



U.S. FOOD WASTE PACT  
**2025 IMPACT  
REPORT**

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# A LETTER FROM REFED AND WWF



When we launched the U.S. Food Waste Pact at COP28 over two years ago, we had a clear vision: take the work that we were doing with food businesses and scale it nationally. We hoped that with a bigger reach, we could have a bigger impact. We started with eleven fiercely committed food business signatories that represented three different sectors. Now, our signatory base has nearly tripled, and the businesses and organizations that have joined the Pact represent almost every corner of our food system—after just two years, our vision has officially become our reality.

In its second year, the Pact saw extraordinary growth. We welcomed 14 new signatories into the fold, expanding our reach to new sectors like farm and distribution, and deepened our engagement with existing sectors and signatories, particularly our quick-service restaurant cohort. In collaboration with our signatories and other food businesses, we ran six successful pilot projects in 2025, including our first whole chain pilot that scaled a solution identified in a previous pilot. We also entered a new project area—and broke new ground—with our pilot to measure and reduce food waste at events. We launched the Pact’s Employee Engagement Toolkit, a resource born out of pilots that focused on engaging frontline workers in food waste reduction and which has set the foundation for future resources and tools to help businesses around the world embed food waste reduction practices into their operations. And in 2025, our signatories enabled us to establish national sector-specific baselines in retail and in foodservice, the first datasets of their kind.

We also engaged in new strategic efforts to maximize the Pact’s impact. We hosted our first executive roundtable at Climate Week NYC, which brought together food business leaders from the

boardroom to discuss common challenges in reducing food waste and opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, at the beginning of the year, representatives from the U.S. Food Waste Pact joined nine other food waste pacts around the world to create the Food Pact Network, a collaborative effort between global initiatives to share best practices and resources.

With so much growth in 2025, we’re looking forward to digging deeper in 2026. We are eager to hear new ideas emerge from our expanded signatory base as businesses work on this challenge together. We are excited to welcome Pact members to help co-create ways they can engage in the national wasted food campaign led by EPA and USDA to be launched in 2027. We will focus on mapping more commodities in our ongoing whole chain efforts and diving deeper into our low-waste events work. New resources will be generated from the incredible work that our signatories are carrying out in their operations, creating a deep library of open source insights and learnings. Finally, we’ll continue to refine our benchmarking and measurement capabilities, giving our business signatories a detailed look at their own operations and inspiring other businesses to join the Pact by giving them a point of comparison for their own operations

We are so proud of the dedication that our Pact signatories have shown to address this problem, and we look forward to continued progress on food waste reduction in 2026 and beyond.

– Dana Gunders & Pete Pearson

# ABOUT THE PACT

Launched in 2023 by nonprofit partners ReFED and World Wildlife Fund, the U.S. Food Waste Pact is a national voluntary agreement that uses the “Target, Measure, Act” framework to reduce food waste across the supply chain. The Pact works with waste-generating food businesses and associations to collect and analyze data about food waste in their operations, share best practices through precompetitive collaboration, and test and scale solutions through pilot projects.

“Target, Measure, Act” is a simple but sequential framework for reducing food waste, and it has been used in voluntary agreements across multiple countries. For food businesses, this framework provides a path to set goals to reduce food waste, use data to mark progress against those goals, and implement data-informed action to meet those goals.

The “Target, Measure, Act” framework maps onto signatories’ experience in the U.S. Food Waste Pact. Signatories sign a voluntary agreement that allows them to participate in food waste reduction efforts facilitated by the Pact. The Pact collects, anonymizes, aggregates, analyzes, and reports signatory food waste data publicly. This data is then used to inform both precompetitive conversation in Pact-run convenings between signatories and pilot projects that test and scale cost-effective food waste solutions.

In 2024, food businesses in the United States accounted for nearly

# 61% OF FOOD WASTE

The U.S. Food Waste Pact is working to bring food businesses together to solve this problem.



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# PACT 2025: AT A GLANCE

In 2025, the U.S. Food Waste Pact worked across the food system to catalyze food business action, build cultures of sustainability, and reduce food waste.



## FOOD WASTE IN FOODSERVICE



**3.99%**  
food efficiency rate

**21% decrease** ↓  
in emissions from food waste

**711K**   
meals donated

**23% decrease** ↓  
in the wholesale cost of unsold food

## FOOD WASTE IN RETAIL



**2.9%**  
unsold food rate

**1.21 billion**   
meals donated

## SIGNATORY ENGAGEMENT



**79** leaders engaged

**96%\*** of signatories have food waste KPIs

**88%\*** of signatories do food waste training with employees

**83%\*** of signatories engage with suppliers about food waste

\* Excludes trade associations and coalition signatories

## PACT HIGHLIGHTS



**1.32B**  
media impressions

**32** Precompetitive convenings

**14** New signatories

**13** Signatories reporting publicly

**6** Pilots

**6** New resources



# TARGET

## Signatories

Signatories of the U.S. Food Waste Pact span not just the supply chain, but the entire food system. From food businesses to trade associations to coalitions, the Pact is engaging with organizations to reduce food waste on farms, in food processing facilities, at distribution centers, in kitchens, and in stores. In 2025, 14 food businesses and organizations became signatories of the U.S. Food Waste Pact.



\* Denotes signatories that joined the U.S. Food Waste Pact in 2025



Reducing food waste isn't just good for business—it's good for the environment and the communities we serve. Joining the U.S. Food Waste Pact gave us the chance to share what we've learned through programs like FoodShare, our back-haul logistics donation initiative, and to learn from others. The energy and ideas from fellow signatories have inspired us to try new approaches. Collaboration makes us all more effective, and we're excited to keep driving progress together."

— KELLY GOODEJOHN, CHIEF SOCIAL IMPACT OFFICER, STARBUCKS

# MEASURE

To make progress on food waste goals, signatories of the U.S. Food Waste Pact report their annual food waste data. The Pact aggregates and anonymizes that data by sector, and then publishes insights and industry analysis on an annual basis. This report presents 2024 national estimates scaled from signatory data, reflecting food waste outcomes if businesses matched Pact signatory performance.<sup>1</sup>

## Retail

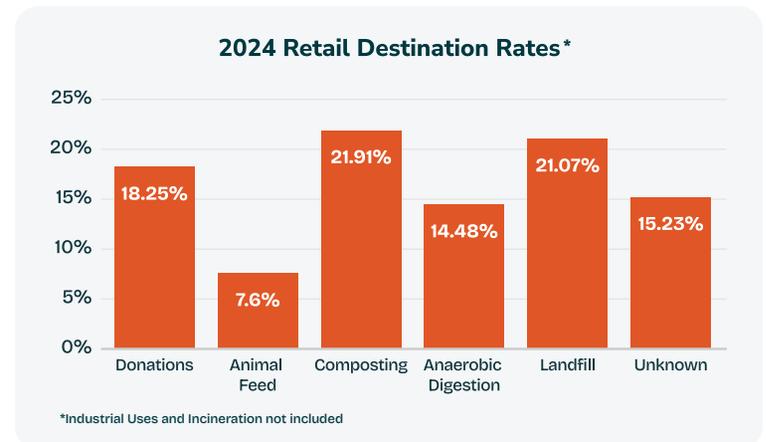
### REPORTING PACT SIGNATORIES MAKE UP 54.4% OF THE RETAIL SEGMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

Unsold food rates, the metric that most accurately reflects food waste trends in the retail sector, decreased by 1.1% in 2024, despite increased food waste volume (tonnage) and value (dollars). This means that while market fluctuations and business performance across the retail sector resulted in more food passing through grocery stores, food waste is still decreasing based on the share of retail inventory that goes unsold. Fresh departments lead in unsold food rates for the retail sector, including Prepared Foods (8.7%), Breads & Bakery (6.4%), and Produce (4.8%).

Where unsold food ends up is critical to curbing the negative societal and environmental impacts of food waste. Retailers reported a significant decrease in food being sent to “Unknown” destinations, indicating improved measurement and potentially a decrease in food sent to landfill. Additionally, retailers reported a sharp increase in food donations this year compared to last year. While food waste in the retail sector saw only marginal changes in key categories from 2023 to 2024, there are promising trends, including improved tracking and an increase in unsold food being sent to more desirable pathways, that point to further progress in the years to come.

It is important to note that while this national retail dataset only accounts for two years of progress, it builds on the regional retail dataset established by signatories of the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment, which published [a report on five years of reduction progress](#) in conjunction with the U.S. Food Waste Pact in 2025.

<b>2.90%</b> Unsold food rate .04 PERCENTAGE POINTS FROM 2023	<b>3.98M</b> Tons of unsold food 77.8K TONS FROM 2023
<b>\$26.9B</b> Lost sales \$1.3B FROM 2023	<b>23.4 lbs</b> Unsold food per capita .05 LBS/CAPITA FROM 2023



#### Impact of Unsold Food in Retail in 2024

Metric	Value	Change from 2023
MEALS DONATED	1.21 Billion	↑ 31%
GHG EMISSIONS	16.44 Million MTCO <sub>2</sub> e	↑ 6%
LOST SALES	\$26.93 Billion	↑ 5%

<sup>1</sup> The data in this report is a high-level overview of the insights uncovered during this year’s reporting period. For more comprehensive information about unsold food types, destinations, analysis, and methodology, please refer to the [U.S. Food Waste Pact 2025 Data Report](#).

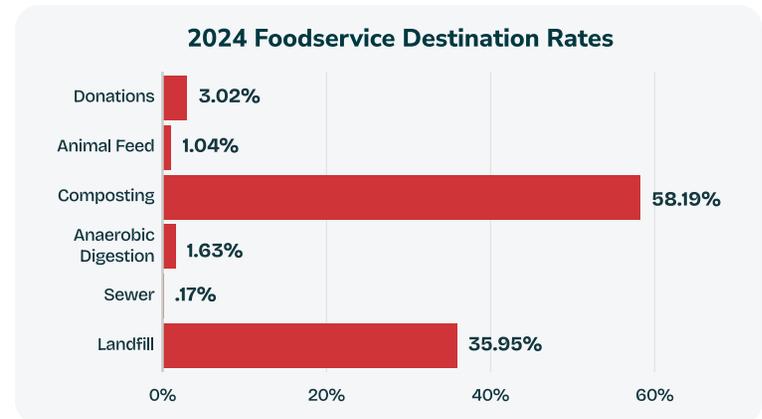
## Foodservice

REPORTING PACT SIGNATORIES MAKE UP 81% OF THE FOODSERVICE (BUSINESS & INDUSTRY) SEGMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

The food efficiency rate, the metric that most accurately reflects food waste trends in the foodservice sector, decreased by 5.7% in 2024, which was accompanied by a decrease in tons and the wholesale cost of surplus food. These metrics indicate that foodservice operators improved their operational efficiency and increased their efforts to reduce food waste between 2023 and 2024. Produce leads in food efficiency rates by department at 13.5%, followed by Prepared Foods (4.9%) and Dry Goods (3.6%).

As was the case in 2023, Composting leads the pack of destinations where surplus food from this sector ends up. In fact, composting increased in 2024, which was accompanied by a decrease in food being sent to the landfill. Signatories reported that destination pathways are often determined by client-owned infrastructure, and composting has been a concerted effort on their part to manage food waste more effectively. Foodservice signatories reported cause data, which identifies the top reasons for food waste, for the first time in 2024. Trimmings & Byproducts was the cause of nearly one half of food wasted in this sector, with Overproduction, Date Label Concerns, and Spoiled making up the majority of remaining causes.

Overall, key metrics indicate significant progress on food waste reduction in the foodservice sector. It's important to note that this foodservice data only represents the Business & Industry segment of the foodservice sector, and it does not include front-of-house, or plate, waste.



# ACT

Two programmatic pillars of the U.S. Food Waste Pact engage signatories to take data-informed action to meet food waste reduction goals: precompetitive convenings and pilot projects.

## Precompetitive Convenings

The Pact hosts two kinds of precompetitive convenings for signatories: topic-based Working Groups and industry-focused Sector Summits.

### Working Groups Highlights

#### FOOD RECOVERY

Leveraged the precompetitive environment to support peer share-outs and discussion on reverse logistics, animal feed, and donation metrics.

#### WHOLE CHAIN

Delved into the topic of supplier engagement and developing materials to support supplier discussions on food waste prevention and reduction.

#### STAFF TRAINING & ENGAGEMENT

Discussed best practices for [training platforms](#) and engaging employees on diversion programs.

#### CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT & ENVIRONMENTS

Launched in 2025 with a focus on engaging consumers through changes to their environments and experiences.

Since 2019, global efforts have reduced

**220,000**  
**TONNES OF FOOD WASTE**

equivalent to 600 fully loaded jumbo jets.

### Sector Summit Highlights

#### MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTION

Welcomed three new members and helped guide the [Employee Engagement Toolkit](#) as the founding sector for that resource.

#### FOODSERVICE

Guided the strawberry whole chain and low-waste events pilots, which led to improved outcomes and recruitment.

#### QUICK-SERVICE RESTAURANTS

Launched in 2025 with a focus on determining goals and barriers as a newly represented sector in the Pact.

#### RETAIL

Supported strategic conversations around beef and dairy whole chain pilots and the future of whole chain work.

## WRAP Food Pact Network

At the beginning of 2025, the U.S. Food Waste Pact became a founding member of the Food Pact Network, a collaborative effort between food waste initiatives across the globe. Led by WRAP, the network includes 10 countries that are committed to scaling and accelerating food waste solutions and driving systems change through collaboration. At the end of 2025, WRAP published [an impact report](#) that summarizes the work of this group collectively and of its individual members. Since 2019, global efforts have reduced 220,000 tonnes of food waste—equivalent to 600 fully loaded jumbo jets.

“The U.S. Food Waste Pact gives us the opportunity to delve into challenges and opportunities with our foodservice peers, while gaining insights from the broader value chain. It also enables us to participate in actionable pilots that help us learn and build a waste-free future together. This combination of depth and breadth—and inquiry and action—makes the Pact a vital part of our food waste reduction journey.”

— REBECCA CHESNEY, VICE PRESIDENT OF SUSTAINABILITY, GUCKENHEIMER

# Pilots

Pilot projects are at the center of the “Act” portion of the U.S. Food Waste Pact’s framework. Six pilots—which covered employee engagement, whole chain collaboration, and low-waste event execution—were successfully completed in 2025, taking place on farms, in distribution centers, in kitchens, and in retail stores across the country.

## ● WHOLE CHAIN: STRAWBERRIES

This pilot tested a solution to reduce strawberry waste in foodservice sites across California.

## ● EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: FOODWISE

This pilot tested the employee engagement competition model in foodservice sites across the country.

## ● LOW-WASTE EVENTS

This pilot measured waste at events across the country and created guidelines for venues and event planners to reduce food waste at events.

## ● WHOLE CHAIN: BEEF & YOGURT

These pilots measured and identified waste hotspots in the ground beef and yogurt supply chains across the country.

## WHOLE CHAIN: BANANAS

For proprietary purposes, this site cannot be plotted on the map, but it measured and identified waste hotspots at ports and grocery retail stores across the country.



## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement pilots have been some of the most successful intervention projects to date. Across four pilots in three years, frontline workers have generated 750+ food waste reduction ideas and have implemented over ten ideas, resulting in an average food waste reduction of 66%.

### Pilot: Empowering Staff in Foodservice for Sustainable Impact

The most recent employee engagement [pilot project](#) was the first in foodservice and the first tested on a national scale. Frontline workers across ten corporate and collegiate kitchens were engaged in an employee competition, where they generated 120+ reduction ideas. Each site piloted one idea, resulting in [ten site-specific case studies](#).

#### RESOURCES

Alongside four successful pilots, the U.S. Food Waste Pact published the [Employee Engagement Toolkit](#), a portfolio of open-source resources designed to enable any food business from any sector to run an employee engagement program and make progress toward their food waste reduction goals.

Since launch, the Employee Engagement Toolkit has had over 1700 users and has been demonstrated for food businesses across the globe.

An additional [set of resources](#) from the foodservice pilot were also published, with step-by-step guides for kitchens to run successful food waste reduction programs. **To date, more than 300 users have engaged with these resources.**

Frontline workers have generated and implemented food waste reduction ideas resulting in an average

# 66%

## FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

”

“These simple changes required minimal cost and operational adjustments, but they have the potential to drive meaningful reductions in food waste given the volume of meals we serve daily.”

— PILOT PARTICIPANT AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Engaging employees is one of the most effective ways to reduce food waste in business operations while building sustainable and collaborative work cultures and cutting costs.

## Whole Chain

The core of the U.S. Food Waste Pact's mission is to create change through collaboration. Whole Chain pilots exemplify this purpose as they encourage food businesses to work together in a two-phased approach to identify food waste hotspots across the supply chain and test solutions to those hotspots.

### Phase I Pilots

The U.S. Food Waste Pact completed three first-phase pilots in 2025. Each pilot tracks one commodity from early in the supply chain to the end of the supply chain, measuring how much waste is being generated at each node and identifying where and why it is happening.

#### GROUND BEEF

Ground beef waste was measured at a meat processing facility, distribution centers, and retail stores. At the processing node, 45% of losses were due to beef falling on the floor. At the distribution and retail nodes, 60% of losses were due to expired products.

#### YOGURT

Yogurt waste was measured at a yogurt processing facility, distribution centers, and retail stores. At the processing node, almost 20% of loss was due to yogurt getting stuck in pipes during product changes. At the distribution and retail nodes, 40% of losses were due to expired products.

The strawberry pilot rescued nearly 10k pounds of strawberries and

## REDUCED ON-FARM WASTE BY 51%

#### BANANAS

Banana waste was measured at the primary production phase, ports of import, ports of export, distribution, retail, and in secondary markets. This is the first pilot that has measured waste from a commodity with a global supply chain of this kind, and results will indicate waste hotspots and identify solutions based on those hotspots.

### Phase II Pilots

#### STRAWBERRIES

In the U.S. Food Waste Pact's first phase II whole chain pilot, a potential solution that was identified in [phase I](#) was tested in the foodservice sector. Smaller strawberries that are edible but do not meet traditional retail specifications were sent to 34 foodservice sites in California, where they were incorporated into dozens of different recipes. The project rescued nearly 10k pounds of strawberries and reduced on-farm waste by 51%.

“Reducing food waste involves collaboration across the entire value chain. Through the U.S. Food Waste Pact, we’ve been able to work side by side with suppliers, manufacturers and industry peers to identify root causes and develop practical solutions that make a real difference. These pilots don’t just address waste at one point in the process—they help close systemic gaps and create scalable approaches that benefit the whole industry. That’s the power of collaborative action.”

— JUSTIN LACROIX, DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS & BRAND LEAD, AHOLD DELHAIZE USA

Tracking different commodities uncovers many reasons why food is being wasted across the food system, and identifying solutions to these waste hotspots provides a path toward progress.

## Low-Waste Events

In 2025, the U.S. Food Waste Pact explored a new project area: reducing food waste at events. The low-waste events pilot was the first of its kind as it created research-backed guidelines for both venues and planners and subsequently tested those guidelines and measured their impact.

The foodservice sector accounts for almost 13 million tons of food waste per year, and the vast majority—nearly 80 percent—ends up in waste destinations like landfills, sewers, and incinerators. One of the challenges in quantifying food waste at events is the lack of data; event food waste data is often not collected, and per guest baselines to measure progress against are non-existent. In addition to testing solutions, this pilot played an important role in establishing metrics and clear insights into how much waste occurs at events. **On average, 42% of food prepared for buffets went uneaten—29% met recovery standards for donation and the remaining 13% went to waste destinations.**

### Pilot: Low-Waste Events: Measuring & Reducing Food Waste in Events

Applying the Pact's approach to cross-chain collaboration, the pilot brought planning, production, and post-event practices together to evaluate how coordinated actions between planners and venues can measurably reduce food waste.

Six sites across the country tested a set of guidelines that aimed to prevent food from being wasted in the first place through small, repeatable adjustments. Waste hotspots were identified across locations, identifying three food categories—bread, dressings and sauces, and fruit—that were most likely to be wasted. Sites then implemented Low-Waste Events Guidelines that encouraged simple solutions to reduce waste in these categories and across the board. Across all pilot sites, targeted interventions reduced waste in focus categories by an average of 55%.

### Resources

The pilot produced a number of open-source resources for venues and event planners.

#### LOW-WASTE EVENTS GUIDELINES

The Low-Waste Events Guidelines provide frameworks for integrating food waste reduction practices for both venues and event planners. The guidelines are founded on each audience's unique order of operations and give practitioners actionable steps and processes to reduce food waste.

#### ADDITIONAL LOW-WASTE EVENTS RESOURCES

More than 10 additional resources provide venues and event planners with checklists, processes, calculators, and actionable steps to reduce food waste before, during, and after events.

“We appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with the Pact on reducing food waste at meetings and events—an issue that is important to us and to our customers. The Pact helped us implement a pilot that brought our hotel team together with the meeting planner to achieve less waste. This collaboration and shared vision are essential. We look forward to applying the learnings from this effort into our Meet with Purpose offering, delivering more impactful, lower waste meetings for our customers.”

— JEAN GARRIS HAND, VP | GLOBAL HEAD, SUSTAINABILITY, HILTON

Across all pilot sites, targeted interventions reduced waste in focus categories by an average of

**55%**

# PACT 2026: LOOKING AHEAD

To keep the momentum going on food waste reduction, the U.S. Food Waste Pact will continue to lead food businesses in the pursuit to reduce food waste, minimizing harmful environmental impacts and cutting costs along the way.

As the Pact enters its third year, expanding programming is a top priority. Retail and foodservice signatories are showing progress, and process improvements will continue to make data collection and measurement easier. Building on the success in retail and foodservice, the Pact will continue to expand data reporting tools and resources to new sectors, including manufacturing and quick-service restaurants, to provide these signatories with decision-ready data.

Facilitating discussion between signatories through new and different convenings will spark new connections and ideas, accelerating collaboration and meaningful impact. Building up the Pact Resource Library with more actionable case studies and new resources that share best practices and industry insights will also catalyze business action.

New pilots and projects will aim to scale this work and accelerate impact. Whole chain work will continue to map food waste hotspots for new commodities and test solutions identified in existing commodities. Low-waste events work will aim to embed existing learnings and practices into the hospitality sector, and new tools will provide food businesses with actionable resources and guidance to reduce food waste.

Finally, the U.S. Food Waste Pact will continue to collaborate with other Pacts around the world to accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 and maximize food by wasting less.

”

“As a founding signatory, collaborating openly with our peers has accelerated our progress and provided insights that we excitedly share with fellow signatories. As the Pact grows, so does its impact on reducing food waste nationwide. Together, we are making meaningful strides in food waste diversion and reduction, and we take pride in being part of the retail cohort that established the national benchmark for food waste in our industry.”

— EMILY WIORA, SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR,  
ALDI US

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The U.S. Food Waste Pact team would like to thank each of its signatories for doing this work and leading the way on business action to address food waste. A special thank you also goes out to businesses and consultants that have led work on the Pact's pilot projects.

ReFED and World Wildlife Fund would like to thank its funders for supporting this effort and making it possible. Lastly, the Pact team would like to thank Nia D'Emilio and Giada Mannino for their authorship and design of this report.



ReFED is a U.S.-based nonprofit that catalyzes the food system toward evidence-based action to stop wasting food. They work to increase adoption of food waste solutions across the supply chain by cultivating and convening the food community, delivering actionable evidence and insights, and seeding and accelerating promising initiatives. The U.S. Food Waste Pact is a core program that contributes to ReFED's goal to mobilize businesses to reduce food waste.



WWF is one of the world's leading conservation organizations, working for 60 years in nearly 100 countries to help people and nature thrive. With the support of 1 million members in the United States and more than 5 million members worldwide, WWF is dedicated to delivering science-based solutions to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth, halt the degradation of the environment, and combat the climate crisis.



The U.S. Food Waste Pact is a national voluntary agreement to help food businesses accelerate progress toward their waste reduction targets. Led by national nonprofit partners ReFED and World Wildlife Fund, the U.S. Food Waste Pact is aligned around the global framework of "Target, Measure, Act" to help food businesses reduce waste within their operations.

## JOIN THE PACT

Work across sectors to accelerate action on food waste reduction.

[JOIN](#)

## CONNECT WITH US

[usfoodwastepact.org](https://usfoodwastepact.org)

[in](#) [U.S. Food Waste Pact](#)