

Recommended Food Loss and Waste Reduction Strategies: Overview

As the state of Michigan works to become climate neutral by 2050, mitigating the effects of climate change through food loss and waste reduction (FLWR) is critical. FLWR is a climate, food security and financial issue and provides Michigan an opportunity to be a leader in climate change mitigation as “wasted” food accounts for 10% of the US’s greenhouse gas emissions¹ and drains our water, land, transportation, storage and human resources.

Michigan nonprofits Make Food Not Waste, Food Rescue US-Detroit and FoodPLUS Detroit, in consultation with a diverse statewide stakeholder group, recommend nine key strategies based on best practices across the U.S. to be included in the MI Healthy Climate Plan. The strategies, balanced across source reduction, rescue and recycling methods, emphasize action that would reduce food loss and waste, deliver significant savings in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and deliver a positive net economic return. The total estimated GHG emissions saved is 433,100 tons (866 million pounds) and the total estimated net economic impact is \$1.2 billion.

The issue of food loss and waste is deeply interconnected with the issues of food security and equity. In 2019, 884k tons of food was landfilled in Michigan which is enough for each Michigan resident facing food insecurity to consume four pounds of food per day. Investing in policies, infrastructure, education and partnerships that catches food before it is landfilled and diverts it to people who can benefit from it benefits our communities and our environment. At the same time, food insecurity disproportionately affects Hispanic residents, Black residents, people under the age of 25, and single female-headed households with children. Working to eliminate disparities in food access provides necessary opportunities for Michigan residents who face challenges meeting basic needs.

Policy Strategies

- Address date labels
- Provide additional food donation liability protection
- Incorporate food waste strategies in schools
- Support Adoption of model compost procurement policy

Incentive, Public-Private Partnership and Education Campaign Strategies

- Support education of food service professionals in food waste reduction
- Support consumer education and behavior change
- Address food loss on farms
- Provide state tax credits beyond the current limited federal tax deductions for food rescue
- Provide additional grants and incentives

Cross-section Strategies

- Create the environment needed to reduce food waste through diversion from landfills

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¹ https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/driven_to_waste_summary.pdf