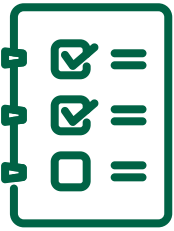


Changing the rules together: 10 priorities

Food Waste Free United promotes a circular economy. The legislation and regulations concerning our food system are complex, however, and are sometimes a hindrance. Where possible and safe, these regulations need to be changed to give organisations the scope to minimise waste and optimally valorise unavoidable organic residual streams.

Restrictive regulations

Wageningen University & Research has conducted research into bottlenecks around legislation, policy and private rules that affect the occurrence and prevention of food waste. This included broad consultation among Dutch businesses, relevant ministries and experts.



The Wageningen researchers then weighed the identified bottlenecks in terms of feasibility and impact. Based on this research, Food Waste Free United has defined the 10 most promising rules to change. This was endorsed by the minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in 2020.

Food Waste Free United calls on politicians, the government and businesses to change these 10 rules together. Ways we will do this include making politicians aware of the impact of policy decisions on food waste, working with companies and governments on experimental sample cases, and forming coalitions on specific topics. Together with many stakeholders, we thus form a stimulating, powerful ecosystem in the Netherlands, as well as in Europe. **Together, we will optimise the food system and make it more sustainable to achieve SDG 12.3: 50% less food waste by 2030.**



Focus for 2024

All the rules merit attention. There are a few rules where we expect the greatest impact can be achieved, and Food Waste Free United will first focus particularly on these.

Rule 1 changed in 2022 when the Dutch definition of food waste was aligned with the European definition.

In 2024, the main focus is on the increased use of unavoidable waste streams for animal feed (rule 6), clear date labelling for consumers and companies (rule 9) and flexible expiry date labelling using smart sensor technology (rule 10).



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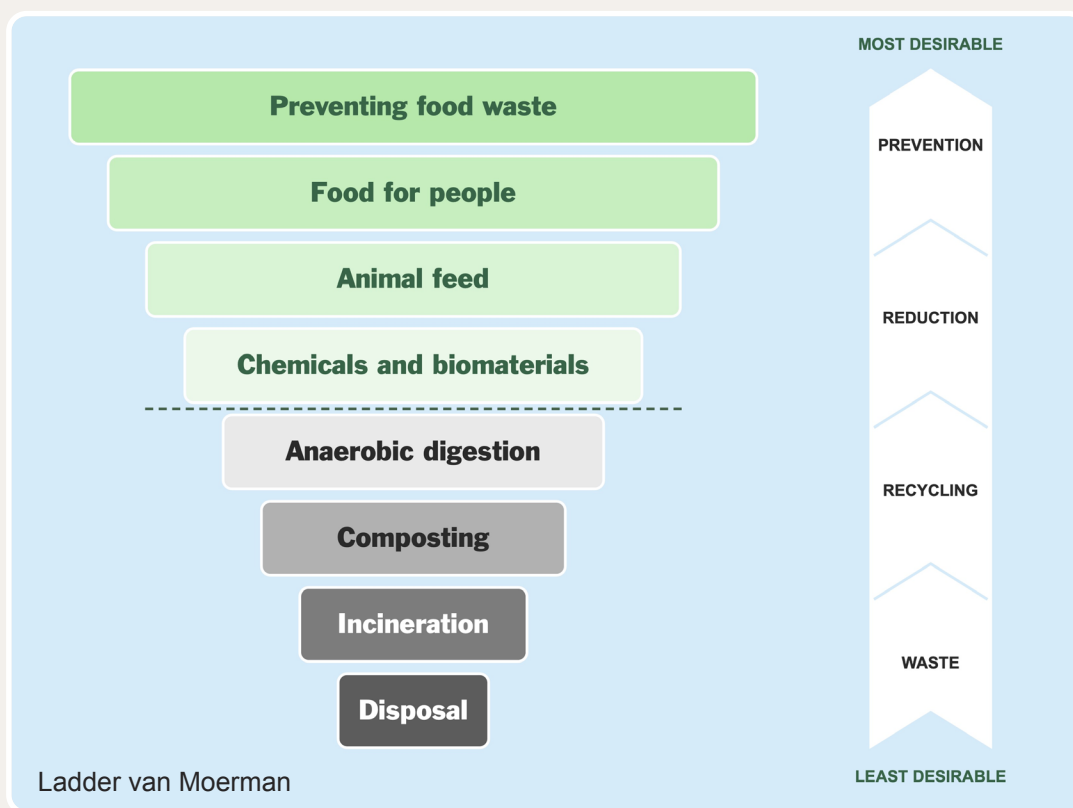
Top 10 rules

1

A definition of food waste

Harmonise the Dutch definition of food waste with the EU.

The definition of food waste forms the basis for measuring and reporting waste, implementing targeted measures and evaluating policy. That basis must be sound to allow links in the chain to exchange reliable data on residual streams and improve coordination between EU countries. If the Netherlands applies a stricter definition of food waste than the EU, the EU member states cannot report, benchmark and address common challenges in the same way. In short, all players in the - internationally oriented - food chain benefit from a level playing field where it is clear which residual streams are considered waste.



ACTIONS

Since 2018, Food Waste Free United has been promoting the measurement of food waste with technical support and substantive discussions with companies and sector organisations. The adoption of the EU definition by the Dutch government will encourage businesses to further chart food waste.

The Dutch definition has been the same as the European definition of food waste since 2022.



2

Stop overproduction

Design the Common Agricultural Policy to encourage production that precisely meets demand, remove all incentives for overproduction, and harmonise legislation between EU member states.

The European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) underpins all food production in the EU, and currently focuses mainly on increasing production and income support for the primary sector. This focus incentivises farmers to overproduce. However, these losses fall outside waste legislation and the definition of food waste. There is no great incentive to chart information on the amount of residual streams from this link in the chain.

EU member states have had more say in shaping their national agricultural policy since 2021. This gives the Netherlands an extra impetus to apply new insights from scientific research and pilot studies in practice. Examples include encouraging companies to self-monitor, and developing legislation and tools that accelerate the transition to a circular economy.



ACTIONS

Although changing the CAP is a long-term issue, Food Waste Free United considers it essential for achieving a more sustainable food system. It calls for a different way of thinking about the role of agriculture within the food system. If the CAP takes fundamental account of preventing and reducing raw material losses, we can make great strides.

3

Prevent destruction

Provide financial incentives to prevent the destruction of products.

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 (economic) incentives 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.

ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United is investigating, 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 residual streams; creating markets for less common fish species; or stimulating dedicated supply chains, all while precisely targeting well-coordinated supply and demand.



4

Animal feed is not human food

Separate pet feed standards from food and 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 either. Through animal feed, the rejected raw material can indirectly end up back on people's plates. This is not the case with pet food, however.

ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United supports the separation of these standards so that more residual streams can be processed into pet food. This requires additional research into food safety and the establishment of a proper assurance process. European legislation must then be adapted.



5

Selective rejection

Make it possible to reject products selectively by using targeted tracking & tracing technology.

Companies in the food chain often use tracking & tracing technology. This enables them to trace a product or raw material in a targeted manner if a food safety problem arises. With the use of this 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.

ACTIONS

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



6

More residual streams to animal feed

Adapt European legislation so that more residual streams can be processed into animal feed.

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



ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United advocates adapting these rules so that more residual streams, such as kitchen waste from the hospitality 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 million tonnes of additional residual streams (source: REFRESH). It goes without saying that food safety is of paramount importance in this respect. Successful examples already exist outside the EU. *Food Waste Free United* is working with the government, knowledge institutes and the sector itself in the Circular Animal Proteins cluster on cases in which residual streams are upgraded to animal feed, and in which food safety concerns are properly investigated with the aim of underpinning changes in legislation.

7

The role of packaging

Develop an overarching vision of the relationship between packaging, packaging waste and food waste, and harmonise a coordinated policy between the Netherlands and the EU.

In a circular economy, we strive for a closed supply chain of packaging materials and the prevention of food waste. The policy ambitions regarding recycling goals clash 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 expiry 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.

ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United calls for a more integrated perspective on packaging and waste. We strive for effective packaging that optimally protects products that can also be recycled. We must not only focus on sustainable materials, but above all on sustainable production chains: from the (fresh) product to the recycling of packaging materials.



8

Valorise organic residual streams

Provide financial incentives to encourage entrepreneurs to optimally valorise organic residual streams.

When residual streams arise, there are various options to valorise these. For example, organic residual 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 residual streams are removed from the food chain in fermentation plants, although 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 residual streams may also be a solution.

ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United calls for an integrated view on residual streams that include both raw materials and climate ambitions. The proper separation of waste and the high-quality re-use of residual 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

Clear date labelling

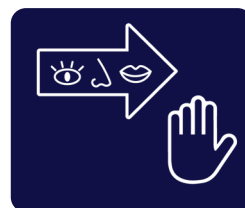
Clarify date labels for consumers and companies.

In the Netherlands, we work with two date labels, Best Before, and Use By. Half of people in the Netherlands are unable to properly explain the difference between these two date labels, and therefore throw away more food than is necessary. Around 10% of the food consumers waste at home is the result of confusion, and a lack of understanding of date labels.

ACTIONS

Food Waste Free United calls for companies to place icons on packaging to clarify expiry dates. A 'Look, smell, taste' icon on Best Before products and a 'Do not use after date' icon on Use By products. And to actively communicate the difference between these dates to consumers.

Food Waste Free United further calls for expansion of the Annex X Codex Alimentarius, which lists products with a long expiry and that do not require a Best Before or Use By date. If these products no longer have a Best Before date on the packaging, it prevents them from being thrown away by consumers unnecessarily when the date has expired.



ACTIONS



Do you want to know more? Take a look at www.samentegenvoedselverspilling.nl

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