

List of Recommendations

Recommendation #1: National Food Loss and Waste (FLW) Prevention and Reduction Strategy and Targets

- The government should implement a National FLW Prevention and Reduction Strategy prioritizing the FLW hierarchy. It should follow the direction provided by the new [CSA Food Loss and Waste Standard K100](#). As part of the Strategy, the federal government should set National Targets for FLW Prevention, Redistribution, and Reduction within the next 2-5 years, in keeping with [Canada's commitment to SDG12.3](#). The National Strategy should include the 4 recommendations below.

** \$20 million

Recommendation #2: National FLW Measuring and Monitoring Program

- The federal government should implement a National FLW Measuring and Monitoring program that:
 - (a) requires major food companies to engage with the [CSA Food Loss and Waste Standard K100](#) and the data should be aggregated and publicly reported;
 - (b) includes loan programs to support SMEs undertake measuring, monitoring and reporting activities; and
 - (c) has a phased transition.

This should be supported by federal funding for:

- (i) a FLW Coordinating Body responsible for measuring, monitoring and collecting aggregated data, and who supports public reporting against nationally set FLW prevention/reduction targets (e.g. [WRAP UK](#) or [ReFED US](#)); AND
- (ii) Data collection, aggregation and reporting infrastructure.

** \$35 million

Recommendation #3: Ban Throwing Away Surplus Food and Mandate Donation

- The federal government should prohibit major food organizations/supermarkets from throwing out unsold safe surplus food and mandate redistribution to food sharing partners (e.g. [France law](#); [Spain regulations](#)).

Recommendation #4: Reform Best Before Dates

- The federal government should reassess Best Before Date (BBD) rules, require the removal of BBDs on products with a shelf life +90 days, and standardize how dates with -90 day shelf life are designed.

Recommendation #5:

- The federal government should fund research into laws and policies required to be revoked, changed or created to achieve the goals of the National FLW Prevention and Reduction Strategy.

**** \$5 million**

**** Funding estimates based on:**

- Comparators: ([\\$150 million for Food Security Fund](#) (2026); [\\$134.4 million over 5 years](#): initial investment for National Food Policy for Canada (2019); [Food Waste Reduction Challenge - \\$20 million](#) (2020); UK government: initial 3 year budget of [£40 million to create WRAP](#) (2001) = 2026 CAD \$163.5 million)
- Cost vs savings, or return on investment:
 - Estimated value of reducing avoidable FLW in Canada: [\\$58 billion/year](#).
 - A UK FLW initiative aimed only at households 2007-2012 “found that the ratio of purely financial benefits to financial costs ... was more than [250 to 1](#).” For businesses: average ratio estimated at [14 to 1](#).

These recommendations are an outcome of the [FLW Forum](#) and endorsed by Office of Sustainability, University of Ottawa, and co-hosts Prof. Heather McLeod-Kilmurray, Prof. Patricia Galvão Ferreira, and the National Zero Waste Council.

Recommendation #1: National FLW Prevention and Reduction Strategy and Targets

THE PROBLEM

[Canada has committed](#) to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 12.3: 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." Yet, there is no overall reduction strategy.

Result: Efforts to reduce FLW are fragmented, uncoordinated and ineffective to address the overall causes of and solutions to FLW.

WHERE OTHERS HAVE DONE BETTER (non-exhaustive list)

European Union	2018 Waste Framework Directive (2018 Revision): required member states to: • Measure FLW annually across the supply chain • Report data using standardized methodologies <u>Result:</u> The EU now produces harmonized, comparable FLW data across Member States, enabling consistent tracking and evidence-based, sector-specific policy action
Japan	October 2019: <i>Food Loss Act</i> establishes a national framework for reducing FLW, with local governments deciding how measures are implemented <u>Result:</u> 50%+ reduction of FLW from 2000 levels, achieving SDG 12.3 in 2025.

TAKEAWAYS

Canada cannot effectively and efficiently reduce FLW without a national strategy that outlines goals and collaboration across governments, business and NGOs, to meet SDG 12.3.

Meeting Goals Requires Plans: TARGET, Measure, Act

Recommendation #2: National FLW Measuring and Monitoring Program

THE PROBLEM

FLW occurs across the supply chain, yet Canada has no consistent national framework for measuring or reporting it. Existing data is fragmented, incomplete, and often based on estimates, not direct tracking.

Result: The extent and sources of FLW remain uncertain at the system level.

1. Measurement Is Not Widespread

- [Most FLW in Canada is never formally measured](#)
 - Tracking is often sporadic or absent
 - Canada's data is [fragmented and largely estimate-based](#)
- Little FLW visibility or accountability - cannot support effective policy or system-wide action

2. No Measuring and Reporting Framework

- No requirement to measure or report FLW
 - No centralized reporting system
- Lack of consistent national data ([ECCC](#)).

3. Policy Decisions Need Foundations

- [Without consistent measurement:](#)
 - Governments cannot target interventions
 - Businesses cannot identify inefficiencies
 - Progress toward [SDG 12.3](#) cannot be tracked

WHERE OTHERS HAVE DONE BETTER (non-exhaustive list)

European Union

[Waste Framework Directive \(2018 Revision\)](#)

Requires Member States to:

- Measure FLW annually using standardized methodologies
- Track waste across entire supply chain

Data is:

- Comparable across countries
- Broken down by sector (households, retail, manufacturing, etc.)

Result: [The EU produces harmonized, comparable FLW data across Member States](#), enabling consistent tracking and evidence-based, sector-specific policy action

United Kingdom

[WRAP](#)

- Developed national measurement protocols aligned with global standards
- Voluntary agreements (e.g. Courtauld Agreement and the [UK Food and Drink Pact](#)):
- Sector-wide benchmarking/transparency

Result:

- Businesses track waste consistently
- National data enables targeted interventions
- Contributed to [~27% reduction in per capita FLW since 2007](#) (across system reforms)

WHAT CANADA SHOULD DO?

1. ADOPT a National Definition & Measurement Standard
 - Adopt the new [CSA Food Loss and Waste Standard K100](#)
2. Require Measurement & Reporting for Large Generators
 - Require measurement/reporting modelled after [EU reporting obligations](#)
3. Build a National FLW Data Platform
 - Create a centralized (internal or arm's length) reporting system to: Aggregate data across provinces and sectors and allow anonymized industry reporting
4. Fund Measurement at Municipal & Community Levels
 - Provide funding for: Municipal material waste flow analysis that includes waste audits and [food rescue organizations](#) to track donations
 - Align with carbon offsets and other market opportunities
5. Link FLW Reduction Measurement to Related Policy Goals
 - Integrate FLW reporting into: Circular Economy Goals, Agricultural Efficiency Goals, [National GHG inventories](#), and [climate accountability frameworks](#)

Policies Should
Target → Measure → Report → Reduce

OBSTACLES

Jurisdictional Fragmentation	Industry Burden & Data Sensitivity	Resource Constraints	Lack of Political Prioritization
Waste management is largely provincial and municipal Response: Federal leadership required for coordination	Businesses may resist: • Administrative costs • Sharing operational data Response: • Phase-in requirements • Use anonymized reporting systems with	Municipalities: • Funding • Technical capacity • Ability to require business reporting Response: • Federal Funding	• Measurement seen as technical, not urgent Yet it is foundational to: • Climate policy • Food security • Economic efficiency • Response: Federal awareness raising on the business case for FLW reduction

secure data
protections

- Standardi
zed Tools

TAKEAWAYS

Canada cannot effectively and efficiently reduce what it does not measure. Without standardized measurement and reporting, FLW is not seen, measured or reduced.

Recommendation #3 Ban Throwing Away Surplus Food and Mandate Donation

THE PROBLEM

An abundance of edible surplus food created across the food supply chain is never consumed.

1. Lack of mandatory donation incentivises production of surplus food that goes to waste.
 - With costs of labour and infrastructure much higher than food, food is overproduced and landfilling is often the easiest solution.

WHERE OTHERS HAVE DONE BETTER (non-exhaustive list)

France	2015: National Assembly unanimously approved a law requiring big supermarkets (>400 m²) to donate surplus food. The Garot Law bans destruction of edible food, obliges donation partnerships, sets a food-waste hierarchy. This includes • Penalties for non-compliance (fines to reputational consequences) • Simplified donation logistics (incl. standard contracts with nonprofit recipients) • Public awareness campaigns that frame redistribution as a social and environmental obligation <u>Result:</u> • 2016-2020: 10% food waste reduction
Japan	<i>Food Recycling Act</i> (2000) mandates large food businesses to reduce food waste, prioritize source reduction and recycling, and report periodically. <u>Result:</u> • Achieved SDG 12.3 five years early
South Korea	2005: law banning sending food waste to landfills. Mandatory pay-as-you-throw program rolled out nationwide. <u>Result (as of 2019):</u> • Food-waste recycling skyrockets from ~2% to approximately 95% • Seoul alone reduced ~47,000 tonnes of food waste over six years via smart bins

WHAT CANADA SHOULD DO?

1. Pilot a donation mandate for large grocery chains and food service institutions.
 - Including infrastructure investment and regulatory harmonization to ensure food safety and donor confidence.

Impact: Up to 8.8 million tonnes of edible food/yr could be redirected to support communities.

TAKEAWAYS

More edible food can reaching donation pathways through policy coordination, investment in infrastructure and increased awareness

Recommendation #4: Reform Best Before Dates

THE PROBLEM

Canada wastes [46.5%](#) of all food produced.
[41%](#) of Canadian FLW is avoidable, with a [value of \\$58 billion](#).

A major driver? Confusion around BBDs.

- [63%](#) of easily avoidable household FLW linked to confusion about date labels.
- Most Canadians believe BBDs mean “unsafe after this date”: in reality, BBDs refers to quality, not safety.
- BBDs are confused with [expiration date](#) labels, which are only required for 5 food product categories such as infant formula.

Under the [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#) (SFCR), foods with a durable life of [90 days or less](#) must carry a BBD. Yet manufacturers voluntarily apply them to many shelf-stable foods.

Result:

- Edible food discarded across the supply chain, not just households
- Retailers remove products prematurely due to label-driven risk management
- Reduced donations (products nearing BBDs deprioritized and subject to [risk-averse redistribution and intake practices](#) despite remaining safe and edible)
- Lost revenue for producers and retailers, who absorb full cost of producing/transporting/stocking food that is ultimately discarded despite remaining edible, contributing to approx [\\$940 billion USD in global economic losses annually](#)
- Missed economic gains, in a system where reducing food FLW delivers a [~14:1 return on investment for businesses](#), highlighting the scale of preventable losses embedded in current practices

WHERE OTHERS HAVE DONE BETTER (non-exhaustive list)

France: Legal Reform & Messaging Shift	United Kingdom: Voluntary Retail Reform	Japan: Supply Chain Reform
2020 Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Law (AGEC) (Overview in French) • Bans destruction of unsold edible food • Encourages alternative phrasing, e.g.: ◦ “This product can be consumed after this date” • Strong retailer donation obligations	Led by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) Major Retailers (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury’s, Morrisons): • Removed BBDs from fresh produce • Used coded internal stock labels instead of consumer-facing dates	Japan revised the “ One-Third Rule ,” which required retailers to receive goods within the first third of shelf life. Reforms: • Extended delivery windows between manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers

National awareness efforts Result: Reinforced that date labels reflect quality, not safety; strengthened food redistribution systems, with donations to food banks increasing 20%+ following donation law.	Ran public education campaigns Result: Removing BBDs from fresh produce reduced consumer confusion and prevented avoidable household FLW at scale, contributing to UK achieving a ~27% reduction per capita FLW since 2007.	- Allowed month-only labelling for long-life goods - Reduced supply-chain waste caused by strict retail delivery deadlines Result: Reduced premature disposal at wholesale and retail levels by extending product viability and improving inventory efficiency, contributing to reducing FLW from ~9.8 million tonnes in 2000 to ~5.2 million tonnes in recent years.
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WHAT SHOULD CANADA DO?

Clarify Law

- Prohibit BBDs on products with a shelf life 90+ days unless justified
- Establish a national standard for applying BBDs (requiring demonstrable deterioration in quality)

Regulatory Pathway: Canadian Food Inspection Agency & Health Canada guidance under the [SFCR](#).

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES			
Industry Caution	Consumer Trust	Federal-Provincial Coordination	Political Framing
Fear of liability, brand concerns, and redesign costs → Address through: - pilots demonstrating minimal risk and high impact - industry education on legal protection through donation protection laws	Initial concern about label removal → Address through clearer labelling (not reliance on behaviour change)	Waste policy is shared, and labelling is federal → Use federal SFCR authority to lead and align	Must be framed as climate action, cost-of-living relief, and food security, not deregulation

This reform is functionally no-cost, relying on regulatory clarification, not new spending.

TAKEAWAYS

“Best before” does not mean “unsafe.” Law and communications must clarify this.