

# SAMEN TEGEN VOEDSELVERSPILLING

## CHANGING THE RULES TOGETHER: 10 PRIORITIES

### HALVE FOOD WASTE TOGETHER BY 2030

It is estimated that 1.7 to 2.5 million tonnes of food are wasted annually in the Netherlands. This happens throughout the food chain, from harvest to consumption. Consumers also throw away an average of 34 kg of food per person on an annual basis. The Netherlands' impact on climate change amounts to about 6% of the total greenhouse gas emissions from human activities.

#### Less food waste contributes to

- a reduction in emissions and the achievement of climate targets;
- a circular economy in which we use our raw materials sparingly;
- the conservation of biodiversity;
- sufficient good food for everyone in a growing world population;
- a resilient food production system that is more resistant to external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Dutch government is committed to The United Nations SDG 12.3 to halve food waste in the supply chain by 2030 compared to 2015. The Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling (Food Waste Free United) foundation is the ecosystem in which all important initiatives, expertise, and driving forces against food waste in the Netherlands are brought together and accelerated. Companies from throughout the supply chain, government, civil society organisations, and knowledge institutes are working on a joint agenda with the concrete objective of retaining an additional 1 million tonnes of food within the food chain each year.

### WHY JOIN FORCES TO COMBAT FOOD WASTE?



1/4

One quarter of the food in the Netherlands is lost or wasted every year.<sup>1</sup>



Food waste in Europe causes 6% of all greenhouse gases emitted through human activity.<sup>2</sup>



Wasting less food = helping to achieve climate goals and ensuring there is enough valuable food for the growing global population.

That is equal to **105-152 KG** per capita annually in the Netherlands.

**2015 - 2030**  
**50%**  
**reduction**

### OUR OBJECTIVES

In a joint effort, we aim to make the Netherlands one of the first countries to cut food waste in half. We will make the Netherlands a leader and a global role model in terms of realizing Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.

1 Wageningen Food & Biobased Research, 2017, Monitor Voedselverspilling, update 2009-2015, rapport nummer 1747.  
 2 FUSIONS, Criteria for and baseline assessment of environmental and socio-economic impacts of food waste, 2016.

The ambition of Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling is divided into four lines of action.

1



**Monitoring progress and impact:** Food Waste Free United measures the effects of its individual and joint approach.

2



**Joining forces to combat food waste across the food supply chain:** Stakeholders and leaders combine their strengths, networks and knowledge to develop innovative solutions.

### Self-Reporting and Benchmarks by the Business Community

The policy on food waste consists of: 1. target, 2. measure, and 3. act. The availability of reliable data is crucial in combating waste. Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling and Wageningen University & Research have developed a registration method, which allows companies from the food chain to record their side streams. Dutch supermarkets were the first in the world to collectively provide figures on the food scraps themselves in 2020. Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling stimulates other companies to self-report, so that they – eventually with more sector-wide benchmarks – gain more insight into their raw material streams.

### Supply Chain Responsibility and Solutions

Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling inspires and activates the business community to initiate a transition. It is a win-win situation, because every euro invested in a proven solution to prevent food waste pays for itself 14 times over. That means pure profit! Companies in the food chain can counter raw material losses by making adjustments to private agreements or supply contracts. These include criteria for sustainable catering procurement by the government or a flexible supply chain agreement to purchase fruit or vegetables with different specifications. If supply and demand are better matched, the production, processing, and sale of food becomes more resilient. For example: during the production of bread, both too much is ordered and too much is delivered compared to what can be sold. A pilot project entitled “Goudeerlijk Vers Ingevoren” took place in 2020 to sell freshly frozen bread on a special shelf in the supermarket in order to reduce the amount of wasted fresh bread.

**PURE PROFIT**

3



**Consumers:** Through campaigns and other actions Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling strives for sustainable change in consumer behavior.

### Clarifying Expiry Dates (best-by/use-by date)

Research shows that a large proportion of consumers do not know the difference between the best-by date and use-by date. If every Dutch citizen follows expiry dates in a more appropriate way, we can reduce waste by around 90 million kilos of food every year. Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling informs consumers about the different expiry dates (best-by/ use-by date) through the #verspillingsvrij (#wastefree) campaign: what is the difference and how do you follow them appropriately? This campaign was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and other members of the Green Deal “Over de Datum?” (Beyond Expiry Date?). Another result of this Green Deal is a clarification of the law with regard to expiry dates.



### How #wastefree are you?

During Verspillingsvrije Week (waste-free week), we raise awareness nationally along with consumers and businesses. We help consumers to become #wastefree in many ways: from actions in supermarkets to theme days at schools and “challenges” to cook with leftovers at home. Through actions from **67 partners**, we distributed over **1 million practical kitchen tools** from Voedingscentrum in September 2020, an estimated **2 million people** took action to waste less food, and there was a **great deal of media attention**.



Watch the video here



## CHANGING THE RULES

Great strides must still be made to achieve halving food waste by 2030. The legislation and policy for our food system are complex and sometimes present obstacles. Whenever possible and safe, changing those regulations is key for allowing entrepreneurs to advance their efforts to limit waste and to optimally valorise side waste streams.

### The Feasibility and Impact of New Rules

[Wageningen University & Research](#) examined the bottlenecks experienced with regard to legislation, policy, and agreements that affect the generation and prevention of food waste. The bottlenecks were divided into six overarching themes:

- 1 interpretation and measurement of food loss and food waste;
- 2 (EU) policy on agriculture and fisheries;
- 3 health and safety regulations, including those on animal feed, product information, and possible contaminations;
- 4 trade practices and standards, including cosmetic aspects, product liability, VAT, and unfair trading practices;
- 5 waste legislation;
- 6 information on packaging.

Wide-ranging and transparent consultations also took place between the Dutch business community, relevant ministries, and experts.

The Wageningen researchers used all this information to weigh up feasibility and impact. In 2020, Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling selected the ten most promising rules that need to change. Minister Schouten of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) highlighted this top ten in her letter [to the House of Representatives](#).

## 10 PRIORITIES

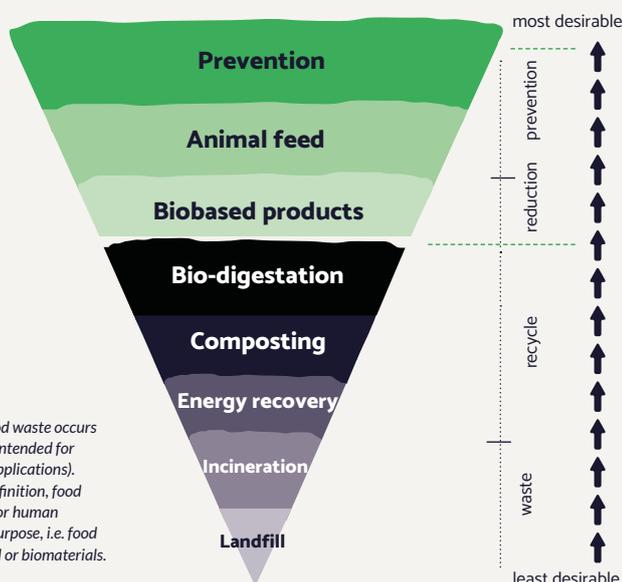
1

### ALIGN THE DUTCH DEFINITION OF FOOD WASTE WITH THAT OF THE EU.

The definition of food waste forms the basis for measuring and reporting waste, taking targeted measures, and evaluating policy. This basis must be in place so that links in the chain can exchange reliable data on side streams and so that coordination between EU countries can be improved. The Netherlands currently uses a stricter definition of food waste than the EU. If links in the supply chain report in the same way in all EU member states, benchmarks can be created and common challenges addressed. In short, all players in the internationally oriented food chain benefit from a level playing field, in which it is clear which side streams are considered waste.



According to the EU definition, food waste occurs when food scraps become waste (intended for fermentation or more low-value applications). According to the current Dutch definition, food waste means that food intended for human consumption is not used for this purpose, i.e. food scraps are also used in animal feed or biomaterials.



Since 2018, Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling has been stimulating the measurement of food waste with technical support and discussions with businesses and branch organisations. The adoption of the EU definition by the Dutch government will encourage industry to further identify food waste.

**2**

## DESIGN THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP) IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT STIMULATES PRODUCTION THAT MEETS DEMAND EXACTLY, REMOVES ALL INCENTIVES FOR OVERPRODUCTION, AND COORDINATES LEGISLATION BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

The CAP is the basis for all food production in the EU and currently focuses on increasing production and supporting incomes in the primary sector. This focus encourages farmers to produce more than is needed, and this overproduction cannot be included in the food chain. However, these losses fall outside the scope of waste legislation and the definition of food waste. As a result, there is a lack of important incentive to analyse information about the quantity of side streams from this link in the chain.



EU member states will have more say in shaping their national agricultural policies from 2021 onwards. This offers the Netherlands the incentive to immediately translate new insights from scientific research and pilot studies into practice. Some examples are encouraging businesses to self-monitor and the development of legislation and instruments to speed up the transition to a circular economy.

While changing the CAP is a long-term process, *Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling* sees it as essential to achieving a more sustainable food system. It requires a different way of thinking about the role of agriculture within the food system. If the CAP fundamentally takes the prevention and reduction of raw material losses into account, major steps can be taken.

**3**

## PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO PREVENT THE DESTRUCTION OF PRODUCTS DUE TO UNFAVOURABLE MARKET CONDITIONS

As a producer, you want nothing more than for your product to actually be sold and consumed, and at a fair price. However, there are still too many incentives, including economic ones, which may make it more beneficial to dispose of surpluses, rather than to produce less or to seek alternative markets. As a result, if sales prices are too low, harvested product that has no market is destroyed instead.



*Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling* wants to investigate, with stakeholders from the supply chain, which instruments can be used to make a circular food system without waste more financially attractive. This could include: helping new applicants that introduce products created using unsold side streams, creating markets for less common fish species, or stimulating dedicated supply chains, all while precisely targeting well-coordinated supply and demand.

**4**

## SEPARATE PET FEED STANDARDS FROM FOOD/LIVESTOCK FEED STANDARDS

Pet food is subject to the same legislation as human food and animal feed. As a result, raw materials that are rejected due to human health and safety standards may not be used in pet food. Through animal feed, the rejected raw material can indirectly end up back on people's plates. However, this is not the case with pet feed.



*Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling* supports the separation of these standards so that more side streams can be processed into pet food. This requires additional research into food safety and establishing a proper assurance process. European legislation must then be adapted. Of course, the health of the pet always comes first.

## 5 MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO ALLOW SELECTIVELY REJECTING PRODUCTS BY USING TARGETED TRACKING AND TRACING TECHNOLOGY

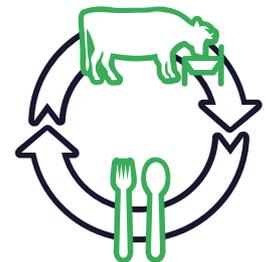
Companies in the food chain often use tracking and tracing technologies. This enables them to trace a product or raw material in a targeted manner if a food safety problem arises. With the use of that technology and the exchange of data in the supply chain, it is possible only a selective number of products will have to be rejected, instead of the entire batch. However, food safety legislation does not yet permit these techniques.



Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling calls on the government to adapt these rules so that products can be rejected in a very targeted manner. In this way, we will prevent entire batches of food from being destroyed unnecessarily.

## 6 ADAPT EUROPEAN LEGISLATION SO THAT MORE SIDE STREAMS CAN BE PROCESSED INTO ANIMAL FEED

The use of side streams that contain or may contain animal products or by-products has been restricted in European legislation (e.g. in the Feed Ban). For example, businesses working with feed materials of animal origin (fishmeal, raw materials containing traces of animal materials, etc.) are subject to strict rules. The same applies to farms that work with organic fertilisers and soil enhancers with animal proteins in them. The aim of the legislation is to prevent the transmission of diseases (such as mad cow disease). Valuable side streams are now often incinerated, composted, or converted into biogas.



Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling recommends adapting these rules so that more side streams, such as kitchen waste from the catering industry (swill), can be processed into animal feed in a way that is safe for both people and animals. If these rules are adapted, we in the EU can valorise 7-14 Mton of additional side streams (source: REFRESH). It goes without saying that food safety is of paramount importance in this respect. Successful examples already exist outside the EU. Scientific research should properly support the change in legislation and address concerns about food safety from political, business, and social sectors.

## 7 DEVELOP AN OVERARCHING VISION AND COORDINATING THIS BASED ON INTEGRATED POLICY (NL AND EU) REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PACKAGING, PACKAGING WASTE, AND FOOD WASTE

A circular economy strives for a closed supply chain of packaging materials and the prevention of food waste. The policy ambitions regarding recycling goals do not entirely align when it comes to these two themes. More and more companies are promising to use less packaging. At the same time, agreements have been made about the recyclability of packaging and the use of sustainable materials. But packaging is also useful: it protects the quality and extends the shelf life of our food and beverages. In the case of fresh produce, the greatest gains can be made both in reducing packaging and increasing recyclability, and in reducing food waste.



Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling calls for a more integral perspective on packaging and waste. We strive for effective packaging that can be recycled and also optimally protects products. We must not only focus on sustainable materials, but above all on sustainable production chains: from the product to the recycling of packaging materials.

8

## PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURS TO VALORISE ORGANIC SIDE STREAMS OPTIMALLY

There are different ways to valorise the generated side streams. For example, organic side streams can be used in anaerobic digestion plants and the co-burning of biomass in power plants to generate sustainable energy. Climate policy and stimulating the bio-economy provide financial incentives to invest in these low-value applications. As a result, a more sustainable and circular choice for higher-value applications is not always the most economically attractive option. Consequently, these conflicting policy ambitions mean that side streams are removed from the food chain in fermentation plants, even though they can also be used for biomaterials, animal feed, or even human food. Various financial incentives can be used to take this step, such as through the different pricing of raw materials or through emission rights. Connecting financing benefits for entrepreneurs to the reduction of waste and to the high-quality re-use of side streams may also be a solution.

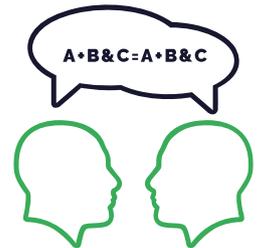


Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling recommends an integral view on side streams that include both raw materials and climate ambitions. The proper separation of waste and the high-quality re-use of side streams must be financially attractive to entrepreneurs. Scenarios for different financial instruments to do this must be assessed in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

9

## INTERPRET AND ENFORCE LEGISLATION AND POLICY FOR FOOD SAFETY AND TRADING STANDARDS IN AN UNAMBIGUOUS MANNER

Although the legislation in question is highly detailed, there may be differing interpretations and perceptions between enforcers/inspectors as well as between member states. One may be stricter than the other with regard to acceptable measurement values and/or rejecting entire batches or only parts of batches. As measurement techniques become more accurate, “something” is being measured more often. As a result, certain zero-tolerance substances are increasingly being rejected. Similarly, it sometimes happens that a shipment of fresh fruit arrives in the Netherlands and is rejected, but is then transported to another EU country where it is approved. In addition to a lack of clarity for businesses, this results in extra long, unnecessary travel time, in which fresh products with a limited shelf life often lose a great deal of time and quality.



Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling asks for clear guidelines and good coordination between enforcers and inspectors at the Dutch and European level. The aim of this action is not to amend or remove the relevant legislation, but to finetune its details and application in consultation with the ministries, competent government agencies, and supply chain parties.

10

## USE SMART SENSOR TECHNOLOGY FOR FLEXIBLE EXPIRY DATE LABELLING

Thanks to smart sensor technology, products can be given a flexible expiry date, so that they only have to be disposed of when they truly cannot be consumed any longer. This technology is already being used outside the EU but is not yet allowed in the EU due to the mandatory static expiry date (best-by and use-by date).



Research into the consumer perception of the sensor and how it can contribute to the actual reduction of waste is being conducted. Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling asks the government for this technology to be included in the food safety rules.

# CALL: CHANGING THE RULES TOGETHER

Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling calls on politicians, government, and businesses to change the rules together. A circular food system in which all raw materials are used as effectively as possible will become the only logical choice.

## JOIN OUR ECOSYSTEM!

Samen Tegen Voedselverspilling brings coalitions together to change the rules and creates a stimulating, powerful ecosystem via a multi-stakeholder approach. Speak up and join us!



## FOUNDING FATHERS



## STAKEHOLDERS

