



Class Activity – Household Food Waste Audit

Household food waste levels vary a lot. In many countries with developed economies household food waste is a significant amount of the waste in a food system. In the UK, the non-governmental body WRAP collects data on household food waste, and works to reduce food waste across food systems.

Their data indicates that, while household food waste has been falling in the past decade, in the UK in 2018 it was 6.6Mt (megatons); 4.5Mt of this was 'food intended to be eaten'. To give you an idea of how much that is, an elephant weighs around 7 tons, so that's nearly 7 million elephants!

WRAP estimates that the value of household food waste in the UK was £14 billion in 2018. With a population of 67.1 million in 2018, this represents £208 per person in the UK in food waste.

WRAP provides guidance on how to carry out a kitchen food waste diary, which clearly explains what to take into account.

Understanding why we waste food in our homes is complicated, even the definition of 'waste' is not as straightforward as you might think. If the 'waste' from our kitchen is taken to a municipal composting site and then used as compost to grow crops, is this actually waste?

This exercise is based on the WRAP household food waste audit.

- We have simplified the WRAP material to make the audit process manageable for a student to carry out at home over the course of a week
- Use the downloadable worksheet below for students to collect data on their household waste over a period of 7 days
- The aim is to show students how collecting household data is complicated and allow them to experience some of the data collecting issues that arise
- Students can use the data collected to carry out simple descriptive statistics. It might also act as a basis for discussion around household waste management, and individual/household behaviour