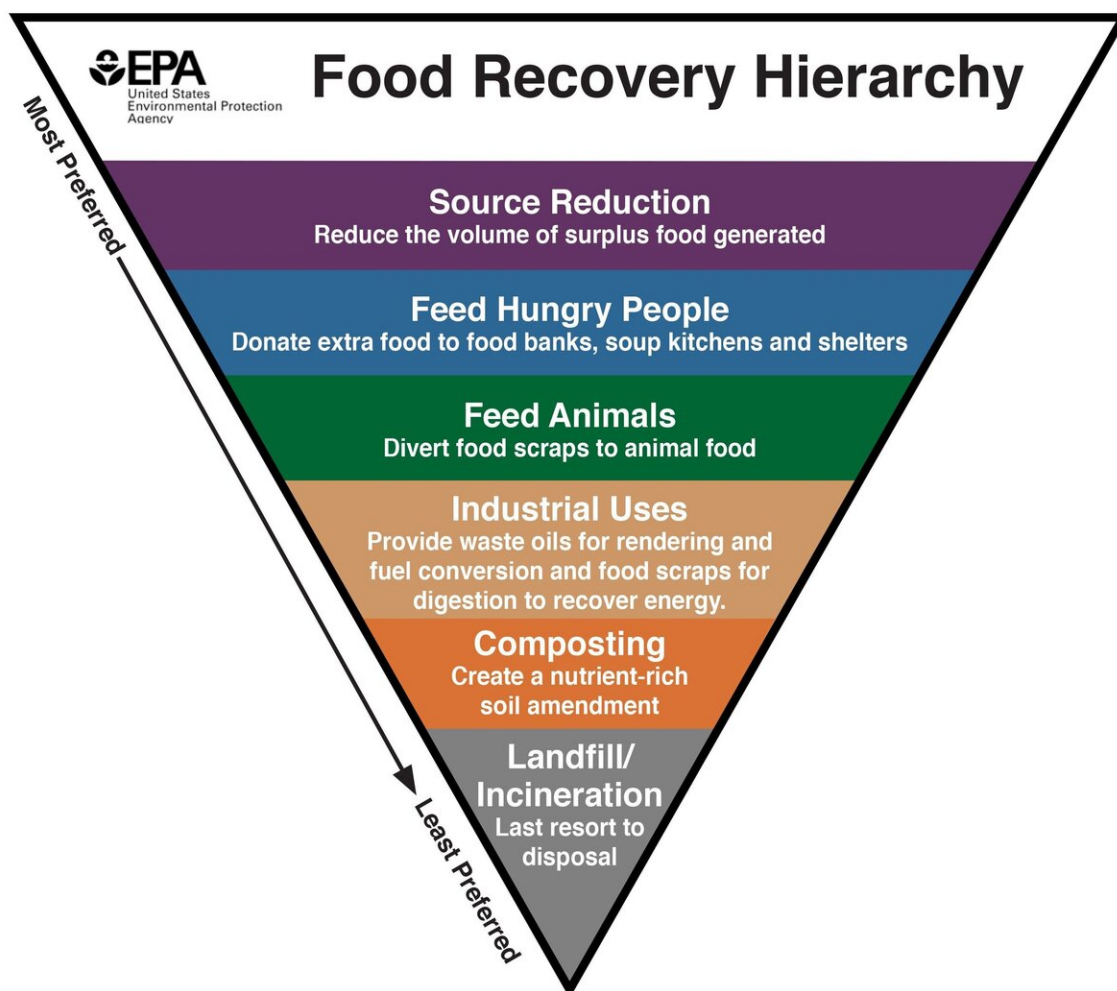


# Reduce food waste to save money

June 12 2020



Credit: University of Missouri

With the COVID-19 pandemic causing disruptions in the food supply chain, it's more important than ever to reduce food waste, says a University of Missouri Extension food safety specialist.

"In 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service estimated that 30% to 40% of edible food in the United States went to waste," said Londa Nwadike. "At the household level, the average U.S. family of four loses an estimated \$1,500 per year on wasted food."

Nwadike said consumers should try to reduce the volume of surplus food they have in the home. She offers some strategies for doing that:

- Shop your refrigerator first. Before buying more food, eat perishable food in the refrigerator, or incorporate it into meal planning.
- Strategic grocery shopping. Once you plan meals, make a shopping list—and stick to it. Avoid impulse buying.
- Store food properly. Maintain your refrigerator at 40 F or lower and the freezer at zero degrees. Store food in packaging designed for storage in the freezer, refrigerator or possibly at room temperature.
- Extend the life of food. Frozen food can be safe for extended periods; follow recommended storage times. Canning properly is another way to extend food life.
- Understand and check food product dates. A "sell by" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. "Best by" or "use by" dates are the [food](#) manufacturer's recommendation for best flavor and quality.

Nwadike, who has a joint appointment with Kansas State University, has worked with staff at both universities to publish a fact sheet to help consumers cut the waste and save money at home.

"Working Together to Reduce Food Waste" is available for free download at [bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3482.pdf](http://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3482.pdf).

The publication outlines several strategies for reducing waste, including things consumers can do at home; donating to [food banks](#); and building a compost pile, Nwadike said.

Provided by University of Missouri

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