

Title: The Easiest Climate Change Issue to Solve - Shrinking Food Waste
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While many of us don't question throwing out spoiled leftovers or discarding onion scraps during cooking, fewer think about where that food goes after it's collected, or realize the impact food waste has on the environment. In the U.S., up to 40% of food (365 million pounds per day) never gets eaten. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, food accounts for 22% of landfilled municipal solid waste (Gale, 2019). Food waste in landfills produces methane, 20 times stronger than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas (GHG). Global food waste links to around 7% of all global GHG emissions; consequently, if food waste were a country it would be the third-largest GHG emitter (Thompson, Saltzman 2019). This research examines strategies by industry, higher education, and government that can be adopted as models for food waste reduction efforts across the U.S. Some approaches include dairy farmers, food retailers and manufacturers working together to convert food waste into electricity (Morris, 2010); a startup redirecting surplus food to food-insecure individuals (Oroski, 2019); a large university cutting waste through improved food service systems like trayless dining (Freedman, 2009); a city collecting organic waste for compost (Zhang, 2006; Lou, 2009). The goal of this research is to connect current efforts by several stakeholders combating food waste to a larger understanding of how these efforts can be scaled up. A successful partnership amongst industry, higher education, and government to solve this issue, will act as a blueprint, and suggest that other climate change issues can be solved.

Works Cited

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