

Q&A session on food waste measurement and reporting

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Agenda



1. Introduction by the Chair & Eurostat

2. Q&A session (based on questions sent in advance by Member States/from the floor)

3. Conclusions and wrap-up



“Food waste” – definition and interpretation

Definition

"food waste" - means all food as defined in Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council that has become waste.

Interpretation:

- **food** - as defined and applied in General Food Law - i.e. referring to entire food (including all its parts, both edible and not intended to be eaten),
- **which has become waste** – i.e. which the holder (in this case a food business operator or household) discards or intends or is required to discard

Main implication: *if it is reported to Waste Statistics it is waste*



Monitoring across food supply chain

- Separate monitoring and reporting for each stage of the food supply chain
 - Primary production
 - Processing and manufacturing
 - Retail and other distribution of food
 - Restaurants and food services
 - Households
- **Justification:** Each stage may require a different policy approach, so they should be monitored separately.



General questions

Q: How do we handle lack of data in certain sectors (calculation vs known underreporting)?

A: Calculate and mention in the quality report how this was done.

Q: Are questionnaires considered to be direct measurement?

A: What we mean by direct measurement is that this should be linked to the amounts of waste. If the questionnaire provides this info and if this data is cross-checked with the actual amounts of waste, then this is considered to be direct measurement.



| General questions

Q: In our diary studies, respondents can use qualitative measurement (e.g. a cup of coffee), which can differ from country to country. We thus may have an issue with the conversion factor across countries. Do you have a solution for this?

A: We do not have a good conversion factor at EU level. Please report on these conversion factors and we will identify the discrepancies between countries.

In the future, these reports may be summarised in Commission reports to build a common knowledge base to be shared with MS



| General questions

Q: Food and waste definitions are not always clear, especially in the early stages of the food supply chain (i.e. primary production and food industry). How do we ensure that all Member States use the same interpretation? For example, in primary production, only a small part of the losses is defined as waste.

A: Follow the rules of the Waste Directive (see art. 5 on by-products).
Practical approach: *if it is reported to Waste Statistics, then it should be reported as food waste.*

In primary production, only food which is given to waste treatment is counted as food waste. Other materials (e.g. food left unharvested in the field) are considered to be food losses. This is in line with the legal framework (see definitions on slide 3).

We welcome any information about food losses that countries may provide in the quality report.



| General questions

Q: The list of EWC (European Waste Catalogue) waste codes should be revised and we should ensure that all countries are using the same list.

A: The waste codes included in the European list of waste for types of waste which typically include food waste are listed in Annex II of the [Delegated decision \(EU\) 2019/1597](#). There is no codes specifically designed for food waste in the EWC codes at the moment.

Codes used in the plug-in exercise by Eurostat referred to waste which may include food waste.



Primary production

Q: How do we deal with potential **underreporting due to low number of farms registered as activity A by NACE Rev.2?** A number of farms are not registered as A activity <primary producers> and it can be expected that any food waste from such farms is reported as household waste.

A: There is no quick solution for this. It is important to include in the quality report information on the number of farms that are not registered as primary producers, so we understand the size of the issue. Countries may consider also the use of surveys or the use of stratified sampling (comparing rural-areas waste amounts versus non-rural-areas amounts, by population in the areas) to roughly estimate the impact of small farms and rural activities on the household waste.



Primary production

Q: Edible/inedible parts of harvested crops

A: The general rule is as follows: **if the inedible parts are typically removed during harvesting** (e.g. sugar beet leaves) **or not harvested** (e.g. wheat straw, fruit tree, etc.) then these parts **are not considered food waste** since they do not enter the food chain. If the inedible parts are harvested and **enter the food chain** (e.g. olive pits), then they **can be considered food waste** (if destined for waste treatment).

Bones are considered animal by-products and if they are processed for other applications, they do not count as waste. Bones should be reported as food waste only if they are treated as waste (landfilling, composting, biogas, incineration).



Processing and manufacturing

Q: Handling of sludges: Is it correct that sludges (waste codes "02 02 01", "02 02 04", "02 03 01", "02 03 05", "02 04 03", "02 05 02", "02 06 03" and "02 07 05") **are not included in the mandatory reporting** according to the Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597, as they fall under Article 1 (5) a) of this decision - "food waste drained as or with wastewater"?

A: Generally no, but... The exclusion of food waste drained, referred to under Art 1(5)a, refers to food waste which is not collected on site, but flows away. Hence, the sludges collected on the premises of the processing plant, would be counted as food waste. Please note that sludges from the treatment of wastewater (including liquid waste) are excluded from the scope of reporting.

Liquid waste discarded down the drain can be reported on voluntarily.



Processing and manufacturing

Q: Could you give concrete examples of “former foodstuffs” (e.g., in restaurants and catering)?

A: “Former foodstuffs” is food which is SAFE, but no longer destined for human consumption. This can happen due to production errors (wrong shape or colour, bad packaging), damaged food (broken biscuits), foods past company “sell by” date standards (e.g. insufficient available shelf-life), packaged stale bread etc. In order to be safe, full traceability of such foods must be ensured.

Due to their character, it is unlikely for ‘former foodstuffs’ to come from restaurants and food services.

Concept of ‘former foodstuffs’ describes material reprocessed into other products (feed), hence is not considered food waste and is to be reported on voluntary basis



Processing and manufacturing

Q: Olive pomace processing is complex process including drying, should we count and weight as food waste the bagasse before or after entering the dryers?

A: This should be done in the same way as you report it for Waste Statistics. The legislation requires reporting on waste calculated in terms of fresh mass. It is advisable to calculate the mass that goes to waste when the decision to discard has been taken, before further processing of the mass for the purpose of transportation to waste operators.

The answer to this question depends on the technological processes involved and the different types of foods; Eurostat will try to provide further instructions on this for a future reporting exercise. In the meantime, please follow the same approach as the one used when reporting for waste statistics and include some information in the quality report.



Processing and manufacturing

Q: Interpretation of food waste reporting over time, when for instance one reporting year the animal by-product must be accounted as food waste as defined in article 2(2)(b) of WFD, whereas the next reporting year the food waste amount of the same “stream” is reduced due to the fact that a part of it is destined for purposes other than incineration, landfilling or composting/anaerobic digestion (is it considered waste prevention or is it out of the scope of WFD?).

A: When the waste stream is directed to the waste operation first year and during the next year used as by-product –this means that in the 2nd year it is not reported as waste and the waste generation, in general, is reduced. Please remember that when an amount foreseen to become animal by-product is wasted before being processed as by product, this amount must be accounted as food waste.



Attribution to the stage of food supply chain

Q: Auctioning (for example, of fruit and vegetables): **which sector is this?**

A: Depending on which stage the auction is conducted at: it can be at primary production, manufacturing, retail and other distribution.



| Households

Q: Do we measure and report on food waste in home composting? How?

A: Generally, the same way it is done for Waste Statistics. Some countries count bio-waste separated and recycled at source for municipal waste recycling rates; in this case it has to be reported as food waste. For countries that do not use this system, they do not need to report this as food waste.



Households

Q: Waste composition analysis: is there anything at EU level that stipulates how a representative sample should look like?

A: Legally no, but there are national and regional reports that explain how to draw the sample. Samples should take into account the heterogeneity of the population and should be carried out a few times per year to ensure seasonality aspects are captured. Please mention in the quality report how the samples were taken, how many times etc.

The [EU Statistical Office](#) (Eurostat) has developed a Questionnaire and a Guidance document to help Member State experts with their food waste measurement activities. The files can be found on [Eurostat's website](#), under the tab 'Food waste and food waste prevention, 30 July'.

Although the Guidance document does not include specific measurement instructions, it lays down important information about the reporting of food waste data, such as an overview of best practices as well as standards and guidelines for waste composition analysis.



| Households

Q: In some regions we have door to door separate collection, in others we do not. It is difficult to set up waste composition analysis for the whole country at the same time. Suggestions to overcome this issue?

A: We are aware of this issue and there are on-going discussion on this between the ESTAT and experts from Member States, with more precise guidelines expected to be adopted in January 2023.

An approach could be to select a set of big towns in different regions that could be a representative sample for each region; and to consider the waste facilities in each. In the survey design and stratification of data, you should consider all parts of the cities, both those with separate collection and without. You will need to carry out waste composition analysis in both, to understand the mass of waste and number of population per each mass.



Attribution to the stage of food supply chain – municipal waste

Q: How do we allocate food waste to a given stage of food supply chain if everything is collected together as a part of municipal waste?

Household mixed waste (with food waste in it) is often collected together with businesses' waste. Restaurants, hostels and smaller companies in this sector often have collection through municipal waste. How do countries determine the part which originates from households? How do countries handle non-food organic waste (e.g., flowers, paper) in the household bio-waste during estimations?

A: No clear answer, depends on country practices, this may require additional surveys.

A good stratification is key and ideally this should be reflected in the surveys to collect data. In the survey design, ideally you would distinguish between household waste and waste from businesses.

Waste composition analysis can be used to determine the share of non-food organic waste.



Attribution to the stage of food supply chain – municipal waste

Good practice from Spain:

Spain uses municipal waste data and carries out a separate survey on waste generation from businesses/ other services, where they include a question on the destination of the waste (if this goes to the street bin, processing plant etc.). With this data, they can separate the fractions of waste that come from households and from businesses/ other services.



Estimations (example of food residues in packaging)

Q: We found waste residues within packaging and contamination of packaging due to cross-contamination with unpackaged food & beverages. **Should we include an estimate of contamination caused by cross-contamination when we are reporting our food waste statistics?**

A: Estimates are always welcomed for the quality report. If you wish to add these estimates to the main reporting, please consider whether these are a significant amount? Please do not forget to report in the quality report that you are using Waste Composition Analysis (WCA).



Topics raised by MS interested in exchange of experiences:

- **Attribution of food waste to the given stage of food supply chain – municipal waste (retail + food service + households)**
- **Estimations of edible and inedible parts of food waste**
- **Waste composition analysis – sampling**
- **Food waste removed with wastewater**



Important!

Countries that have not yet informed Eurostat of the reporting officer have to urgently contact
ESTAT WASTE STATISTICS [ESTAT-WASTE-
STATISTICS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-WASTE-STATISTICS@ec.europa.eu) and
Cristina.RE@ec.europa.eu



Thank you



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