ca.gov/FoodWaste/ and www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Organics/.

Keep 'Em Separated

Pre-consumer scraps are often easier to source-separate, since only a few employees need to be

trained versus an unlimited number of diners. These scraps, if separated for composting, typically do not include straws, cups, utensils, meat trimmings, or other animal-derived products. The chance of contamination is reduced when the diners are not separating food scraps.

Separation of glass, metal, or plastic food service ware is vital if postconsumer food scraps are to be collected for a pig feed program or composting. The use of biodegradable products can sometimes help facilitate the composting of postconsumer food scraps.

Definitions

Definitions are often used interchangeably and can vary. Clarify any uncertain language with others involved in your food scrap diversion program. Following are some food type definitions:

Food waste (in this fact sheet and elsewhere) is used both as a verb and as a noun, meaning all surplus food. The term has fallen out of favor with composters, who prefer to view this material as a resource rather than as waste material.

Food scraps refers to all excess food, including surplus, spoiled, or unsold food such as vegetables and culls (lower quality vegetables or trimmings such as onion peels or carrot tops), as well as plate scrapings. Food scraps are also called food "remnants," food "residuals," or food "waste."

Leftovers may refer to food prepared in excess that has not been served but may be collected for a human food donation or recovery program. Leftovers can also refer to plate scrapings that are not appropriate for human consumption.

Preconsumer food scraps refer to food that has not made it to a diner's plate. Preconsumer scraps may include food processing wastes such as vegetable culls, brewery by-products, coffee grounds, or kitchen preparation wastes. Restaurants, for example, often cut off inedible portions of food before serving it to diners. This can include carrot tops, outer leaves of lettuce, broccoli stems, or similar trimmings.

Postconsumer refers to food that has been served to diners but is not eaten; also called plate

scrapings. This may include vegetables, salad dressings, sauces, cheese, meat, and bones; and non-food items, such as napkins. If not separated, these and other non-food contaminants like straws, cups, and plastic utensils will be a part of this blend.

For More Information

The Food Scrap Management Program maintains a Web site, www.ciwmb.ca.gov/FoodWaste/, with more resources for food scrap generators. For more information, please call CIWMB staff at (916) 341-6596.

The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut energy costs, **Flex Your Power** and visit www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html.