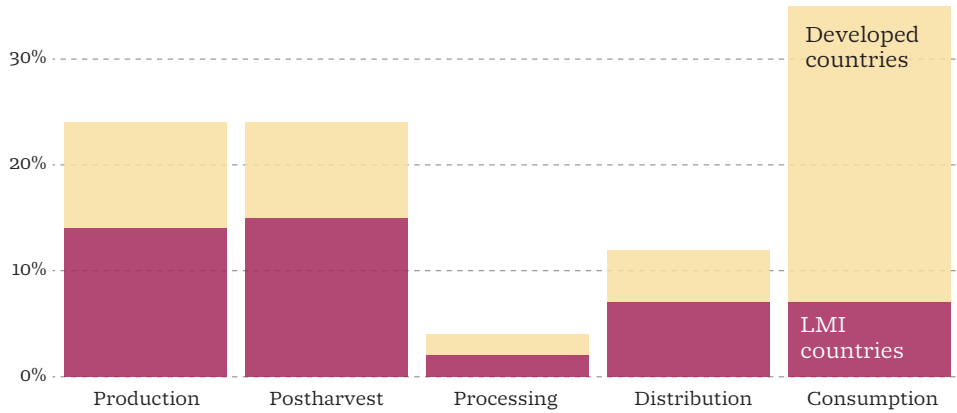


WASTED and INSECURE



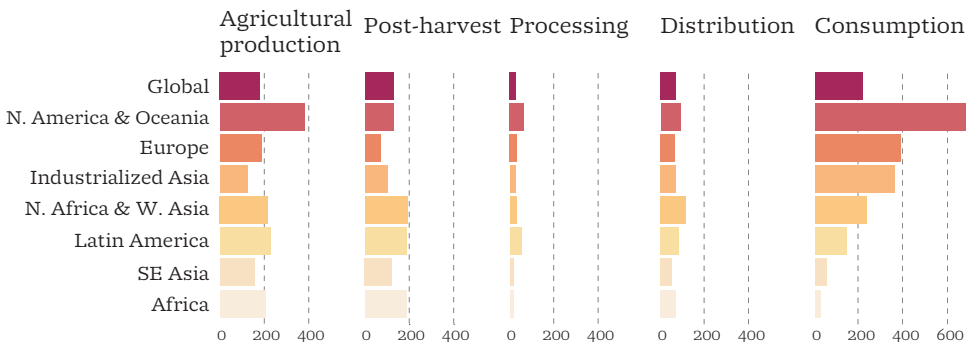
Food waste is a pressing problem for people and the environment. A global estimate shows that 30-40% of produced food is wasted as it moves through the supply chain. In low and middle income (LMI) countries, food waste is predominant in processing steps, while in more affluent countries, food waste occurs during distribution and consumption. In the US, the majority of food waste is generated at consumption, while more than 38 million Americans are considered food insecure according to the USDA. If so much food is being wasted, and so many Americans are considered food insecure, can these two problems be the solution to one another?

Rich countries waste the majority of food at the consumer level

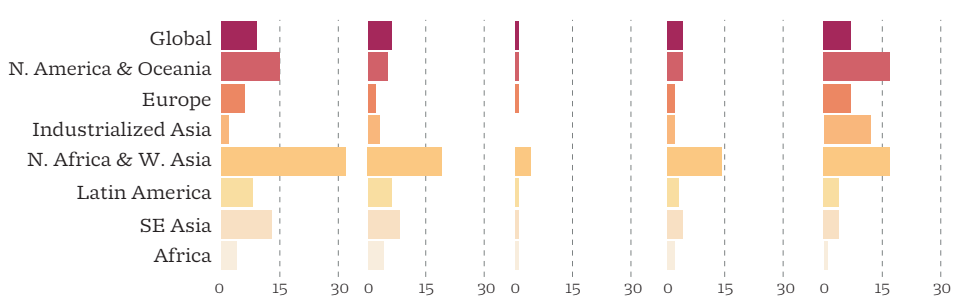


Global populations waste food differently in the supply chain with climate consequences

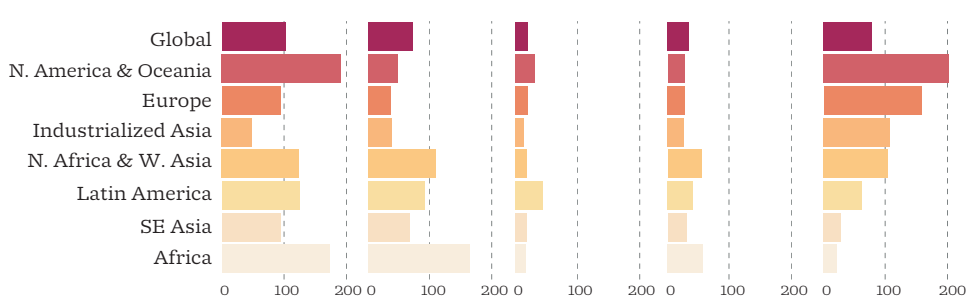
Overall food supply losses [kcal/cap/day]



Water resources [m³/cap/yr] used for food losses

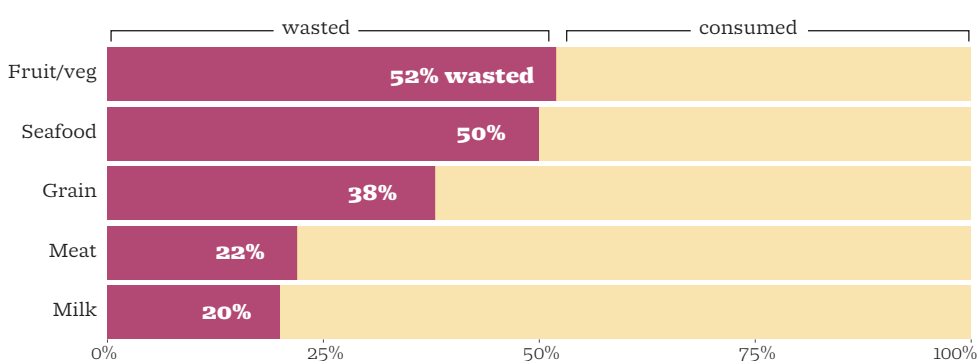


Cropland [m²/cap/yr] used for food losses



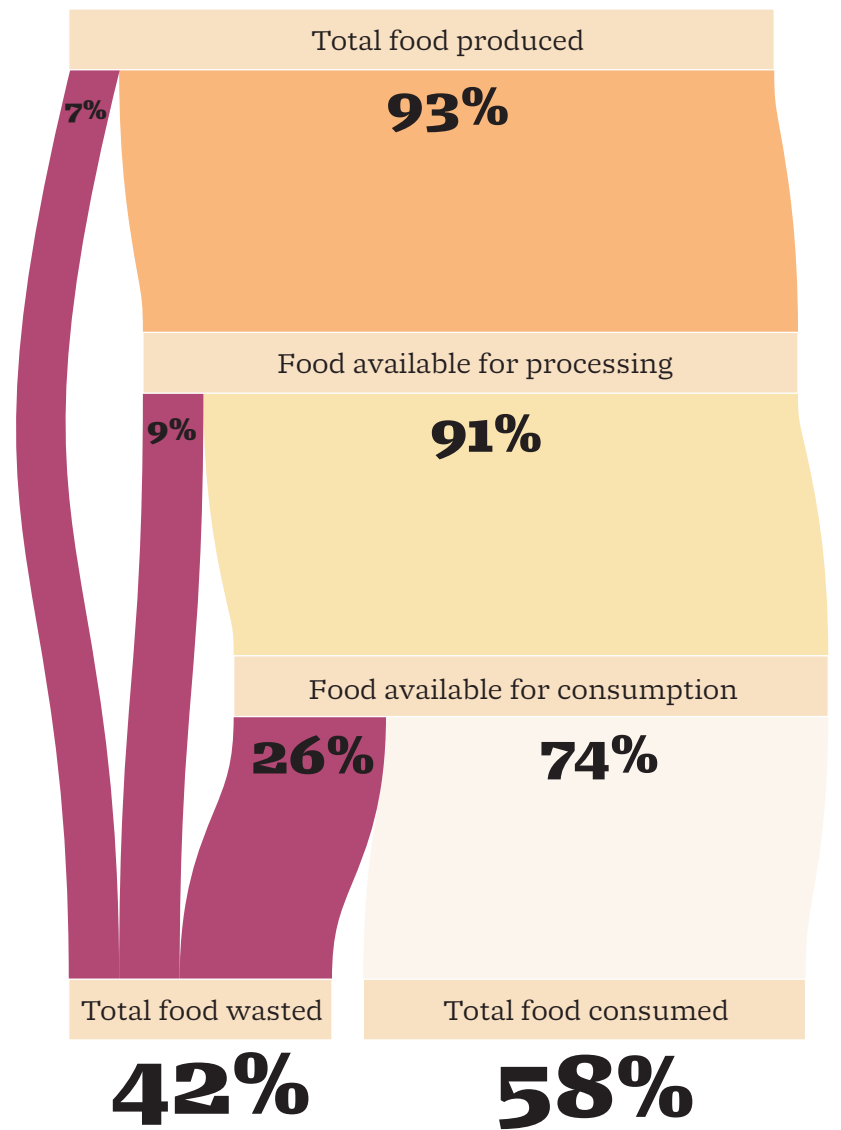
50% of fruits and vegetables are wasted in the US food supply chain

Fruits and vegetables are most likely to be wasted, with more than half of all crops produced entering the landfill between production and consumption. Losses in meat and dairy are less prevalent, but production of these foods is more resource intensive, with higher potential negative impacts on the climate.



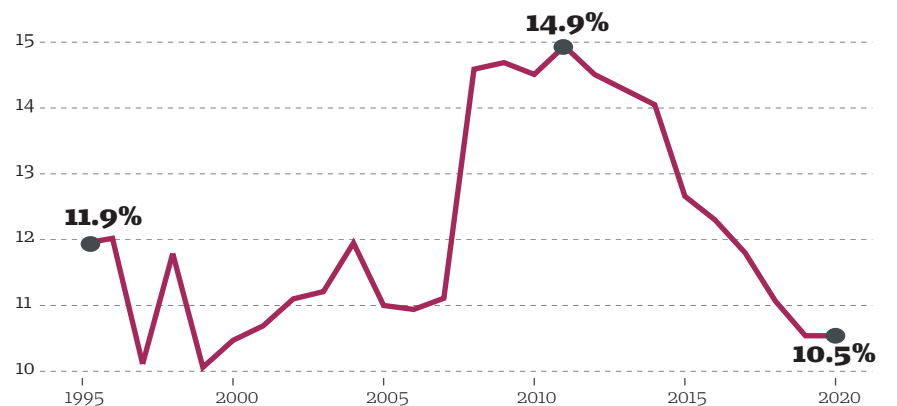
Food waste in the United States coming from losses during consumption

Crop production and harvesting is streamlined and efficient in the US, but consumer behaviors are wasteful and result in 30-40% of food being wasted. Consumer behavior changes are therefore most necessary in reducing food waste in the US.



Despite high levels of food waste, food insecurity in the US is still prevalent

Food insecurity in households is defined by having uncertainty or an inability to acquire enough food and meet the caloric needs of all family members. In the United States in 2020, food insecurity rates were 10.5% and decreasing, but still affecting 38 million households. The peak in food insecurity between 2008-2015 is likely attributable to economic downturns and household financial struggles, which significantly contribute to the prevalence of food insecurity.



The food waste hierarchy offers solutions to relieve food insecurity

Food waste in the US mainly results from wasteful consumer behaviors - either due to buying too many groceries that end up going bad, or by ordering excess food at a restaurant that goes uneaten. Therefore, reducing food waste is in the hands of consumers, as a simple change in behavior can easily reduce food waste. Researchers have studied and introduced the food waste hierarchy to outline steps we can take to redirect food waste, and the second highest priority is to use food waste to feed hungry people or those that are food insecure. Donating leftover food to redistribution networks and food pantries can therefore have an immediate positive impact on reducing food insecurity in local communities.

1. SOURCE REDUCTION
2. FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE
3. FEED ANIMALS
4. INDUSTRIAL USES
5. COMPOST
6. LANDFILL

INFOGRAPHIC BY: Abbey Yatsko, DATA SOURCES: Reducing Food Loss and Waste (WRI), Kummu et al. 2012, Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill (NRDC 2012), Food Security Status of U.S. Households in 2020 (USDA)