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Food Waste

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A top-down view of a hand holding a bunch of carrot peels over a blue-lined bag filled with food waste. The bag contains various food scraps including carrot peels, corn cobs, green beans, and other vegetable scraps. The background is a wooden surface. A bright yellow square is visible in the top right corner.

Food Waste

BY DAMON COX

The Numbers of Food Waste

- ▶ Per capita food waste has increased 50% since 1974
- ▶ 1.6 billion tons of food wasted each year
- ▶ \$1.2 trillion worth of food is either lost or wasted every year
- ▶ North America has 200% of the food it needs
- ▶ 40% of all food produced each year is not eaten
- ▶ 870 million people worldwide are malnourished





Who is Wasting the Food?

- ▶ A single person household wastes more food per person per week than larger households
- ▶ Consumers aged 16-24 years waste more than twice as much food as consumers over the age of 65
- ▶ Reasons why younger consumers waste more:
 - ▶ New freedom (new driver, going to college, no longer at home with parents)
 - ▶ Only need to think of themselves
 - ▶ Lack of budget
 - ▶ Lack of awareness

Problems of Food Waste

- ▶ Wasted water, resources, and labor hours
 - ▶ It takes 27,154 gallons of water to irrigate one acre of crops and a cow drinks 3 to 30 gallons of water a day
 - ▶ 40% of all food produced is wasted
 - ▶ Putting water into food that is either not making the stores or thrown away
 - ▶ Resources such as land and machines cost money to operate
 - ▶ Money, machines and land could be put to better use
 - ▶ Farm hours are long and wasted hours could be spent doing task that need more attention
- ▶ People living in hunger
 - ▶ Grocery stores are scared to donate due to a fear of being sued
 - ▶ "Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act" protects them from being sued
 - ▶ A lot of food thrown out can be donated



Problems of Food Waste

- ▶ Unhealthy food consumption
 - ▶ 30% of the worldwide population as of 2017 is obese
 - ▶ United States has an obesity rate of 36.2%
 - ▶ Price is a huge factor
 - ▶ Cheeseburger and fries for \$2.50 vs salad for \$8 to \$15
 - ▶ Consumers on a healthy diet will spent \$550 more per year than a consumers on a non-healthy diet
- ▶ Environmental Problems
 - ▶ Landfills
 - ▶ Food waste and food packaging make up 45% of all landfills
 - ▶ Cause methane gas which leads to green house affect
 - ▶ Causes ice caps to melt
 - ▶ Trash in the ocean
 - ▶ 100 million die every year from trash in the ocean (food packaging, plastic)



Causes of Food Waste

- ▶ Packaging
 - ▶ Can be too hard to remove food from packaging
 - ▶ 25% of all residential food waste is because of the packaging size or design
 - ▶ Misleading expiration dates
- ▶ Portion sizes
 - ▶ Between 1983 and 2003:
 - ▶ Hamburgers expanded 23%, a plate of Mexican food grow 27%, and snacks are 60% larger
 - ▶ A dish that use to say, “serves eight” now only says “serves four”
 - ▶ On average, restaurants are serving portion sizes two and half times larger than standard sizes



Causes of Food Waste

- ▶ Products
 - ▶ Too many choices
 - ▶ Ten brands that make the same flavor
 - ▶ Appearance of the product
 - ▶ High standards of grocery store keeps food that is fine to eat out of the store
 - ▶ Overstocking
 - ▶ If a food item is by itself, consumers think there is something wrong with it
 - ▶ Need more items around it to make consumers want it
 - ▶ Promotions
 - ▶ Consumer gets a “two for one deal” on a food item
 - ▶ Does not end up eating it the second item, only bought it because of the deal
- ▶ Lack of awareness
 - ▶ Consumers do not connect actions to consequences
 - ▶ Younger consumers do not have as much knowledge



Recommendations

- ▶ Generating Awareness
 - ▶ Get communities to start a donation drive
 - ▶ Teach consumers at a young age
 - ▶ Encourage consumers to plan better on what they will eat for the week
- ▶ Get More Grocery Stores Donating
 - ▶ Make grocery stores aware of “Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act”
 - ▶ Add incentive for grocery stores
 - ▶ Set up programs for grocery stores
- ▶ Better Food Packaging
 - ▶ Designs that allow food to be exacted easier
 - ▶ More accurate expiration dates



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