

News story: Action to reduce food waste announced

The Government will set up a pilot scheme to reduce food waste, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced today.

The scheme will be supported by £15 million of additional funding which has been allocated to tackle food waste.

Currently around 43,000 tonnes of surplus food is redistributed from retailers and food manufacturers every year. It is estimated a further 100,000 tonnes of food – equating to 250 million meals a year – is edible and readily available but goes uneaten. Instead, this food is currently sent away for generating energy from waste, anaerobic digestion, or animal feed.

The pilot scheme will be developed over the coming months in collaboration with businesses and charities. The scheme will launch in 2019/20.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Nobody wants to see good food go to waste. It harms our environment, it's bad for business – and it's morally indefensible.

Every year, around 100,000 tonnes of readily available and perfectly edible food is never eaten. This has got to change.

In the coming months we will work closely with business, charities and volunteers to deliver a new scheme to tackle this problem.

The scheme will specifically address surplus food from retail and manufacturing. This is just one part of the problem – food waste in the UK totals 10.2 million tonnes per year, of which 1.8 million tonnes comes from food manufacture, 1 million from the hospitality sector, and 260,000 from retail, with the remainder from households. Further action to cut food waste from all sources is being considered as part of Defra's Resources and Waste Strategy, which will be published later this year.

Defra is commissioning work to improve the evidence base around food waste, including understanding why more surplus food is not being redistributed. This work will inform the design of the scheme, ensuring it drives down food waste in the most effective possible way.

Dr David Moon, Head of Business Collaboration at WRAP said:

Today's announcement is a great boost for the many support networks around the country working hard to ensure good food feeds people, and is not wasted.

Between 2015 and 2017 surplus food redistributed from retailers, manufacturers and hospitality and food services businesses increased by 50%, with nearly £130 million worth of food saved from waste.

And there is the potential to increase this significantly, and to expand the range and type of foods with more fresh produce. Not only will this benefit people, it will also help reduce the huge environmental impact of food waste.

The new scheme follows the £500,000 Food [Waste Reduction Fund](#) announced in December last year to support the substantial reduction of food waste throughout England.

In July this year it was announced that funds have been awarded to [eight charities](#) across the country. The Food Waste Reduction Fund grants will help provide the essential resources needed to expand their important work, and will further inform development of the new scheme.

Further information:

- In 2017, [205,000 tonnes](#) of surplus food in the retail and food manufacturing sectors was wasted. Some of the surplus is difficult to minimise, costly in that it would need to be reworked or repackaged, and some surplus would not be edible. It is estimated by WRAP that 100,000 tonnes of this is both accessible and edible with the remaining being more difficult to redistribute.
- The pilot will run in 2019/20, drawing on £15 million additional funding the Treasury have allocated to Defra to tackle food waste. Any future funding would be subject to the Spending Review.

[Collection: Environment statistics](#)

Working with our Defra group partner organisations: Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Natural England we produce a wide range of statistics that provide information on our relationship with and impact on the environment around us.

[Our products](#)

[Our partners within Defra group](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Environmental Quality

- [air quality and emissions statistics](#)
- [UK carbon footprint](#)
- [Environmental Protection Expenditure](#)
- [waste and recycling statistics](#)
- [Digest of waste and resources statistics](#)
- [water quality and abstraction statistics](#)

Natural Environment

- [biodiversity and wildlife statistics](#)
- [natural environment statistics](#)

Cross cutting statistics

- [sustainable development indicators](#)
- [funding for flooding and coastal erosion](#)

Our partners within Defra group

- [Environment Agency \(EA\)](#)
- [Forestry Commission](#)
- [Joint Nature Conservation Committee \(JNCC\)](#)
- [Natural England \(NE\)](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

Our environmental portfolio of official statistics is large (around 60 different products) and diverse. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best balance between compendiums of environmental statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

One key driver of the way that the portfolio will evolve will be the progress reporting now in development for the [Government's 25 year plan](#). Looking further to the future, we believe that technological development can bring radical change to what we measure and how we measure it and we will continue to track the potential of environmental monitoring approaches from Earth

observation to e-dna.

Collection: Food, Farming and Bio-security statistics

Working alongside our Defra group partner organisations: Animal and Plant Health Agency, Rural Payments Agency and Veterinary Medicines Directorate, we produce a wide range of statistics on the food we grow, sell and consume; farm productivity and management; farm commodity prices; health and welfare of farm animals and the control of animal and plant diseases.

[Our products](#)

[Our partners within Defra group](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Food statistics

- [family food statistics](#)
- [food chain analysis](#)
- [food statistics pocketbook](#)
- [food transport indicators](#)
- [overseas trade](#)
- [sustainable food system indicators](#)

Farming statistics

Farming

- [agriculture in the United Kingdom](#)
- [agriculture in England regional profiles](#)

Farm management statistics

- [aggregate agricultural accounts](#)
- [farm business survey](#)
- [agricultural productivity and competitiveness analyses](#)
- [productivity of the agricultural industry](#)

Commodities and farm-gate prices

- [agricultural price indices](#)

- [animal feed production](#)
- [cattle, sheep and pig slaughter](#)
- [cereal usage and stocks](#)
- [commodity prices](#)
- [egg production and prices](#)
- [fruit and vegetable wholesale prices](#)
- [milk utilisation by dairies](#)
- [milk prices and composition](#)
- [poultry and poultry meat statistics](#)

Land management and environmental issues

- [agricultural statistics and climate change](#)
- [agri-environment indicators](#)
- [agri-environment analysis](#)
- [farm practices survey](#)
- [fertiliser usage](#)
- [land under environmental management](#)

Land use and livestock

- [farm animal genetic resources](#)
- [horticultural statistics](#)
- [non-food crops](#)
- [orchard fruit](#)
- [organic farming](#)
- [structure of the agricultural industry](#)

Bio-security statistics

- [animal on-farm welfare inspections](#)
- [bovine TB](#)

Our partners within Defra group

- [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#)
- [Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\)](#)
- [Veterinary Medicines Directorate \(VMD\)](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)
- [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board \(AHDB\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The food, farming and biosecurity portfolio of official statistics is large (over 50 different products) and well established – with many of our datasets

having a long historical archive. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

One key driver of the way that the portfolio will evolve will be the new policy context for this topic, for example as a result of the forthcoming Agriculture Act and, more broadly, as a consequence of exiting the EU, increased demand for statistics in areas such as food and food trade.

Collection: Marine and fisheries statistics

Statistics on the UK fishing industry and its operations, along with international comparisons, stock assessments and information on fish imports and exports, are available on the Marine Management Organisation's sea fisheries statistics website.

Research and data on marine and freshwater aquatic environments, biodiversity and fisheries are available on the Cefas website.

[Our products](#)

[Our partners within Defra group](#)

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Our Products

Currently official and national statistics related to marine and fisheries topics are produced by Defra's relevant arms' length bodies.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

- [UK fishing industry and its operations](#)

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)

- [Marine and freshwater aquatic environments](#)

Our partners within Defra group

- [Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\)](#)

- [Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science \(Cefas\)](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The current marine and fisheries portfolio of statistics is small and focuses on sea fisheries, although the environmental portfolio of statistics includes some official statistics on the state of the marine environment (e.g. the UK Biodiversity Indicators).

International and domestic agreements, such as [OSPAR](#) and the [UK Marine Strategy](#), produce a much more extensive set of indicators on the state of the marine environment and we are currently exploring the potential need for official statistics on the state of the marine environment.

As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

[Collection: Rural Communities statistics](#)

Defra provides a collection of high level statistics which present an overall picture of living in rural areas across England.

[Our products](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Rural Communities statistics

- [rural urban classification](#)
- [rural economy – statistical indicators](#)
- [rural living – statistical indicators](#)

- [census rural analyses](#)
- [statistical digest of rural England](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The rural portfolio of official statistics is different to the remainder of the wider Defra portfolio in that much of it focuses on looking again at wider socio and economic statistics and drawing out insights by applying the official definitions of rural and urban communities to explore differences as well as rural specific trends. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of environmental statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.