



# Global Unilever Food Waste Report - 2020

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1st January 2020 – 31st December 2020

## Introduction

The Unilever Compass, our sustainable business strategy, is set out to help us deliver superior performance and drive sustainable and responsible growth, while improving the health of the planet through taking climate action, protecting and regenerating nature and creating a waste-free world.

Food loss and waste is a global crisis with one-third of all food produced globally lost or wasted. Tackling food waste is an opportunity to address food insecurity, protect natural resources and mitigate climate change – and it requires a holistic approach. It means focusing on the systems by which food is produced, consumed and disposed of, by our industry and others across the whole chain from farm to fork.

## Our approach to food waste reduction

We have long-standing programmes in place that address food waste in our manufacturing operations.

We have sent zero waste to landfill from our factories since 2014 and since 2016 we have been sending zero waste to landfill across more than 600 sites, in 70 countries, including factories, warehouses, distribution centers and offices.

Alan Jope, our CEO, is a member of [Champions 12.3](#), a global coalition of leaders dedicated to accelerating progress towards achieving sustainable development goal 12.3, which calls for halving per capita food waste at the retail and consumers levels and reduce food losses along the production and supply chains by 2030.

It is our ambition to protect and preserve food to feed the world. Our accelerated plan of action to reduce food waste was fueled by the urgency of what is not only a humanitarian but also an environmental and economic crisis.



In September 2020 we adopted the Champions 12.3 'Target-Measure-Act' approach and signed up to the 10x20x30 commitment, as well as pledging to publicly report our food waste footprint using the Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard.

In November 2020, we announced our Future Foods strategy where we pledged to halve food waste across our global direct operations from factory to shelf by 2025 – five years ahead of the UN's SDG 12.3.

In March 2021, our food waste footprint for the baseline year 2019 was published. This current report covers 2020, the year in which we published our food waste commitments. The report relates to all Unilever Foods and Refreshment manufacturing and logistic sites across the globe: 128 manufacturing sites and 235 Distribution Centres (DCs). We are reporting the food waste in our global direct operation from factory to shelf – extending our impact beyond manufacturing operations and including our DCs.

## Our food waste commitments

In addition to halving food waste in our global direct operations by 2025, we want to drive wide-reaching change beyond the boundaries of our business and tackle food loss and waste across the food chain. Over the next few years, we will focus on the following four additional areas of action:

- Maintain zero waste to landfill and ensuring no good food is destroyed
- Enroll key supply partners to follow our lead and tackle food loss and waste in their operations
- Help our food service customers avoid food waste through education, partnerships and services, and finding ways of redistributing surplus food
- Through our brands, help our consumers waste less food at home.

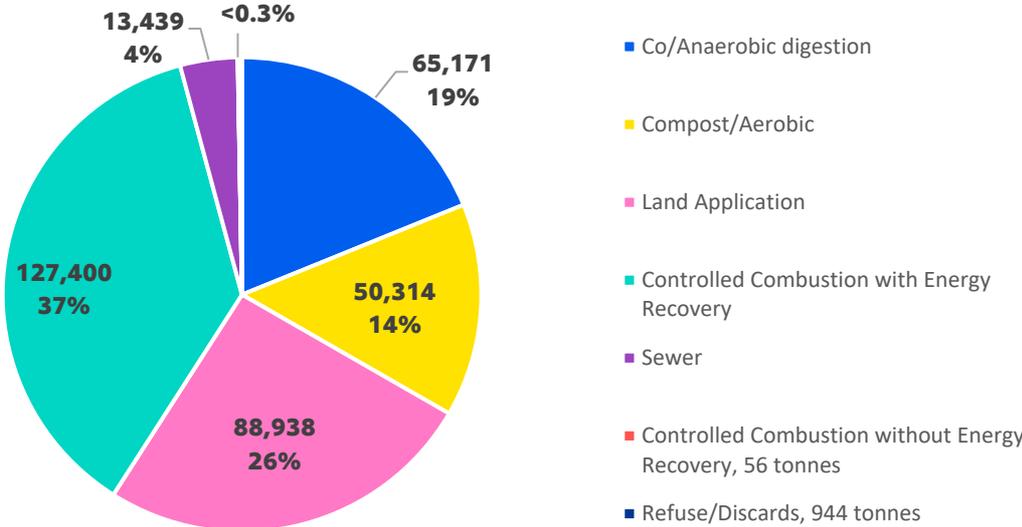
# 2020 Food Waste Reporting

**Total food handled  
6,093,028 tonnes**

**Waste as percentage of food handled: 5.7%**

**Overall Food Waste: 346,261 tonnes**

**Chart 1. Waste by destination in tonnes; percentage of total food waste**



Our total food handled for the year 2020 was 6,093,028 tonnes.

Our food waste was 346,261 tonnes which equates to 5.7% of the total food handled. In line with the Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard, this includes all waste destinations except donations, animal feeding and biomaterial processing.

We are covering food waste from our distribution centers, in addition to our manufacturing sites.



As per Chart 1, our Food Waste is managed in different ways. We are always trying to move up the food waste hierarchy to find the most sustainable solutions to dispose of what cannot be eliminated at source.

Below are some examples of waste recycling from our sites:

- 19% of our food waste goes to anaerobic digestion where we are capturing and using the biogas generated as a green energy source.
- 14% of our food waste goes to composting solutions. In some instances, the output is used directly on site to grow vegetables.
- Where possible, our food waste is also applied directly to land as a fertiliser.
- Finally, 37% of our waste cannot be moved up the waste hierarchy and is sent to incineration with energy recovery.

## Our 2020 food waste results in context

During 2020, the effect of the pandemic on Unilever's business has been significant. Widespread national lockdowns saw large parts of the portfolio – including our €1.7 billion food service business – hit by sudden and very dramatic falls in sales, in some cases by as much as 70%.

Across the year, we saw similarly unprecedented swings in consumer demand across geographical markets, as well as across sales channels.

In this year of crisis, our first priority was to ensure the health and safety of our employees next to meeting consumer needs to the best of our abilities.

Responding to sudden and dramatic fluctuations in demand in the midst of a global pandemic has required a huge effort on the part of our teams, and especially from our supply chain and field sales colleagues, who focused on keeping our products reaching the shelves while having to observe strict safety protocols.

In this context we are proud to report that the food waste generated in our operations as percentage of the total volume of food produced was the same as in 2019, 5.7% of total food handled.

We saw a small increase in food waste in our factories during 2020. This was offset by a decrease in food waste coming from finished food products in our distribution centers at the end of shelf life.

When it comes to waste destinations, we could maintain our zero food waste to landfill commitment also in this untypical year. And despite COVID our waste destination profile was maintained and similar to 2019.

Food donations are not considered food waste but the year 2020 was characterised by large amounts of food being donated to where it was needed most. Across the globe, we donated hundreds of tonnes of products working with the Global Food Banking network or directly with charities e.g. in the US with United for America.

## A snapshot of our food waste programme

Our mission to protect and preserve food is not one we can achieve alone. That's why we're working with our brands and partners across the food chain to transform the system and help end the food waste crisis. The below outlines some of our key achievements in 2020:

### **Valinhos factory – reducing food waste by 25%**

Over the past years our ice cream factory in Brazil already significantly reduced its food waste. Also, in 2020, they stayed focused on food waste reduction.

The Valinhos team set up systems to track where losses occur. Setting targets, having dedicated teams and frequent (daily) check-in meetings created a Food Waste Warriors mindset. Complemented by changes in processes and operations, this resulted in a total of ~25% less food waste versus 2017.

### **Cutting down finished product waste through rigour, tools and a Food Waste Warrior movement**

Our Benelux and German teams have been pioneering approaches to minimise waste from finished food products which, for a variety of reasons, we had not been able to sell or donate before end of shelf life.

Dedicated cross-functional teams, involving supply chain, marketing, planning and sales were set up to identify root causes for finished products going to waste and to drive towards different outcomes. Solutions included taking action on slow moving stock much earlier by better use of planning and stock-aging tools

supported by predictive analytics as well as working closely with customer teams to ensure finished products reached consumers before end of shelf life.

Creating a Food Waste Warrior culture and movement played an equally important role as systems, tools, processes and focus. In both countries, food waste in the form of finished products that could not be sold or donated decreased very significantly as a result of these interventions.

## Cremissimo ice-cream – helping to use up ‘saved’ ice cream



Our Cremissimo ice cream team have found a way to collect ice cream not used in the primary production process and mixing it in with delicious chocolate sauce and white chocolate chips to create ‘saved’ ice cream.

Launched in 2020, over 1.2 million Cremissimo Chocolate Hero tubs have been sold, representing a waste reduction of 160 tonnes – or 300,000 tubs – of ice cream a year.

To add to the brand’s ecological credentials, each tub is made from 100% recyclable plastic and features *Too Good To Go*’s new ‘Often Good for Longer’ use-by date label – making Cremissimo one of the first ice cream brands in Germany to feature this type of guidance to combat food waste.

## Smart tech helps chefs cut down on food waste

Our foodservice business, Unilever Food Solutions (UFS), teamed up with digital provider Orbisk in the Netherlands to place waste management systems consisting of smart cameras and scales to tackle food waste in restaurants and professional kitchens. The smart camera and scale sits under an organic waste container and uses artificial intelligence (AI) to quickly identify and log every bit of food thrown away.



These data help our foodservice customers adapt their menus and change their buying patterns to prevent waste and boost profits. We've already supported customers in multiple key sites across the Netherlands halve their food waste.

## Hellmann's takes action on household food waste

Hellmann's has been taking action on food waste for the past few years. Through the Hellmann's Food Relief Fund where we worked in partnership with Feeding America in the US, we could save 1.2 million pounds of food in 2020 and provide it to more than 200,000 US families in need. With harvests and demand being disrupted by the pandemic, farmers were left with surplus from their harvest while

many families became dependent on food banks. With the Hellmann's Food Relief Fund, we were able to help redistribute food to where it was needed most.



As big global brand that is invited into the homes of hundreds of millions of consumers, we believe we have an opportunity and responsibility to help them reduce their household food waste. Therefore, Hellmann's is working with leading academics and behavioural scientists to develop impactful consumer behavior change programs. In Q4 2020, Hellmann's conducted one of the longest and largest behavioral intervention studies in the area of household food waste. The study has proven that simple changes like adopting just one 'Use-Up Day' per week can reduce the amount of food thrown away in homes by one third.

## **Donating food – supporting front-line workers and people in need**

While we work on developing innovative strategies to reduce food waste, our global partnership with the Global FoodBanking Network continues to enable us to make product donations. In 2020, we reached 3.3 million kg (3,330 metric tonnes) in product donations across 30 countries.

We also worked with other partners to support health workers and others in need with food and hygiene products. In Turkey, Unilever Food Solutions (UFS) delivered 1.7 million bowls of Knorr soup, 230 tons of Domestos and 10 million cups of Lipton Tea to the Ministry of Health to support health workers. In Indonesia, Unilever Food Solutions employees donated 52,000 meals to health workers.

In the US, United for America is a movement, ignited by Unilever to unite with retail, corporate and nonprofit partners to help our hardest-hit communities recover, rebuild, and reimagine their futures. As part of this initiative Knorr donated 1,2M worth of products to Feeding America and Hellmann's delivered 30,000 meals to healthcare workers in NY hospitals as part of a 1 million US dollar donation to feed frontline workers and people in need.

### **Our purpose is to make sustainable living commonplace.**

We're focused on improving both the health of the planet and people's health, confidence and wellbeing, whilst contributing to a fairer, more socially inclusive world.

Find out more about our mission to create a waste-free world at <https://www.unilever.com/planet-and-society/waste-free-world/>

### **Company background**

Unilever is one of the world's leading suppliers of Foods and Refreshments, Beauty & Personal Care and Home Care products, with sales in over 190 countries and products used by 2.5 billion people every day. We have 149,000 employees and generated sales of €50.7 billion in 2020. Over half of our footprint is in developing and emerging markets. We have around 400 brands found in homes all over the world – including iconic global brands like Knorr, Magnum, Hellmann's, Walls and Ben & Jerry's as well as Dove, Lifebuoy, OMO and Surf.

