



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **Leader Training Guide Food Waste**

#### **Objectives:**

- Participants will be able to explain the magnitude of food waste in the United States and the three areas that are affected by food waste (social, economic, and environmental).
- Participants will be able to list 3 ways to reduce food waste during grocery shopping.
- Participants will be able to list 3 ways to reduce food waste in the home.
- Participants will be able to explain the benefits of composting food.
- Participants will be able to explain the benefits of donating food.

#### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

- **Objective 1: Participants will be able to explain the magnitude of food waste in the United States and the three areas that are affected by food waste (social, economic, and environmental)**
  - Begin the lesson by going around and having everyone introduce themselves along with estimating the percentage and dollars worth of food that is wasted in the United States each year. Once this is completed, reveal to them that **40%** or **\$165 billion** of food is wasted in the United States each year.
  - Have the group brainstorm together ways that food waste is bad for the country. What impact does all this waste have? Does it affect people? The economy? The environment? Guide the brainstorming and discussion to the conclusion that food waste has social, economic, and environmental impacts. Provide the group with the following information to demonstrate the impact of food waste in the United States.
    - **40%** of food in the US is wasted. If we reduced this by **15%**, we could feed **25 million** Americans at a time when **1 in 6** Americans doesn't have enough to eat.
    - **\$165 billion** of food is wasted each year. With **318.9 million** people in the United States, this comes to about **\$515 per person**. With **4.832 million** people in SC, this means that SC is wasting **\$2.5 billion** every year.
    - **16%** of methane generated in the United States comes from wasted food. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is **25 times** more potent than the most common greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide.

#### **Lesson:**

- **Objective 2: Participants will be able to list 3 ways to reduce food waste during grocery shopping.**
  - Break the participants into groups and have them take a few minutes to generate a shopping list off the top of their head. Tell them to include things they would normally buy at the grocery store if they were shopping for a week's worth of food for their household.

- Then, have participants generate a 3 day meal plan for their household and generate a shopping list based off of this meal plan. Have them compare the two lists to see which is larger. Explain that 3-4 day meal plans are a good starting point so you can go to the store more often and eat fresher produce as opposed to shopping for 7 days at a time and having to throw produce away at the end of the week because it never got eaten and is bad.
- Review with the participants what they learned about how to shop: make meal plans, make a list, and shop for 3-4 days at a time. Ask them to brainstorm any other ideas they have about how to shop effectively to reduce food waste
  - Consider fruits and vegetables with longer shelf life
    - Frozen
    - Canned
    - Apples vs. berries
    - Carrots vs. lettuce
- **Objective 3: Participants will be able to list 3 ways to reduce food waste in the home.**
  - On a white board or a large piece of paper, write the words “Sell-by”, “Best if Used By” and “Use-By”. Have the participants (as a group) decide what they think each expiration date means.
  - Once participant definitions are finalized, explain to them that expiration dates of any kind are not federally regulated and do NOT indicate safety of the food. Rather, they indicate suggestions from the manufacturer related to peak quality and usually err on the side of caution, meaning many foods, unless obvious spoilage has occurred, can be consumed after the expiration date. Then provide them with these definitions for expiration dates
    - **“Sell-by” Date:** This date tells stores and retailers how long to display the product. The manufacturers suggest that you buy food prior to this date.
    - **“Best if Used By” (or “Before”) Date:** This date is the recommended date to use food by for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date, but rather a date that the manufacturer suggests you should consume the product by to ensure highest quality.
    - **“Use-By” Date:** This is the date that indicates when the product should last be used while at peak quality. The manufacturer of the product has determined this date.
  - Explain the concept of “vegetable stock bags” to the class: you save cleaned trimmings and peels and “scraps” of various vegetables until you have about 3 cups worth. You then boil them, in water for a couple of hours with some seasonings and can make your own vegetable stock. Have the class brainstorm together some vegetable scraps that could be used in this project. Some examples include the ends of onions, carrots peels, and the ends of celery.
- **Objective 4: Participants will be able to explain the benefits of composting food.**
  - Have participants generate a list of 5 foods they commonly use in their house that they could compost and see if they can list 5 items that should NOT be composted. A comprehensive list of what can and cannot be composted can be found at: <http://www.compostinstructions.com/what-you-can-and-cannot-compost/>

- Examples of things that can be composted (Coffee, Eggshells, Dogfood, Banana peels, inedible fruits/vegetables, fruit/vegetable peelings except lime etc.)
  - Examples of things that cannot be composted (lime, meat, fat, oil, bones, cat and dog droppings, etc.)
- Have the participants brainstorm ways in which composting may be beneficial. Guide the conversation towards the economic, environmental, community, and health/sanitation benefits.
- Once the group has finished brainstorming ideas, present to them the information found on this webpage: <http://www.wastefwd.com/benefits.html>
- **Objective 5: Participants will be able to explain the benefits of donating food for both individuals and organization**
  - Again, have participants brainstorm ways in which donating food may be beneficial for them as individuals and have them also consider why restaurants and companies may also benefit from donating excess food to charity.
  - Once the group has finished brainstorming, present to them the information found on this webpage: <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/why-donate/>

**Lesson Summary:** During this discussion based lesson, participants should learn about the basics of food waste and the ways it affects the United States. The class will discuss the magnitude and effects of food waste in the United States and ways in which they can reduce the practice of wasting food in their own homes.

#### **Suggested Activities:**

- **Objective 1**
  - Discussion- % and \$ of food waste in the US every year
  - Discussion- Ways food waste is bad for the US; statistics
- **Objective 2**
  - Make a shopping list from scratch
  - Create a meal plan for 3 days; generate a shopping list from meal plan
  - Discuss techniques for reducing food waste through more efficient shopping
- **Objective 3**
  - Learn about expiration dates and what they really mean
  - Brainstorm for vegetable stock bags
- **Objective 4**
  - Determine which foods can/cannot be composted
  - Learn about the benefits of composting
- **Objective 5**
  - Learn and talk about ideas for donating
  - Determine ways that donating might be beneficial in your community

#### **Suggested Materials:**

- Copy of food waste article for all participants found at [http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food\\_safety/other/hgic3877.html](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/other/hgic3877.html)
- Pens/pencils and paper
- White board or easel pad of paper

- Markers to write on white board or easel pad
- Optional: pre-made example of vegetable stock bag
- A print out of the following pages, for reference, or a computer with internet access to reach these pages during the lesson
  - <http://www.compostinstructions.com/what-you-can-and-cannot-compost/>
  - <http://www.wastefwd.com/benefits.html>
  - <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/why-donate/>

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**Sources/References:** Woodside, Tabetha L. "Food Waste." *Clemson Cooperative Extension*. Clemson Cooperative Extension, Mar. 16. Web. 15 June 2016.