

Rural Iowa Food Waste Reduction Project

Through a grant by the Rural Utilities Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Iowa Waste Reduction Center at the University of Northern Iowa is providing free on-site, hands on, technical assistance to Iowa food waste generators in select rural counties of Iowa.



Eligible Entities

- Schools and Colleges
- Hospitals and Nursing Homes
- Restaurants
- Grocery Stores
- Correctional Facilities

For more information

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Available Assistance

- Calculating current food waste generation rates
- Analyzing tipping fees where garbage is source separated
- Tracking kitchen waste using scales and tracking sheets (IWRC can provide these)
- Conducting a waste sort
- Presentation of available IWRC assistance and reduction strategies
- Assistance with site selection of compost operation and/or setting up composting operation
- Identifying food donation opportunities in the local area
- Identifying composting opportunities in the local area
- Identifying hauling companies that will pick up organics and deliver to a composting facility
- Developing training guides
- Use of scales and buckets to weigh kitchen waste
- Training on how to weigh kitchen waste
- Analyzing kitchen waste
- Recommendations of strategies and techniques

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The Iowa Waste Reduction Center and the University of Northern Iowa are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Food Waste Reduction Tips

Simple strategies can be implemented to reduce the amount of food waste you generate. These strategies are universal whether you're a business with a cafeteria, a school, a food producer or any other type of entity. Small steps can produce drastic results in saving this resource.



- **Inventory both fridge and freezer on a regular basis.** Practice “first-in, first-out” by moving older foods to the front of the fridge and freezer.
- **Order more frequently.** When ordering food products, ordering more frequently equals less food at one time, which is easier to manage and use before food perishes.
- **Reuse food by repurposing.** For example, turn stale bread into croutons or hamburgers into chili.
- **Monitor waste.** Watch what is being thrown away most frequently and track the amount and reason.
- **Know optimal storage conditions and storage life of fresh produce and meats.** For example, the optimal storage temperature for ripe avocados is 38–45°F, but watermelon is 55–70°F.
- **Donate what you don't use.** Your local food bank can get you in touch with a food pantry or shelter that can use your excess food to feed those in your community.
- **Understand expiration dates.** Many times these dates have nothing to do with food safety but are a reflection of peak quality. If stored properly, many foods can be used several days past the “use-by” date.
- **Compost.** For inedible foods, consider composting to create a valuable resource that can be used to strengthen gardens and yards.

