

Global Trends
Yining
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Global Trends – Food insecurity

A current global trend of greatest importance to me is the connection between food waste and climate change causing food insecurity. In the United States, there is roughly one-third of food wasted.¹ The energy used in producing, processing, transporting, and preparing this food is also wasted. Food waste and loss exacerbate the climate change crisis due to their large greenhouse gas.¹ Food production, transportation, and handling emit significant amounts of carbon dioxide, and when food ends up in landfills, it emits methane, which is also a greenhouse gas. Climate change, characterized by increasing global surface temperatures and alternations in rainfall could affect the quality and accessibility of nutrient-rich foods.¹ It's disruptive to both agriculture and supply chain resiliency. Therefore, the rising food price may cause greater food insecurity and may lead to micronutrient deficiencies in more people.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides tips on planning, prepping, and storing food to help households waste less food.² To avoid buying food you already have, look in your refrigerator and cupboards first. Make a list of what needs to be used up each week and plan your upcoming meals around it. Make a shopping list based on the number of meals you'll be eating at home.² This allows you to easily select, shop for, and prepare meals. If you buy no more than what you expect to use, you will be more likely to keep it fresh and use it all. When you get home from the store, take the time to wash, dry, chop, dice, slice, and place your fresh food items in clear storage containers for snacks and easy cooking.² Prepare and cook perishable items, then freeze them for use throughout the month. Keep in mind your foods in your freezer and visit them often. It is easy to overbuy or forget about fresh fruits and vegetables. You need to find out how to store fruits and vegetables. For example, wait to wash berries until you want to eat them to prevent mold.

Moreover, the Too Good to Waste Toolkit will assist people in determining how much food is wasted in home and what they can do to waste less.² Too Good to Waste also includes an Implementation Guide that teaches local governments and community organizations how to use the Toolkit to launch a Food: Too Good to Waste campaign in their community.² Lastly, if you can't reduce food waste, divert it away from landfills by donating nutritious, safe, and untouched food to food banks to help those in need or compost food scraps rather than throwing them away.² I believe that reducing and preventing food waste can improve food security, promote resource and energy conservation, and address climate change, all of which can reduce supply chain shocks caused by climate change.

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Reference

1. Buzby, J., 2022. USDA Food Loss and Waste Liaison in Food and Nutrition Health and Safety. [online] U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. Available at: <<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2022/01/24/food-waste-and-its-links-greenhouse-gases-and-climate-change>> [Accessed 10 April 2022].
2. US EPA. 2022. Preventing Wasted Food at Home | US EPA. [online] Available at: <<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/preventing-wasted-food-home>> [Accessed 10 April 2022].