

HOUSEHOLD FOOD WASTAGE

HOUSE Focus 2

At all levels of the food production, distribution and consumption chains, large quantities of food are lost. However, this wastage remains difficult to estimate given the many different definitions and assessment methods. Awareness of this issue on the part of Walloon inhabitants has become a priority for the Walloon Government.

At least 19 kg per capita per year

At EU level, households appear to be the largest contributor to food wastage (42%), followed by the food industry (39%), HORECA (14%) and retail & distribution (5%)¹. In Wallonia, food wastage was estimated at 19 kg/(per capita per year), or 16% of the contents of the general waste bin². However, this figure is conservative as it does not take into account liquid food thrown away or food consumed and thrown away outside of the home.

More wastage among young people than among older people

According to the results of a survey³ on the behaviour of Walloon inhabitants as regards food wastage, just under half (43%) say that they do not throw food away at home. An analysis of the profile of respondents indicates that there is a large difference in behaviour across age groups. For example, the proportion of young people (< 30 years old) who frequently throw away food and/or drinks is 1.8 times higher than the proportion of people over 65 who frequently throw away food and/or drinks.

Meal leftovers (68%), fruits and vegetables (45%) and breads and pastries (35%) are the most commonly discarded types of food. Products that are not consumed are usually thrown into the general waste bin (41%), added to compost (31%), placed in the organic waste bin (29%) or given to animals (pets, 22%, and non-domestic animals, 14%). The three most commonly cited reasons for justifying this

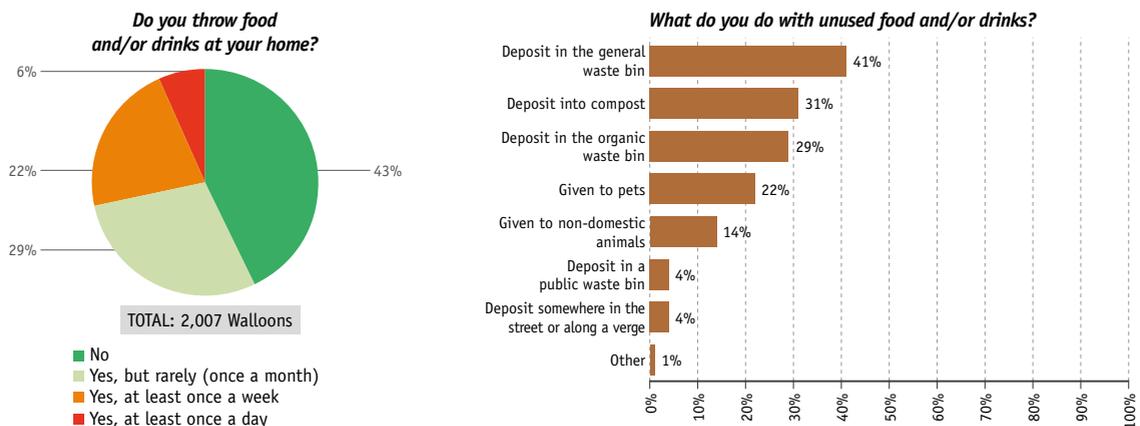
food wastage are: (i) it had passed its use-by date, (ii) the product was improperly stored and damaged, and (iii) there was some product remaining but it was thrown out anyway.

A "farm to table" programme

On 17/06/2015, the Walloon Government adopted the Walloon Programme to Combat Food Wastage 2015-2025 (*Programme wallon de lutte contre les pertes et le gaspillage alimentaire 2015-2025*), commonly referred to as the "REGAL Plan" ("*Plan REGAL*")⁴. It aims to reduce food wastage at all levels of the food chain by 30% by 2025 in line with EU recommendations⁵. The programme anticipates the implementation of 17 actions divided into 5 strands with a total budget of around €1.2 million. Various actions target Walloons directly, including setting up public awareness campaigns for all, promoting the use of the "Rest-O-Pack" (doggy bag) in restaurants (adapted and recyclable boxes provided voluntarily to restaurants), creating a training course for anti-waste ambassadors, and promoting sustainable food in collective canteens.

[1] Estimate carried out by Bio Intelligence Service (2010) on the basis of Eurostat data | [2] Including the organic waste bin (RDC Environment, 2010a): 5 campaigns carried out between 2009 and 2010 | [3] Survey carried out in 2016 among a panel made up of 2,007 people who were representative of the Walloon population (GfK, 2016b) | [4] www.planregal.be | [5] COM (2014) 398

Fig. HOUSE Focus 2-1 Behaviour of Walloons as regards food wastage* (2016)



* Survey carried out in 2016 among a panel of 2,007 people who were representative of the Walloon population (GfK, 2016b)