

FOOD WASTE: BY THE NUMBERS

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE THROW AWAY A HUGE AMOUNT OF OUR NATION'S MOST IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT: FOOD. IT IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST ITEM BEING BULLDOZED IN OUR LANDFILLS, SAYS THE USDA. BUT SLOWLY, SOCIETY IS WAKING UP TO THIS WASTEFULNESS AND SEEKING SOLUTIONS, SOME OF WHICH ARE BEING LED BY FFA MEMBERS. CONSIDER THESE STATISTICS. • BY GENE JOHNSTON

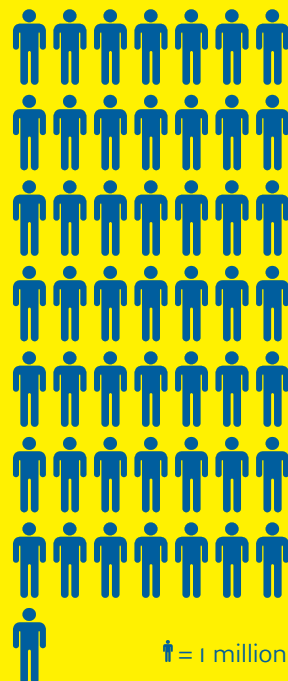
THE EXTENT OF FOOD WASTE



218

pounds of food are wasted per person per year in the U.S.

AT LEAST 50 MILLION PEOPLE COULD LIVE OFF OF THE FOOD WE WASTE IN THE U.S. PER YEAR.



31 PERCENT

of food produced for home, restaurant and school consumption ends up in landfills.

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (INCLUDING THE U.S.) WASTE NEARLY AS MUCH FOOD AS THE TOTAL PRODUCED IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

Developed countries waste

10 TIMES

as much food per person as nondeveloped countries.

3 CHAPTERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

CUBA-RUSHFORD FFA CHAPTER, CUBA, N.Y.

Agricultural education students started a school-wide composting project after they noticed how much food was going uneaten at breakfast and lunch. "We wish the students were eating the food, but at least we're keeping the leftovers out of the landfill," says FFA advisor Carly Santangelo. "Some students are even composting at home now."

CENTRAL JR. HIGH FFA, SPRINGDALE, ARK.

Students saw a connection between the food being wasted at school and agriculture, so they built a compost bin from pallets. "It's a hands-on opportunity to learn," says agriculture educator Kathy Hall. "One student is even building a biogas digester using food waste. I'm hopeful that some students will see career opportunities in this field."

LONE STAR FFA, OTIS, COLO.

Agricultural education students get food from a local food pantry called Food Bank of the Rockies and distribute it to the community. "Students learn about using food rather than wasting it and also about serving our community. It's all good," says FFA advisor Saralynn Vetter.

4 COMMONLY WASTED FOODS



BREAD



FRUITS & VEGETABLES

MEATS



DAIRY



5

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