

SAVE YOUR FOOD CHALLENGE:

TRACK HOUSEHOLD FOOD WASTE

The average household throws away one-quarter of all the food they buy – that’s like walking in the door with four grocery bags and dropping one straight into the trash each time you shop! The Save Your Food Challenge (based off of the EPA’s Get Smart challenge) will help you find out how much food is wasted in your household, and which prevention strategies work best for you!

Week 0: Gather Supplies

- Paper grocery bags
- Compost or plastic bags to line the inside of the paper bags
- Clips to close bags if things get smelly
- Small scale to measure weight (optional)
- Worksheet (below)

Weeks 1 & 2: Baseline Measurements

For the first two weeks, measure how much food your family wastes in a normal week and record the volume and/or weight.

- Place preventable food waste in the lined paper bags
 - This includes food that spoiled without being used and food that you prepared but didn’t eat
 - Non-edible foods (egg shells, coffee grinds, peels, etc.) can be disposed of normally
 - Do not include liquid waste such as soups
- At the end of each week, record the volume and weight of the bag(s) on the worksheet
 - If a bag fills before the end of the week, record the weight, volume and how many days it took to fill it, and then move to a second bag.
- Dispose of bags normally at the end of each week either in the trash, or by composting.

Weeks 3–5: Try Prevention Strategies

Each week, try out at least one prevention strategy to reduce food waste:

- **Smart Shopping:** plan your meals, make a list
- **Smart Storage:** learn which foods do best in the fridge, the freezer, or on the countertop
- **Smart Prep:** wash, dry and chop in advance so food is ready to use when you’re short on time
- **Smart Savings:** eat leftovers, find creative ways to use food before it spoils

Continue to record the volume and weight of the bag(s) at the end of each week, along with which implementation strategies you tried.

Totals:

At the end of the challenge, calculate your totals to see how much food (and money!) you saved compared to weeks 1 and 2.

Write about your experience: What did you learn? What surprised you? Which prevention strategies worked best for your household? What will you do going forward to minimize your food waste?

Questions? Contact Megan DeMasters at mdemasters@fcgov.com.

WORKSHEET

Week 1: Start Date _____ Bag Volume _____ Bag Weight _____ # Days Collected _____

Notes (what went to waste and why?) _____

Week 2: Start Date _____ Bag Volume _____ Bag Weight _____ # Days Collected _____

Notes (what went to waste and why?) _____

Week 3: Start Date _____ Bag Volume _____ Bag Weight _____ # Days Collected _____

Notes (what worked, what didn't?) _____

Week 4: Start Date _____ Bag Volume _____ Bag Weight _____ # Days Collected _____

Notes (what worked, what didn't?) _____

Week 5: Start Date _____ Bag Volume _____ Bag Weight _____ # Days Collected _____

Notes (what worked, what didn't?) _____

TOTALS:

Total bag **volume** Weeks 1-2: _____ ÷ 4 = _____ (weekly average)

Total bag **weight** Weeks 1-2: _____ ÷ 4 = _____ (weekly average)

Total bag **volume** Weeks 3-5: _____ ÷ 4 = _____ (weekly average)

Total bag **weight** Weeks 3-5: _____ ÷ 4 = _____ (weekly average)

Observations: _____
