

RENEW OUR WORLD FAQS



Food waste campaign in the UK

tearfund

ACTION



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WHY FOOD WASTE?

WHY DOES TEARFUND BELIEVE THAT REDUCING FOOD WASTE IS IMPORTANT?

'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.' (Romans 12:2) As followers of Jesus we are on a journey of transformation, and as part of this journey we can change our daily habits to help tackle poverty.

Each day, across the world, Christians join together in praying the Lord's Prayer, asking our Father to supply our daily bread. We ask God to provide us with his precious gift of food, and he graciously meets our need. Each meal is an opportunity for us to receive God's good gifts, with thankfulness.

Our brothers and sisters across the world pray this way too, yet many of the communities that Tearfund works with are struggling to feed themselves as a result of a changing climate.

A third of all food grown in the world goes to waste.¹ Most of this waste is preventable, yet we have become caught in a harmful grow-and-throw food cycle which does not value the gifts that God has given.

Here in the UK, we throw away edible food worth £470 per household each year.² This amounts to £13 billion of wasted food in total,³ enough to fill Wembley Stadium nine times over. Meanwhile, in our fields, around a third of perfectly edible vegetable crops are discarded due to supermarkets' strict cosmetic standards.⁴

In a world where so many are hungry, this can't be right. And the injustice doesn't end there. This wasteful cycle has a big carbon footprint, making climate change worse and leading to more droughts, floods and less reliable rain. Tearfund sees first-hand that this is making life harder for people in poverty. If we continue to live in a way that brings harm rather than renewal, families will be pushed further into poverty across the world.

1. *Global food losses and food waste: Extent, causes and prevention* (FAO, 2011)

2. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

3. Ibid

4. *Global food: Waste not, want not* (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013)

But Jesus shows us another way to live. We see his act of lavish generosity in the feeding of the 5,000 and we learn about God's gift of food, but that's not the end of the lesson. The leftovers are an important part of the story too. Jesus asks his disciples to gather up what is left. He specifically says 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.' (John 6:12)

In picking up the leftovers there is a key discipleship lesson: waste matters. Jesus doesn't just say 'Ah, leave it, surely the birds will eat it.' This food is valuable and is worth the energy and effort of collection: the leftovers were a part of the story. Globally, as we waste around a third of all food produced, the leftovers need to become a part of our story too.

Our food waste fuels climate change, which impacts the poorest communities most. If every single one of us eliminated our avoidable food waste, we could save 4.4 million tonnes of waste every year.⁵ This would be the environmental equivalent of taking one in four cars off the road in the UK.⁶ We all need to make lifestyle changes to play our part in addressing climate change. The combined impact of lots of people cutting their carbon emissions can make a big difference, and shows supermarkets and governments that this is an issue that matters to us.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FOOD WASTE?

'Food waste' is edible food that is thrown away as a result of actions by consumers or retailers. It can be split into three categories:

- Most food waste is 'avoidable': food that is no longer wanted or has been allowed to spoil or go past its prime, such as leftovers that are thrown away or bread that has gone mouldy.
- Some food waste is described as 'possibly avoidable': this is food that some people eat but others don't, for example bread crusts or potato skins.
- Other food waste is 'unavoidable': this is food that is not and never has been edible under normal circumstances and includes egg shells, pineapple skin, tea bags and coffee grounds.

The key thing though is that something can be done about food waste, whatever type, to reduce its impact on climate change. Avoidable and possibly avoidable food waste can be prevented. Unavoidable food waste could be composted or recycled, rather than ending up in landfill.

'Food loss' is different from 'food waste'. Food that is lost from other parts of the food system – such as during production, transport or processing – is known as 'food loss'. For instance, food that falls off a truck during transportation, or food that isn't stored properly after it is harvested so it goes off before it can be eaten. Food loss is usually the result of infrastructure problems, and is more common in developing countries. Food waste is a result of consumer or retailer behaviour, and is most prevalent in developed countries.⁷

Tearfund's campaign focuses on food waste, largely because this is something that we, as consumers and retailers, can influence directly. By reducing our food waste here in the UK we can also lessen the impact of climate change on people in poorer countries.

5. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

6. Ibid

7. *Causes and prevention of food losses and waste* (FAO, 2011)

WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME TO REDUCE MY FOOD WASTE AND GET MY SUPERMARKET TO DO THEIR BIT?

Food waste is a national and international issue, and if we are to meet the Global Goal to halve food waste by 2030, we all need to do our bit.

We know that 70 per cent of UK food waste is generated from people's homes. Research by waste reduction charity WRAP indicates that there are two main ways of reducing the amount of food wasted in our homes. The first is by influencing people's actions and behaviours towards waste food – that's the things that we can all do to waste less. We hope that by raising awareness of the issue of food waste and how it links to poverty and care of creation, people will feel motivated to make some changes. The second way to reduce food waste at home is by making changes to the food that is sold (for example, by extending its shelf life and the way it is packaged). By influencing supermarkets we can ask them to help us waste less through the way they produce and sell our food.

But not only that, supermarkets have a powerful role to play within the whole food system. We are asking them to commit to halving food waste by 2030, through examining their own practices and working to ensure that they are reducing food waste not only in their stores but throughout their supply chains too. Together, these actions could be powerful in reducing food waste from farm to fork.

FOOD WASTE AND GLOBAL POVERTY

HOW DOES ME WASTING LESS FOOD IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE THAT TEARFUND SERVES?

Food waste contributes to climate change, which is making life harder for people in poverty. Climate change leads to more droughts, more floods and less reliable rain. This can mean that crops fail and farmers can't harvest enough food to feed their families.

Our global food production system generates a huge amount of greenhouse gas – a fifth of all global greenhouse gas emissions.⁸ When we throw this food in to landfill it also generates methane. In addition, scarce water and land that has been used to produce this food is wasted. If food loss and waste was a country it would be the world's third top greenhouse gas emitter after the USA and China.⁸ It accounts for about eight per cent of humankind's greenhouse gas emissions.⁹

8. *Food wastage footprint and climate change* (FAO, 2015)

9. *Ibid*

In the UK, if we all stopped producing food waste from our homes, it would have the environmental benefit of taking one in four cars off our roads.¹⁰ And if supermarkets took action too on what they waste, the impact could be multiplied out, from farm to fork. This would help to break the unsustainable grow-and-throw cycle that is pushing people further into poverty around the world.

IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD MOST OF THE WASTE IS CAUSED BY POOR STORAGE AND LOSSES AFTER HARVEST – SO WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THAT? WHAT IS TEARFUND DOING ABOUT IT?

Better infrastructure, such as storage or transport, would make a big difference in reducing food losses in the developing world. Tearfund is working to reduce losses from storage in developing countries. For example, we work with partners in West and Central Africa and in Pakistan to create better grain storage facilities. We have also produced [resources](#) to help other organisations and communities store, buy and sell grain.

WHAT ARE THE GLOBAL GOALS AND WHY DOES THE ONE ON FOOD WASTE MATTER?

The Global Goals – also known as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – are 17 goals agreed by 193 countries with the aim of ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all by 2030. They cover global issues such as climate change, economic inequality and sustainable consumption. They are important because they tackle the root causes of poverty and provide direction and targets for countries to adopt to address these global issues up until 2030.

Goal 12 is about making production and consumption more environmentally responsible. It includes a target (12.3) to:

'By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.'

There are two parts to this target:

- Halving food waste – the edible food that is thrown away as a result of actions by consumers or retailers. There is no agreed year for a baseline for this; a roadmap will help us to know from which year supermarkets are measuring it.
- Reducing food losses throughout the supply chain, including on farms and during transportation and storage.

This target is important because, at present, a third of all food produced is never eaten.¹¹ This unnecessary grow-and-throw cycle has a big cost for those living in poverty. Food waste produces about eight per cent of humankind's greenhouse gas emissions, making climate change worse and leading to more droughts, more floods and less reliable rain. The impacts of climate change leave many people in poverty struggling to feed themselves and their families. By tackling food waste, we can break this harmful cycle.

10. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

11. *Global food losses and food waste: Extent, causes and prevention* (FAO, 2011)

IS NORTHERN IRELAND, WALES OR SCOTLAND DIFFERENT?

The Global Goals apply to the whole UK. Most supermarkets in NI, Wales and Scotland have signed up to Courtauld 2025 – a voluntary initiative which commits them to the aim of cutting food waste by one fifth by 2025, which helps on the way to meeting the Global Goal.

In February 2016, Scottish government announced that it was going to set an ambitious target to reduce food and drink waste by 33 per cent by 2025 compared to a 2013 baseline. The Scottish Food Waste Reduction Target is the first of its kind in Europe, putting Scotland at the forefront of global action to tackle food waste. The target puts Scotland on track to deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goal of halving food waste by 2030. This does not include how the target will be achieved, so we still want supermarkets to tell us their route – through a roadmap – to halving their food waste. Food businesses in Scotland have also been legally required, since January 2014, to separate their food waste collection. This helps to reduce the environmental impact of food waste collected, but we still need supermarkets and households to be doing more to reduce food waste in the first place.

Household food waste levels in Wales are lower than in the rest of the UK. In Wales, nine out of ten households have access to separate food waste collection. For the UK as a whole, just one in four households have access to separate food waste collection.¹²

IF WE REDUCE OUR FOOD WASTE AND BUY LESS FOOD, ISN'T THAT BAD NEWS FOR THE PEOPLE MAKING IT, INCLUDING FAIRTRADE PRODUCERS AND HARD-PRESSED UK FARMERS?

The food system is inefficient, and it is often producers and farmers who suffer as a result of that. Supermarkets and farmers forecast how much food they think will be wanted by consumers. When that forecasting is inaccurate, and supermarkets don't accept all the food produced, it's usually farmers who pay the cost. Farmers also lose out because of strict cosmetic standards.¹³ In the UK, as much as 30 per cent of vegetable crops are not harvested because they don't meet supermarkets' exacting cosmetic standards. The UK's National Farmers Union launched a scheme in 2015 to support British farmers in having more of their seasonal produce accepted; this would reduce food loss and be better for UK farmers. This is why we're asking supermarkets to play their part in reducing food losses and food waste.

Producers and farmers in the UK and abroad also directly feel the impacts of climate change. Agriculture is very vulnerable to extreme weather events such as flooding and to unreliable rainfall. In the UK, much of the fertile soil is close to the sea and at low altitude, making it vulnerable to sea level rise as a result of climate change.¹⁴ Taking action on climate change is good for producers and farmers.

12. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

13. *Global food: Waste not, want not* (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013)

14. *Agriculture and climate change - parliamentary briefing note* (House of Commons Library, 2012)

WHAT ABOUT FOOD PACKAGING? ISN'T THIS A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN FOOD WASTE?

Food waste has a bigger environmental impact than packaging.¹⁵ That's why we're focusing our campaign on food waste. That said, you can also reduce your carbon footprint by avoiding food that is over-packaged or in non-recyclable packaging.

FOOD WASTE AND CHURCH

WHY SHOULD MY CHURCH GET INVOLVED IN THIS CAMPAIGN?

'Give us this day our daily bread'...Christians across the world pray this prayer. We pray it silently, out loud, together and alone. We ask God to provide us with his precious gift of food, and he graciously meets our need. Each meal is an opportunity for us to receive God's good gifts, with thankfulness.

We believe that food is a precious gift, generously given to us by God. Yet today a third of all the food grown in the world will go to waste.

And while bread has such special significance for us as Christians, we throw away 460,000 tonnes of it a year from our homes in the UK- the equivalent of 177 million slices a week.

Most of this waste is preventable, yet we have become caught in a harmful grow-and-throw food cycle which does not value the gifts that God has given.

As Christians, we can pledge to take simple, everyday steps to reduce our food waste at home and in our churches. Earlier this year, we launched the *Renew Our World* campaign with churches around the world. We have a hope and a vision of a renewed world where Christians in rich and poor countries stand together to stop people being pushed further into poverty.

Much has been said about the issue of food waste in the UK, but little has been said about the environmental impact of food waste, which directly affects people in poverty around the world. This is where we believe God is calling us to speak. Food waste has a big carbon footprint, making climate change worse and leading to more droughts, floods and less reliable rain. Tearfund sees the impact of this first-hand amongst the communities that we serve.

We hope that this campaign will cause us as Christians to reflect on God's gift of food, to reflect on our own lifestyles and to take action. We hope that many will gather together and hold *Food Waste Feasts* which will give your church, homegroup or youth group a chance to discuss these issues over a meal and then to individually, and potentially collectively, take action on food waste. If we use our food to the full, and call on supermarkets to do the same, we'll not only renew our own relationship with food – we'll help families to flourish whilst renewing our world, piece by piece.

15. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

FOOD WASTE AT HOME

I DON'T WASTE ANY FOOD AT HOME, AND NEITHER DOES ANYONE I KNOW! IS THIS REALLY A PROBLEM?

Three in five of us believe that we waste none or hardly any food,¹⁶ but the data shows otherwise. UK consumers collectively throw away £13 billion worth of food every year – that's 7.3 million tonnes of food;¹⁷ enough to fill Wembley Stadium to the brim nine times over.

On an individual level, this means that the average person wastes around 113kg of food per year.¹⁸ This amounts to throwing away the equivalent of £200 every twelve months. For the average household this amount rises to £470 and for the average family, £700.¹⁹ We know this because the charity WRAP has been collecting data on household food waste since 2007. It does this by collecting data from local authorities about the waste they collect, and surveying households. In fact, the UK is a leader in collecting data on food waste.

Some food waste is possibly avoidable; which means some people throw it away but others don't. For example, you might eat your bread crusts but others may not. Why not try tracking your food waste for a week to see what's going into your bin that could be avoided?

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS I CAN TAKE TO REDUCE MY FOOD WASTE AT HOME?

It's easy to renew our food at home and keep food out of the bin AND it has a big impact too.

In the UK if we stopped wasting food from our homes it would have the environmental benefit of taking one in four cars off the road!

There are three steps you can take: **REFUSE, REDUCE AND SHARE!**

REFUSE: to buy more than you need. Planning your meals for the week, checking date labels and using a shopping list are all simple ways you can reduce your waste.

REDUCE: Make friends with your fridge and freezer to make your food last longer, and get to know your portion sizes to avoid accidentally cooking too much.

SHARE: Get creative and try new recipes to make the most of your leftovers, and share these tips with your friends.

16. *Unite in the food waste fight* (WRAP, 2017)

17. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

18. *Ibid*

19. *Ibid*

Two websites we like for tips and recipes on cutting your personal food waste are Love Food Hate Waste www.lovefoodhatewaste.com and The Real Meal Deal www.therealmealdeal.com

You can also visit our page at www.tearfund.org/waste for more information. And sign up for our *Tearfund Action* emails where we will be featuring some of your stories and tips on how you reduce food waste at home.

IS IT JUST THE FOOD WASTE INTO LANDFILL THAT'S BAD – IF I RECYCLE OR COMPOST THAT'S OK, RIGHT?

Sorting any unwanted food for collection or home composting is better than sending it to landfill. Local authority collections recycle food waste into fertiliser, soil improver or to create electricity that is then fed into the national grid. Recycling or composting are good options for unavoidable food waste like egg shells, banana skins and tea bags.

However, the majority of our food waste is avoidable. Recycling and composting are good but doing things to prevent food waste – like meal planning so you buy only what you need, or using up leftovers – is even better.

This is because the biggest environmental benefit – and therefore the biggest benefit to people in poverty – is from preventing food from being wasted in the first place. This would reduce the energy, water and other resources used to grow, harvest, transport, process, sell, store and cook the food. Preventing food waste reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about eight times more than by diverting it from landfill to anaerobic digestion.²⁰

WHAT IS TEARFUND DOING ABOUT FOOD WASTE WITHIN ITS OWN OPERATIONS?

Tearfund is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint. Within our Teddington office, our canteen staff work to reduce food waste from our meals; leftovers from a meal at the start of the week will be the basis of a meal later that week. All kitchens have a food bin provided to prevent that food from going to landfill. Food from the food bin is collected by **First Mile**, which turns it into biofuel. Coffee from our coffee machines is also recycled by First Mile and turned into biofuel.

Tearfund operates cafés at a number of venues across the UK such as New Wine, Spring Harvest etc. We generate little food waste through our cafés due to the nature of the food we sell (such as longer life items). Where possible we make every effort to reduce waste through our operations, however we are dependent on the nature of the recycling facilities provided by our hosts at each event.

We are launching our food waste campaign with five *Food Waste Feasts* across the UK, which are events gathering people to enjoy a meal using food that would otherwise be wasted. We are also asking supporters to organise their own *Food Waste Feasts* in their churches and local communities to discuss the issues of food waste and to encourage others to take action. We are asking all organisers to ensure, as far as possible, that any leftover food is gathered up and put to good use after the event – such as by inviting diners to bring containers with them to take food home.

20. *Food and drink waste from households in the UK* (Nutrition Bulletin, 2011)

FOOD WASTE AND SUPERMARKETS

WHAT ARE YOU ASKING SUPERMARKETS TO DO?

Supermarkets have a powerful role to play in reducing food waste, from farm to fork. For instance, they can relax strict cosmetic standards that lead to wasted crops, and they can stop encouraging customers to buy more food than they need.

The UN have set a Global Goal to halve food waste by 2030. We are asking supermarkets to show leadership by committing to halve food waste in their operations, and to publish a roadmap showing how they propose to achieve this, so that people in poorer countries can flourish.

I READ THAT SUPERMARKETS CREATE ONLY TWO PER CENT OF THE UK'S FOOD WASTE MOUNTAIN. WHY ARE YOU ASKING THEM TO TAKE ACTION WHEN HOUSEHOLDS AND MANUFACTURERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE OF THE WASTE?

Supermarkets are at the centre of our food supply chains, so they are in a position to reduce food loss and food waste. Stopping food waste from going to landfill is a good start, but the biggest environmental benefit – and therefore benefit to people in poverty – is from preventing the food from being wasted in the first place. This would reduce the energy, water and other resources used to grow, harvest, transport, process, sell, store and cook the food.

Whilst supermarkets' in-store food waste only accounts for two per cent of UK food waste, this is just the top of a larger food waste mountain. As hugely influential national retailers with international reach, supermarkets can lead the way in making changes along the food supply chain as well as supporting their customers to reduce their own food waste.

Supermarkets could lead the way in championing food waste reduction by:

- Working with suppliers to plan better, ensuring that food production does not exceed demand. Demand from consumers is influenced by a variety of factors, including the season, the weather and upcoming events/activities. More accurate forecasting and better coordination between supermarkets and growers would minimise the rejection of produce that is no longer wanted in store.
- Relaxing cosmetic standards. Supermarkets set their own standards for the appearance of their produce. In the UK, as much as 30 per cent of vegetable crops are not harvested because they don't meet supermarkets' exacting cosmetic standards.²¹ This has nothing to do with the taste or nutritional quality of the produce.

21. *Global food: Waste not, want not* (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013)

- Avoiding marketing techniques that encourage consumers to overbuy e.g. 'buy one get one free'.

They could also reduce their food waste in store further by, for example:

- Changing food labelling. 'Best-before' and 'sell-by' dates often relate to food quality, not safety. Food that passes these dates is often still edible yet is thrown out by consumers.
- Redistributing food that would otherwise be thrown away for charities or community groups to use, e.g. food banks.

MY SUPERMARKET SAYS THEY ARE SIGNED UP TO THE COURTAULD 2025 INITIATIVE, WHICH WILL ENSURE THE UK MEETS THE GLOBAL GOAL TARGET. IS THIS THE ISSUE SOLVED?

Courtauld 2025 (C2025) is a UK initiative run by the charity WRAP with the aim of cutting food waste by one fifth by between 2015 and 2025. Many major supermarkets and manufacturers have voluntarily signed up to this target. If the Global Goal target is measured from the same year as C2025 (2007) then it is estimated that avoidable UK food waste will be reduced by 47 per cent by 2030.²² This is close to the Global Goal target.

However, this does not include food losses in the system. The Global Goal includes a target to reduce food losses throughout the supply chain. This is why we are also asking supermarkets to publish a roadmap to meeting the Global Goal, including addressing food losses in the supply chain.

WHICH SUPERMARKETS ARE DOING BETTER OR WORSE ON FOOD WASTE?

It's difficult to know which supermarkets are doing better or worse – that's why we want them to publish a roadmap which would show us where they are at and how they are going to halve their food waste and reduce food losses throughout the supply chain by 2030. At the moment, the charity WRAP collects and publishes data on food waste from the supermarket sector but they don't publish data for individual supermarkets. We do know that the UK produces around 10 million tonnes of waste every year,²³ and with supermarkets at a pivotal point in the supply chain, they could all do more to reduce food lost and wasted.



22. *Evidence from WRAP*, Efra inquiry (2017)

23. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

IF SUPERMARKETS DON'T SEND ANY FOOD TO LANDFILL IS THAT OK?

When organisations describe themselves as 'zero waste to landfill', they often send any waste to anaerobic digestion. This is better than landfill, because it prevents the greenhouse gas emissions that would be emitted from the rotting food. However, preventing the food waste in the first place reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about eight times more than diverting it from landfill to anaerobic digestion.²⁴ The biggest environmental benefit – and therefore benefit to people in poverty – is from preventing the food from being wasted in the first place. This would reduce the energy, water and other resources used to grow, harvest, transport, process, sell, store and cook the food.

2030 SEEMS A LONG WAY AWAY! WHAT'S THE POINT IN ASKING SUPERMARKETS TO TAKE ACTION NOW?

2030 is a long way off, but halving food waste and reducing food losses is an ambitious task so we all need to start to play our part now. 2018 is also a significant year for action on food waste and food loss. The Global Goal that includes food waste is going to be reviewed in 2018 at the high-level political forum for the Global Goals. In the UK, the charity WRAP which coordinates the Courtauld commitment – signed up to by retailers and manufacturers – is going to be reviewing ways to measure food lost from farms. Taking action this year will help to show supermarkets and governments that people care about the Global Goal and about more action being taken to reduce food losses and waste.

HAVE ANY SUPERMARKETS COMMITTED TO HALVING THEIR FOOD WASTE BY 2030?

None of the supermarkets have explicitly committed to this. They are signed up to Courtauld 2025 (C2025) – a voluntary initiative which commits them to the aim of cutting food waste by one fifth by 2025. If the Global Goal target is measured from the same year as C2025 (2007) then it is estimated that avoidable food waste will be reduced by 47 per cent by 2030.²⁵ This is close to the Global Goal target, but does not include possibly avoidable food waste or food losses throughout the supply chain. This is why we are also asking supermarkets to publish a roadmap to meeting the Global Goal, including addressing food losses in the supply chain.

ALL OF THE SUPERMARKETS HAVE A WONKY VEGETABLE RANGE NOW – HASN'T THAT DEALT WITH THE PROBLEM OF PRODUCE BEING THROWN AWAY BECAUSE IT DIDN'T MAKE THE GRADE?

In the UK, as much as 30 per cent of vegetable crops are not harvested due to their failure to meet retailers exacting cosmetic standards.²⁶ This means that their taste and nutritional value are fine; they just might be blemished or misshapen. Wonky vegetable ranges go some way to help with this

24. *Food and drink waste from households in the UK* (Nutrition Bulletin , 2011)

25. *Evidence from WRAP*, Efra inquiry (2017)

26. *Global food: Waste not, want not* (Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 2013)

problem, but they tend to be specialist ranges of food. Increasing the acceptable size for potatoes by just two millimetres across product ranges could reduce waste by 15 per cent.²⁷ To have more of the food crop being accepted, we need not just specialist ranges but cosmetic standards to be changed across all product lines.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF SUPERMARKETS ARE TAKING ACTION AS A RESULT OF ME WRITING TO THEM?

We are more powerful when we act together, and together we can show our supermarkets that we care about food waste and want them to do more. On each campaign postcard or email you will be asked to fill in the name of the supermarket where you most regularly shop. We will then add up all the numbers for each retailer, and tell them how many of their customers want them to take action. We will follow up with them to get a response to you, and we will update you on progress through our communications – so make sure you are signed up to our *Tearfund Action* emails! Sign up here: www.tearfund.org/action.

If supermarkets confirm their commitment to the Global Goal, or even better, publish their roadmap to meeting it, then we'll know they're taking action because of you writing to them. Publishing a roadmap would be a sign that they are taking the lead on meeting this ambitious Global Goal. We want them to publish this soon, so that they can show their commitment ahead of a high-level political forum for the Global Goals in 2018.

FOOD WASTE REUSE

IF FOOD WASTE IS REDISTRIBUTED TO FEED THE HUNGRY IN THE UK, SURELY THAT'S A GOOD USE OF IT? IF SUPERMARKETS REDUCE THEIR WASTE THEN SURELY HOMELESS SHELTERS, CHURCH MINISTRIES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS WILL BE LEFT WITHOUT?

Where there is food waste, it should be redistributed to people as far as possible to ensure that it gets eaten, rather than being sent to anaerobic digestion where the food is broken down to generate energy. Supermarkets need to ensure that they have good systems in place to redistribute food that is at risk of being wasted. Food that has been produced at great environmental and human cost should be used to the full, and we are thankful for the many organisations that use this food well to feed and support those in need. However, this does not tackle the underlying problem of food waste. Redistributing unwanted food to food banks does not deal with the root causes of food poverty, which is income related.²⁸ Food banks provide short-term and immediate relief for people.

27. *Evidence from WRAP*, Efra inquiry (2017)

28. *Why giving surplus food to charities is not a solution to food poverty* (City, University of London, 2017)

There is however no evidence that they are a long-term solution to reducing food waste or creating food security for people in poverty in the UK. Food insecurity needs to be addressed by governments guaranteeing people's standard of living, which includes access to food.²⁹

Food that is redistributed for human consumption is also not included in the figures for food waste so redistribution won't reduce the 10 million tonnes of food waste produced in the UK every year.³⁰

DOESN'T FOOD WASTE GET USED SOMEHOW – FED TO ANIMALS OR BROKEN DOWN TO MAKE ENERGY – WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

Once food waste is created, it isn't a bad solution to send it to feed animals or to create energy from it (a process called anaerobic digestion), but the biggest environmental benefit – and therefore the biggest benefit to people in poverty – is from preventing the food from being wasted in the first place. This would reduce the energy, water and other resources used to grow, harvest, transport, process, sell, store and cook the food.

Food redistributed for animal feed is also not included in the food waste figures, so won't help to reduce the around 10 million tonnes of food waste the UK produces every year.³¹ It's not included within food waste figures because the animals fed with this food will then be eaten by people. This is, however, an inefficient way to use food grown for human consumption. Animals use up some of the calories that they eat because they move around and need to keep their body temperature at the right level. This means that we get less calories from the animals than we provide to them.

That said, there will always be some unavoidable food waste e.g. bones, egg shells and banana peel. Anaerobic digestion is the process where waste breaks down in an airless (anaerobic) environment to create biogas, which is captured and used as a low-carbon energy source. This is a good alternative to putting food waste in landfill where it would release methane. But preventing food waste reduces greenhouse gas emissions by about eight times more than diverting it from landfill to anaerobic digestion.³²

I'VE HEARD THAT WE COLLECT RENEWABLE GAS OFF LANDFILL SITES. TEARFUND TELLS US WE NEED THESE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Methane produced by landfill can be captured and used to fuel engines to generate electricity, which is fed directly into the national grid. The number of landfill sites capturing methane rose from one per cent in 1990 to 61 per cent in 2013.³³ This is a good option to minimise the climate change contribution of waste that ends up in landfill. Even better though, is to prevent that waste from arriving at landfill in the first place.

29. *Ibid*

30. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

31. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

32. *Food and drink waste from households in the UK* (Nutrition Bulletin, 2011)

33. *Waste and F gases factsheet* (Committee on Climate Change, 2013)

Even modern landfill sites can't capture all of the methane – around one fifth of the methane is not captured and therefore contributes to climate change.³⁴ The biggest environmental benefit – and therefore the biggest benefit to people in poverty – comes from preventing food from being wasted in the first place.

You can find out about clean energy solutions through Tearfund's *[Big Church Switch](#)*.

WHAT ABOUT RESTAURANTS, PUBS, HOTELS, SCHOOL CANTEENS, ETC? ARE THEY IMPORTANT TOO OR ARE SUPERMARKETS MUCH BIGGER?

They do matter too – tackling an issue as large as the 10 million tonnes per year food waste³⁵ problem requires everyone to do their bit. The hospitality industry is responsible for about 17 per cent of the UK's food waste so they can make a big difference too. We're focusing on supermarkets though because they have a pivotal role in the supply chain; they can influence farmers, suppliers, manufacturers and consumers.

CLIMATE CHANGE

SURELY THERE ARE MORE CARBON-INTENSIVE THINGS THAT WE SHOULD CUT DOWN ON FIRST, RATHER THAN REDUCING OUR FOOD WASTE?

Reducing our food waste is not the only thing that we can do, but it is something that we can all do immediately to reduce our carbon footprint – and it has a significant impact.

If food loss and waste was a country it would be the world's third top greenhouse gas emitter after the USA and China.³⁶ It accounts for about eight per cent of humankind's greenhouse gas emissions.³⁷ In the UK, if we all stopped producing food waste from our homes, that would be the equivalent to one in four cars off our roads.³⁸

However we all need to be aware of our carbon footprint and taking a range of different steps to cut our footprint down is useful. Tearfund recommends making a number of changes to help reduce our individual carbon emissions – including flying less, eating less meat, and switching to a renewable energy supplier.

34. *Ibid*

35. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

36. *Food wastage footprint and climate change* (FAO, 2015)

37. *Ibid*

38. *2015 Household food waste in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)

Two tools that you might find useful when considering your carbon footprint:

WWF's footprint calculator covers food, home and travel and will give you a percentage footprint compared to the level we need to be living at (and the UK average). There are also some great tips on how you can reduce your carbon footprint further.

Climate Stewards also has a calculator as well as an option to offset the CO₂ you generate through transport and energy use at home.

WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS CARE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

As an evangelical Christian organisation upholding biblical values, Tearfund maintains that Christians should follow Jesus by acting justly in our relationships with people and with the environment that God created; this is our biblical mandate to combat climate change and bring about justice for people and for the environment.

Loving our neighbours: 'Love does no harm to a neighbour.' (Romans 13:10) We need to recognise our connection with poor people who are suffering the most from climate change. We should demonstrate our love and concern by taking action personally and politically to tackle the problem.

Acting justly: 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8b) It's an injustice that the poorest communities suffer the most from climate change when they've contributed the least to the problem. We must campaign for justice in a changing climate.

Caring for creation: We believe the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. (Psalm 24:1) Throughout scripture we are reminded that God created the world for his purposes and we have responsibility to take care of it.

Living sustainably: 'I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.' (Philippians 4:12b-13) In response to the changing climate we need to examine our lives and our role in this before God. Can we change the way we live to have less impact on the earth and our neighbours? Can we be content without some of the stuff and lifestyle we take for granted? (Romans 12:1-2, The Message)

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS MAN-MADE – WHY IS TEARFUND CAMPAIGNING ON THIS?

Scientists have concluded with 97 per cent certainty that climate change is occurring as a result of human activity,³⁹ and that its impacts are already being felt, especially by developing countries.

The climate is constantly changing, but the rate of change occurring at the moment is unprecedented.⁴⁰ Although at times the media portrays a debate between those who accept and those who reject the existence of human-induced climate change, it is important to realise that this is not an equal debate. There is an overwhelming consensus in the scientific community that human-made global warming is a reality, and an enormous bank of scientific evidence that supports this consensus.

39. *NASA global climate change* (Accessed May 2017)

40. *Climate change 2014 synthesis report* (IPCC, 2014)

Tearfund believes average global temperature rise should not exceed 1.5°C to protect the poorest people and us all from catastrophic climate change.⁴¹ However, 'we are currently emitting about 40.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, from fossil fuel burning, cement production and land use change. That suggests we have just six years of business-as-usual emissions before the budget giving us a two-thirds chance of staying below 1.5°C is exhausted.'⁴²

Tearfund campaigns on climate change because the impact of climate change is one of the greatest injustices of our time. The climate is changing fast and the people least responsible for it are often the most vulnerable to its impacts. The developing world produces a tiny fraction of the greenhouse gases that rich countries produce yet the impacts are being felt the most in many of these countries. And over 100 million people could be pushed back into poverty by climate change by 2030.⁴³

Earlier this year, we launched the *Renew Our World* campaign with churches around the world. We have a hope and a vision of a renewed world where Christians in rich and poor countries stand together to stop people being pushed further into poverty.

We began by asking the UK government to bring light to poor communities by funding more renewable energy projects. We want to continue taking action by renewing our relationship with food. Every year, wasted food in the UK represents 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.⁴⁴ If we use our food to the full, and call on supermarkets to do the same, we'll not only renew our own relationship with food – we'll help people in poverty to flourish – and we'll renew our world, piece by piece.

For more in-depth answers on climate change and clean energy, see our [Renew Our World FAQs](#)

41. *Two degrees one chance* (Tearfund, 2007). NOTE: Tearfund has revised its position to support efforts to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees, not 2 degrees. However, our publication, whilst outdated in this respect, still contains valuable data about the impacts of temperature rise.

42. *Six years' worth of current emissions would blow the carbon budget for 1.5 degrees*. (Carbon Brief, 2014) Carbon dioxide emissions should be capped at 2250 billion tonnes to keep warming below 1.5 degrees compared to pre-industrial levels. Calculations by Carbon Brief suggest that there is therefore only 243 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide left to emit from 2015 onwards.

43. *Shock Waves: Managing the impacts of climate change on poverty* (World Bank Group, 2016)

44. *Estimates of food surplus and waste arisings in the UK* (WRAP, 2017)