GUARDIANS OF THE FOOD GALAXY

LESSON 12

Food Waste in the Food System

What is this image showing us?

An American Family of Four's Monthly Food Waste

Figure 1

Source: New York Times, 2008

1. How much fruit and vegetables are thrown away every month by the average American family?

2. Do you think American families throw away more or less food than families in other countries? Why?

3. What is the most and least wasted food type?

4. Write down a question or idea that comes to mind from the image above.

Food Waste in the Food System

What is this pie chart showing us?

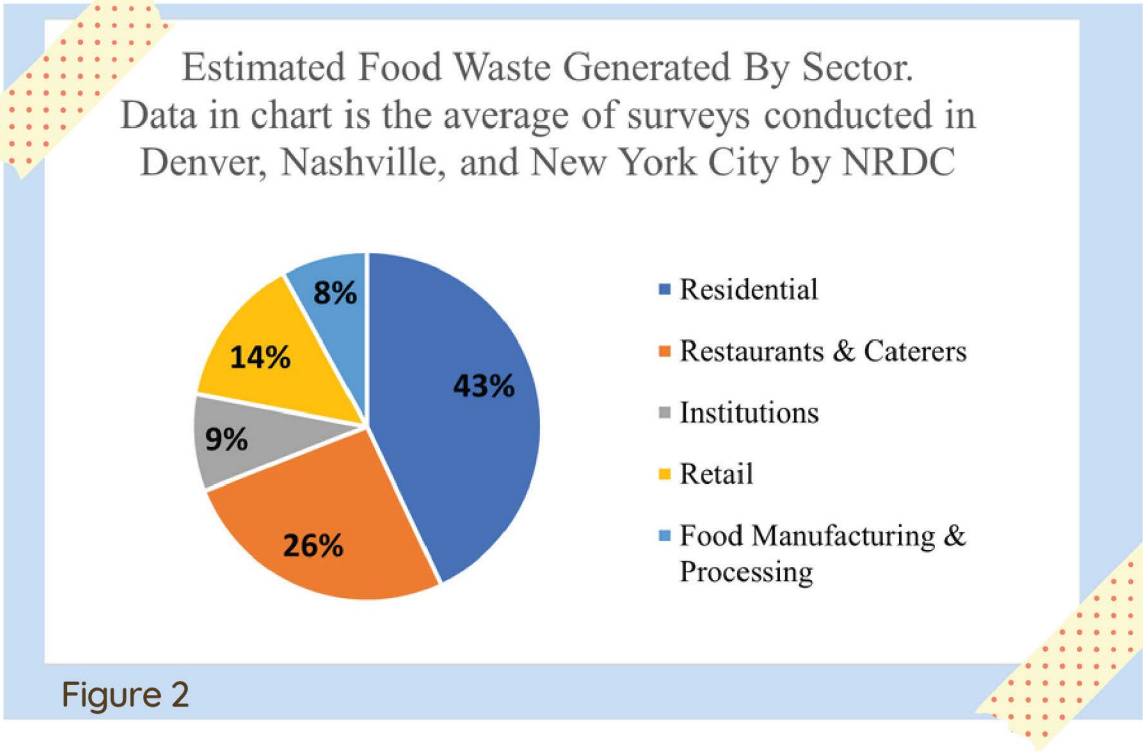

Figure 2

1. What percentage of food waste comes from Retail (for example Grocery Stores) ?

2. Find the part of the food system where the most food waste comes from.

3. What might be one cause of food waste from restaurants?

4. Write down a question that comes to mind about the pie chart above.

Food Waste in the Food System

What is this pie chart showing us?

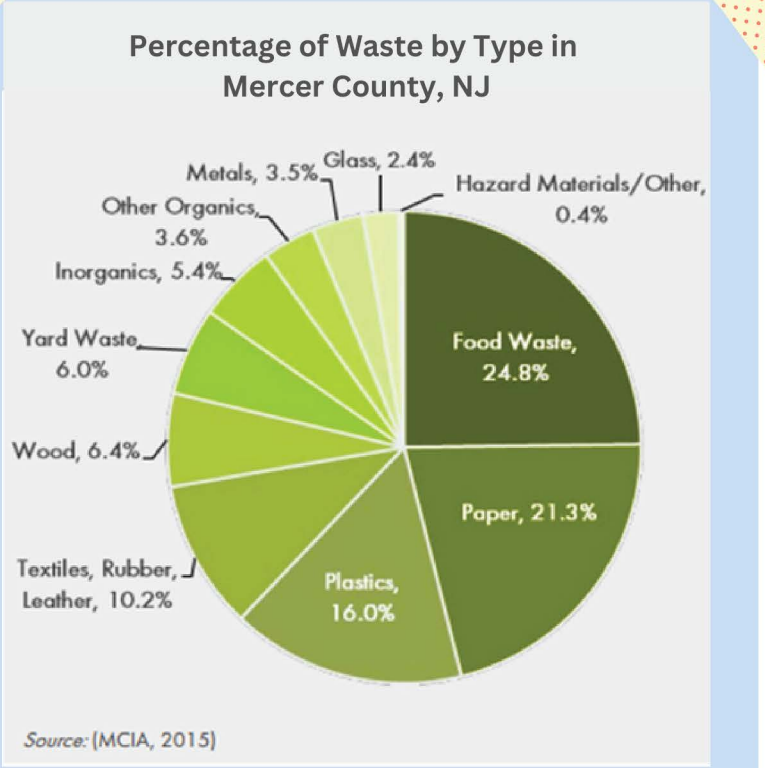

Figure 3

This pie chart shows information about the different types of solid waste from one NJ county landfill.

1. What type of waste contributes the most to this NJ landfill?

_____

_____

2. What else does this pie chart show us?

_____

_____

3. Write down a question that comes to mind about the pie chart above.

_____

_____

Food Waste in the Food System

What is this bar graph telling us?

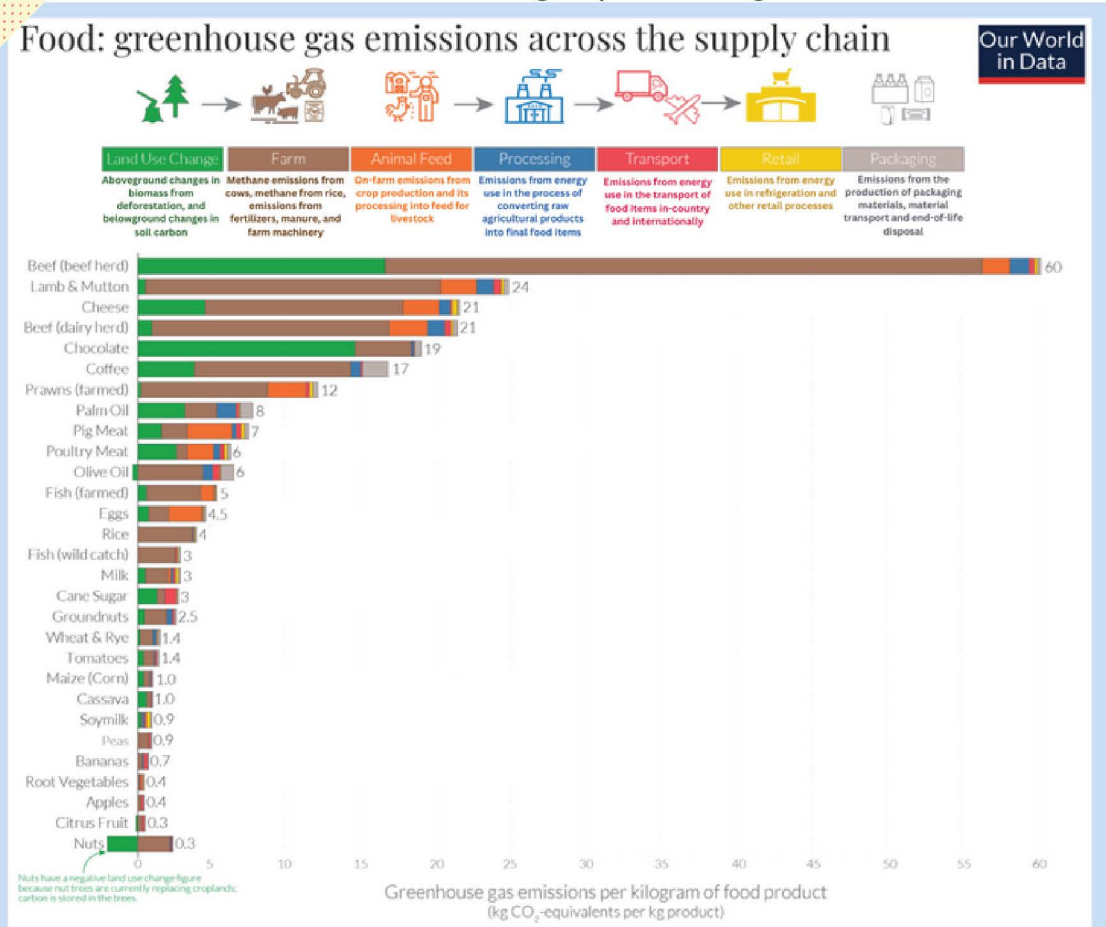

Figure 4 Our World in Data, 2018

1. What type of graph is this?

_____

_____

2. Identify one food that creates a lot of greenhouse gases in the "Farm" stage of the food supply chain.

_____

_____

3. Identify two foods that create a small amount of greenhouse gases compared to other foods.

_____

_____

4. Identify one food that creates greenhouse gases at the "Land Use Change" part of the food supply chain.

_____

Facts about Food Waste

Use the previous images and figures to answer the following questions.

1. Where does Food Waste happen in the food system?

_____

_____

_____

2. How much of municipal solid waste (in one NJ county) is food waste?

_____

_____

_____

3. How much food is wasted in the U.S. every year?

_____

_____

_____

4. Which parts/components of the food system create more waste than others?

_____

_____

_____

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

VIDEO GUIDE

Using the worksheet, answer the following questions.

1- _____ % of all the food that is produced in the U.S. does not get eaten.

2- Where does most food waste occur?

_____

_____

_____

3- What happens to food waste when you throw it out in the garbage?

_____

_____

_____

4- What is one thing you can do to help reduce food waste?

_____

_____

_____

KIDSNEWS

Food waste a growing problem

Candice Choi, March 9, 2021 6:30PM AP

ENVIRONMENT

Reading level: Orange

Will you eat everything in your lunch box today? If not, what will you do with what's left over? Save it for another time or throw it in the bin?

A new report by the United Nations estimates 17 per cent of all the food produced around the world gets wasted each year.
That amounts to 931 million tons of wasted food, far more than previous reports estimate.

Most of the waste — 61 per cent — happens in households, while food services such as restaurants and cafes account for 26 per cent and shops account for 13 per cent, the UN found.

The food waste coming from households alone is estimated to amount to 74kg for each person each year.

The UN is pushing to reduce food waste globally, and researchers are also working on a way to track where and how food is being wasted.

The report authors said they hoped to get a clearer snapshot of the scale of the food waste problem, which has been difficult to assess, in the hope of encouraging governments to invest in better tracking.

"Many countries haven't yet quantified* their food waste, so they don't understand the scale of the problem," said Clementine O'Connor, from the UN Environment Program and co-author of the report.

Food waste has become a growing concern because of the environmental toll of production, including the land required to raise crops and animals and the greenhouse gas emissions produced along the way.

The UN Environment Program estimates that wasted food is responsible for 8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

If food waste was a country, it would have the third highest greenhouse gas emissions in the world, after only the US and China.

Experts say improved waste tracking is key to finding ways to ease the problem, such as programs to divert inedible scraps to use as animal feed or fertiliser.

The report found food waste in homes wasn't limited to higher income countries such as the US, UK and Australia.

Food waste researcher Professor Brian Roe, from Ohio State University in the US, said food was also sometimes wasted in poor countries because they didn't have reliable home refrigeration.

He said people in richer countries tended to eat out more which meant food waste was simply shifted from the home to restaurants.

Prof Roe, who was not involved in the UN report, said household and cultural habits could contribute to waste at home, including massive packaging, "buy one, get one free" deals or lack of composting* programs.

'Use by' or 'best by' dates on products could also be causing people to throw away food.

US food regulators have urged producers to clarify* the meaning of food dates and to be more consistent with their use, saying people could be throwing out food because they think it is unsafe to eat, when in fact the date is intended only to indicate when quality might decline.

"Food waste is a consequence* of sensible decisions by people acting on the best information available," said agricultural economist Prof Chris Barrett, from Cornell University in the US.

Richard Swannell, a co-author of the UN report, said food was generally more valued, even in richer countries, just a few generations ago, because people often couldn't afford to waste it.

He said raising awareness today about the scale of food waste globally could help shift attitudes back to that era.

"Food is too important to waste," he said.

GLOSSARY

- **quantified:** measured the amount of something
- **composting:** the breaking down of food and other organic waste so that it can be used to improve soil
- **clarify:** explain, make clear
- **consequence:** result

EXTRA READING

Eat school lunch to help cut food waste(https://www.kidsnews.com.au/environment/new-discovery-tours-help-children-learn-about-food-waste-and-how-they-can-help-reduce-it/news-story/ba70fd7126c5ea22d76f05455f9bedb8)

Food waste to become 100 million meals(https://www.kidsnews.com.au/environment/coles-supermarkets-to-cut-food-waste-going-to-landfill-to-make-100-million-meals-for-the-hungry/news-story/fbc566b44653430515453bf3c59a38a1)

QUICK QUIZ

1. What percentage of all food produced around the world gets wasted each year?
2. Where does most of the food waste come from?
3. How many kilograms of food waste does each person in a household produce each year?
4. Which organisation prepared this report?
5. What is one reason food is sometimes wasted in poor countries?

LISTEN TO THIS STORY

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Food Waste

Create a table with two columns. Write "How food is/can be wasted in my life?" at the top of the first column and "Ways I can reduce this" at the top of the second column. Now think about the food consumption in your life at home and school. Do you think you waste a lot of food at home and at school? Write down the ways you might waste food in the first column. Try to think of some ways you could reduce this waste in the second column.

Time: allow 20 minutes to complete this activity

Curriculum Links: English, Critical and creative thinking

2. Extension

Write a letter to a local restaurant or supermarket asking them to outline ways they try to reduce their food waste. You could also ask them to consider alternatives to food waste such as giving it to animals, using it to cook meals for the needy and so forth. See if you receive a response from them in the near future (make sure you write your email or postal address so they can reply).

Time: allow 20 minutes to complete this activity

Curriculum Links: English, Critical and creative thinking

VCOP ACTIVITY

Up-level it

Scan through the article and see if you can locate three words that you consider to be basic, or low level. These are words we use all the time and that can be replaced by more sophisticated words. Words like "good" and "said" are examples of overused words.

Once you have found them, see if you can up-level them. Think of synonyms you could use instead of these basic words, but make sure they still fit into the context of the article.

Re-read the article with your new words. Did it make it better? Why/why not?