

FOOD WASTE HARMS CLIMATE, WATER, LAND AND BIODIVERSITY

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) released a few days ago a report detailing the first study to analyze the impacts of **global food wastage** from an environmental perspective, looking specifically at its consequences for the climate, water and land use, and biodiversity.

Key facts and figures from the report are:

- The global volume of food wastage is estimated at 1.6 billion tonnes of “primary product equivalents.” Total food wastage for the edible part of this amounts to 1.3 billion tonnes.
- Food wastage’s carbon footprint is estimated at 3.3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent of GHG released into the atmosphere per year.
- The total volume of water used each year to produce food that is lost or wasted (250km³) is equivalent to the annual flow of Russia’s Volga River, or three times the volume of Lake Geneva.
- Similarly, 1.4 billion hectares of land – 28 percent of the world’s agricultural area – is used annually to produce food that is lost or wasted.
- Agriculture is responsible for a majority of threats to at-risk plant and animal species tracked by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

- A low percentage of all food wastage is composted: much of it ends up in landfills, and represents a large part of municipal solid waste. Methane emissions from landfills represents one of the largest sources of GHG emissions from the waste sector.
- Home composting can potentially divert up to 150 kg of food waste per household per year from local collection authorities.
- Developing countries suffer more food losses during agricultural production, while in middle- and high-income regions, food waste at the retail and consumer level tends to be higher.
- The direct economic consequences of food wastage (excluding fish and seafood) run to the tune of \$750 billion annually.



“All of us – farmers and fishers; food processors and supermarkets; local and national governments; individual consumers — must make changes at every link of the human food chain to prevent food wastage from happening in the first place, and re-use or recycle it when we can’t,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

“We simply cannot allow one-third of all the food we produce to go to waste or be lost because of inappropriate practices, when 870 million people go hungry every day,” he added.

Achim Steiner, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, said:

“UNEP and FAO have identified food waste and loss –food wastage– as a major opportunity for economies everywhere to assist in a transition towards a low carbon, resource efficient and inclusive Green Economy. Today’s excellent report by FAO underlines the multiple benefits that can be realized– in many cases through simple and thoughtful measures by for example households, retailers, restaurants, schools and businesses– that can contribute to environmental sustainability, economic improvements, food security and the realization of the UN Secretary General’s Zero Hunger Challenge. We would urge everyone to adopt the motto of our joint campaign: Think Eat Save – Reduce Your Foodprint!“.

Source: <http://theglobalfool.com/food-waste-harms-climate-water-land-and-biodiversity/>