

# Food Waste - it's a rotten problem!

There was bad news in 2024: the UK wasted 9.5 million tonnes of food, 60% due to households overbuying and not storing it properly. The average family of four wastes about £1,000. The food goes to landfills, releases gases like methane and produces about 5% of our greenhouse gases.

The good news is that at home we're in control and can tackle the problem, save money and help the planet.

We've probably all heard that we should be buying loose veg, not overbuying, planning our meals, making sure food is stored properly, and freezing it if we can't use it.

We can follow those basic steps, but we'll probably still find a soggy lettuce in the fridge or a loaf as hard as concrete. With the effort and energy used to make our food, let alone the wasted spending, it's depressing for it to end up in the bin.

Businesses often waste less because they're more focused on profits than eating! They often use a 'food waste hierarchy'. Can we apply this in our homes?

Prevent surplus and waste by applying basic stock control practices and food hygiene standards to prevent spoilage. And can we be more creative with our menus, making up recipes for items in the fridge? Get help from Google! A wilting lettuce can make a delicious soup! Can we aim not to go shopping to buy more without eating what we've already got?

Redistribute surpluses: if we've made too much and don't want Shepherd's Pie

three days running, see if a neighbour might like some; perhaps someone who can't cook for themselves. Local food charities might welcome unused larder items. Buriton's church collects for the Food Bank and Petersfield's Freeshop prevents wasted food.

Make animal feed: some human foods are safe for birds and pets to eat. They'd need to be low in salt and within the 'use by' date and you can check with your vet, the RSPB or animal charity websites.

Recycling / composting: from March 2026, all local authorities are due to provide weekly food waste collections. But we can already compost some food at home and lots of people already do. Check online for basic home composting rules.

Those four business tips are not too difficult to apply in some way at home. With the amount of money that could be saved, perhaps put someone in your family in charge of food waste and offer some extra pocket money!

The BEA group hopes to run another foodie event on this topic. If you already have any tips and recipes for leftovers, please share by emailing [buritonbea@gmail.com](mailto:buritonbea@gmail.com)