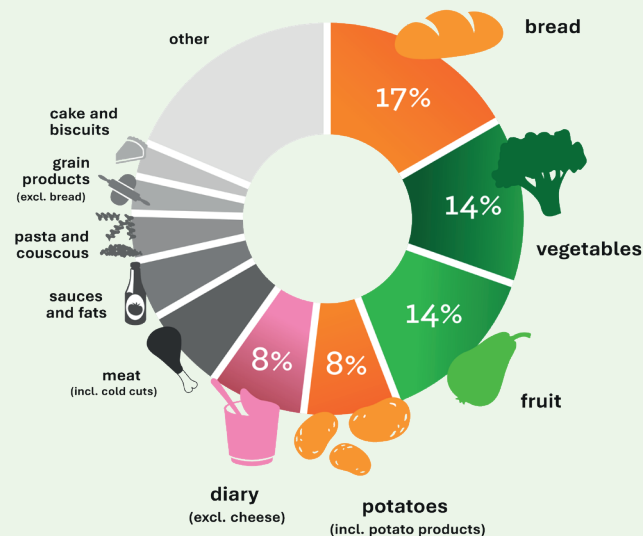


Household food waste by Dutch consumers in 2025

Summary

Reducing food waste is one of the key strategies to fight climate change and feed the growing world population. For this reason, the European Union and the Dutch government have committed to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12.3, which sets a target of halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030 compared to 2015. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature has provided a grant to the Netherlands Nutrition Centre to coordinate this research. The research provides insight into food waste by consumers in Dutch households to monitor progress towards SDG 12.3.

Food waste by Dutch consumers 2025



The category 'other' encompasses different food groups that are not often wasted, such as eggs and fish.

In 2025, household solid food waste by Dutch consumers averaged 25.5 kg per capita per year.

This was 7% of the total amount of all purchased food.

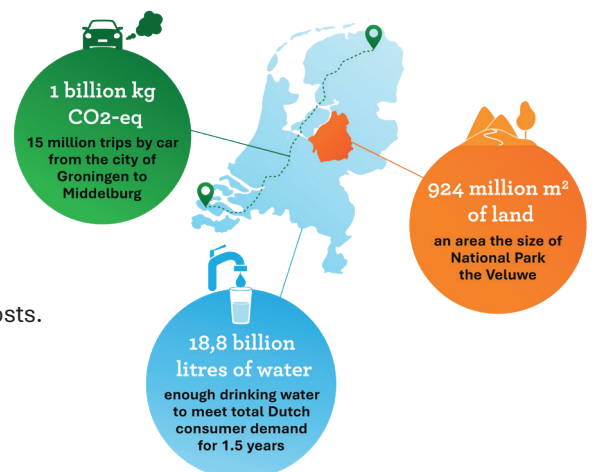
The percentage of purchased food that is wasted has been declining steadily. The financial value of food waste in households is on average equal to 100 euros per person per year.

The 5 most commonly wasted product groups are bread (4.3 kg), vegetables (3.6 kg), fruit (3.5 kg), potatoes (1.9 kg) and dairy (1.9 kg). These have been the most wasted product groups in the Netherlands for many years.

Preventing food waste has environmental benefits

By the time food is wasted, it has already made an environmental impact. This occurs during every step of production, transport, packaging and preparation at home. Eliminating household food waste in the Netherlands entirely would result in considerable annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, land- and and wateruse required for the average Dutch diet. It would also save on costs.

Anticipated annual savings if household food waste by Dutch consumers were to be slashed to zero:



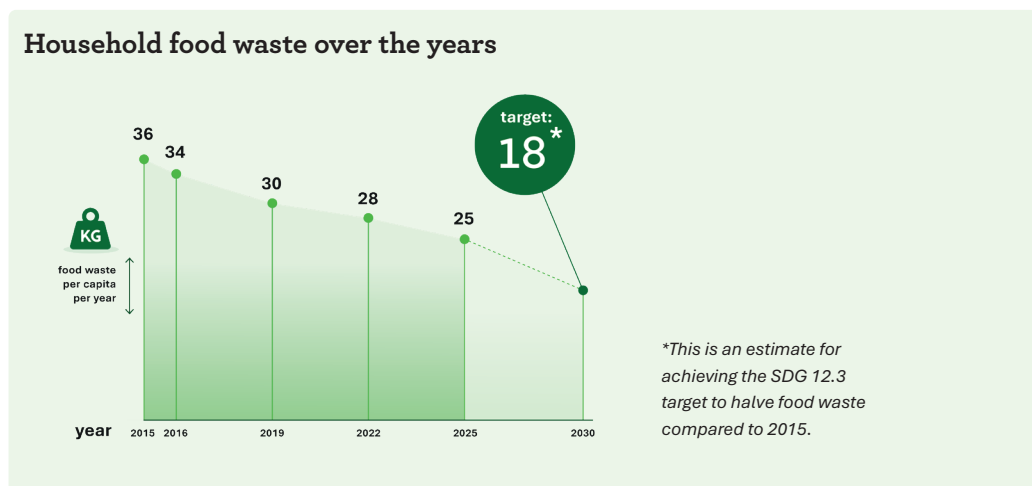
We want to prevent waste, but changing behaviour proves to be complex

Almost all Dutch people think it is important to waste as little food as possible. However, people find it difficult to act accordingly. Wasteful behaviour is complex for several reasons. There are many small behaviours around buying, cooking and storing food that can contribute to waste. In addition, consumers underestimate how much food they actually waste themselves and believe other households waste more food. There are several concrete actions that could reduce food waste. For example, people who waste less are more likely to say they do their shopping with a list and check the household provisions beforehand. Accordingly, spoilage and food that has gone past the best-before date are 2 of the most frequently cited reasons to waste food.

The target of halving household food waste is in sight

We are now halfway through the period to achieve the target of halving food waste (SDG 12.3), and a stable downward trend is visible in the amount of household solid food waste in the Netherlands. By 2025, a 29% reduction has been achieved compared to 2015 (from about 36 kg to about 25 kg). The target of halving food waste is in sight, but the reduction is still below the desirable scenario of a 33% reduction by 2025 compared to 2015.

Household food waste has been accurately measured and published every 3 years since 2010. The current figures and trend differ from those previously communicated because the analyses have been optimised and standardised. All results for the years 2013 to 2025 in the 2025 report can now accurately be compared.



Possible explanations

There are contextual factors that increasingly facilitate behaviours that can reduce food waste, such as various tools and convenience products in the supermarket. Food prices have risen sharply over the years, and the percentage of income spent on food also seems to be rising. These factors could potentially reduce the amount of food waste. In recent years, the issue of food waste also received a lot of attention through awareness campaigns and sharing of knowledge.

Opportunities for the future

We are seeing a reduction in the amount of household food waste, but it proved to be a problem that is not easily solved completely. Thus, it is important to continue current activities and additionally take extra efforts to achieve the SDG 12.3 target by 2030. Below, we provide a brief explanation of 3 opportunities to do so:

- 1. Keep the theme top of mind.** It is important to repeat key messages (e.g. via campaigns), provide information and offer concrete actions so that knowledge sticks. Frequent exposure at the right moment is needed to change social norms. Consumers need to be and remain aware that food waste is a problem they are part of and can therefore do something about. While awareness alone is rarely enough to change behaviour, it is an important basis to understand the significance of the problem.
- 2. Facilitate the desired behaviour.** Preventing food waste is not one single behaviour, but a combination of many 'small' (routine) behaviours that mostly happen unconsciously. It is therefore important that preventing food waste is as effortless as possible for consumers. Making it easy can help bridge the gap between intention and behaviour, thereby reducing food waste. In doing so, it is important to choose the right context, by being 'present' when the consumer has to make choices. One example is placing shelf-life icons on packaging that are present in the kitchen when the consumer is deciding whether or not the product is still edible.
- 3. Implement policies to reduce food waste.** The Dutch government already helps organisations like the Netherlands Nutrition Centre and the foundation Food Waste Free United to take action against food waste. Among other things, this has resulted in the Food Waste Free Week and various other campaigns against food waste in the Netherlands. It is vital that this work continues. In addition, laws and regulations can be highly impactful measures to further reduce household waste. Additionally, local governments can increase their efforts to tackle food waste.

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