

Eliminating Food Waste

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### Executive Summary

Food waste is a serious problem our country is faced with. Throughout the supply chain there is far too much waste of food. Food waste not only has an effect on our economy and society, but also greenhouse emissions. Food waste causes the release of CO<sub>2</sub> and methane which has detrimental effects on the world. Canada has one of the highest rates of food waste in the world and it is necessary to lower these figures.

This paper will explore the ways that Canada can improve our food waste problem. Over the recent years Canada has passed multiple bills and projects to help combat this issue. While Provincial and National projects are underway to inspire and create a difference, there is still a lot of space for improvement. The agriculture industry is widely affected by the amount of food wasted each year during and after the harvest. Canada has a bill in place that helps protect these farmers.

Not only does food waste affect the environment, but also the economy. By creating innovative plans to counteract this issue it is also ensuring a strong economy. It is more important than ever that the government enforces these environment conscious plans of actions. Each day scientists are coming out with more statistics regarding our effects on the planet and how we can stop them.

With the support of the government and community it is possible to get Canada's waste under control and create a positive difference. By reducing food waste, people in poverty will be less likely to be without food. Ensuring the proper safety measures for the planet should be the governments top priority. Opening Up the conversation of reducing food waste will help

support innovative minds and spread awareness to the younger, as well as older generations of Canada.

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The average Canadian wastes 79 kilograms of household food every year (Radio Canada International, 2021). This adds up to 2.94 million metric tonnes of household food annually. Food is wasted from farm to plate, through production, processing, distribution, retail, food-service, and at home. Given these statistics, it is more important than ever for the government of Canada to make drastic changes for our environment. Canada is the largest waste producing country in the world. While there has been some positive changes in the amount of food wasted each year, there are definitely more ways Canada can counteract this problem.

In November 2020, a 20-million dollar Food Waste Reduction Challenge was launched by the Food Policy for Canada (Newswire, 2021). This initiative was created to accelerate and advance high impact and diverse solutions to food waste in Canada. 343 applicants from across the country participated in this challenge. Each semi finalist will be awarded 100 000 dollars and move on to the marketing demonstration of this challenge. This initiative will help encourage and push the younger generation to create innovative ideas to tackle such a detrimental issue.

In 2015, Canada committed to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including Goal 12.3, which sets a target to “halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses” by 2030 (canada.ca, 2019). This goal will help the Canadian economy, improving the efficiency and competitiveness of the agri-food and agriculture sector.

The agenda will make a difference in reducing the greenhouse admissions and will contribute to global efforts to reduce this issue.

Food loss and waste occurs at every part of the supply chain. Reducing waste and losses at each step of this process can save Canadians money. It is estimated that 13% of fruits and

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vegetables grown in Canada go unharvested or are discarded following the harvest (canada.ca, 2019). By reducing this percentage, not only will the amount of food wasted be reduced, but money will be saved.

Many actions have been undertaken to improve profits for farmers and fishers in Canada. There are many funding opportunities for innovative ideas to improve the reduction of food waste, nationally and globally. By creating these helpful initiatives, there is more discussion and improvements regarding this important topic. AAFC has been conducting research on innovative approaches and technology to help preserve fresh produce. The packaging Consortium has been conducting research to improve packaging and storage to reduce food losses throughout the supply chain.

Globalisation has both positive and negative effects on the food waste problem the world is faced with. While Canada has made a step in the right direction, there are many projects around the world Canada could take part in. Because of globalisations countries now work together to create sustainable changes for our environment. On the other hand, there are many examples of food waste directly connected to globalisation. Since there are larger distances to travel with certain perishable food items, this causes much more organic waste.

Many political leaders are pushing for the federal government to tackle the food waste dilemma with a private bill. A West Coast MP a private member's bill aimed at combating

Canada's massive food waste and driving down greenhouse emissions. Bill C-283 was tabled in the House of Commons of April the year. The bill calls for the development of a federal strategy to prevent food ending up in landfills as well as national food waste awareness day. The NDP MP said "Canada has a lot of work to do to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of

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food waste" (National Observer, 2021). The pandemic has highlighted just how important the demolish of food waste is. This bill also builds education and addresses the reality that food waste is responsible for a huge volume of greenhouse emissions in Canada. In addition, this bill will include the study of ways to reduce the environmental impact associated with producing unused food and establish waste reduction targets.

The federal government has been working on bills and projects to reduce Canada's food waste problem. An advisory council has been created to shape federal food policy. The government has a larger plan to not only reduce greenhouse emissions, but also reduce poverty and food insecurity and support healthier food choices and investments in the agriculture sectors to provide high quality food.

Canada wastes a shocking amount of food each year. Greater than half of the food produced in Canada is thrown away annually (National Observer, 2021). This costs the economy an approximate 50 billion dollars in avoidable food loss. Because of the food wasted each year, close to 56.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions is generated. Food waste tightly compacted into landfills and denied oxygen creates methane. A tonne of methane is estimated to have 84 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over a twenty year period (National Observer, 2021).

On a provincial level, Nova Scotia has made many strides to become more efficient. IN October 1992, the Province of Nova Scotia implemented the Sustainable Development Strategy for Nova Scotia (novascotia.ca, 2009). According to Nova Scotia there are five main components of waste diversion: source reduction, material reuse, recycling, composting, and business

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development. By challenging these components Nova Scotia has been creating a less wasteful province.

There are multiple ways Nova Scotia could further their endeavour for a healthier environment. First of all, projects could be made to insure extra food from stores and restaurants are donated to food banks and those who are less fortunate. By doing this not only are CO2 emissions being lowered, but poverty is also being tackled. Another opportunity to create a more sustainable community is supporting local food before large corporations. By shopping local there is less waste throughout the supply chain.

Food waste is an issue that cannot be fixed overnight. It will take local, national, and global support. Canada has been working toward innovative projects and bills to conquer food waste in Canada. Between the support from the younger generations and the research done by environmental scientists, Nova Scotia is one step closer to sustainable living.

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