



RURAL STRATEGIES

FOOD DIVERSION



In rural areas it can be more challenging to find active food rescue groups able to pick-up surplus food and get it to people in need, however there are still numerous strategies for food facilities in rural jurisdictions to reduce wasted food and divert food waste from the landfill.

As with food facilities in urban or suburban areas it is key to start with preventing surplus food to begin with.

1. **WEIGH AND TRACK YOUR SURPLUS FOOD**, set a surplus food reduction goal, and plan accordingly! Visit the EPA Food Recovery Challenge page to sign up for a free tracking tool and access to more resources. Here are a few tips for preventing wasted food. See [Appendixes B and C](#) for Food Waste Prevention Tips from the EPA
 - a. Compare purchasing inventory with customer ordering
 - b. Examine production and handling techniques to prevent and reduce preparation waste
 - c. Ensure proper storage techniques
 - d. See more tips in [Appendix B](#)



<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-challenge-frc>



<http://www.leanpath.com/free-resources/>

2. **Reach out** to a local high school, community college, or university in your area to see if they already have, or would like to establish a community kitchen. Schools, colleges, and universities often have commercial kitchens that sit unused in the evenings and weekends. To learn more about strategies to partner with local schools, colleges, or universities see information from the Campus Kitchens Project below.



<http://www.campuskitchens.org/resources/>

3. FEED ANIMALS If you still have excess food and can't easily donate surplus food to a nonprofit charitable organization. This strategy can benefit the food facility by reducing disposal costs and benefit the farmer by reducing feed costs. If you want to donate your food scraps to animals:

- a. Contact your local solid waste, county agricultural extension office or public health agency for more information about local regulations
- b. Determine what types, how often, and the amount of food scraps you can provide
- c. Connect and partner with a local farmer or rancher



<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/rutgers.pdf>



<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reduce-wasted-food-feeding-animals#success>

4. GENERATE ENERGY with your food scraps if you can't feed animals. Energy generation via anaerobic digestion works like this; microorganisms break down organic materials, such as food scraps, yard waste, manure, and sewage sludge producing biogas and a soil amendment, two valuable products! To learn more, contact your local waste hauler or utility district.



<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/industrial-uses-wasted-food>

5. COMPOST YOUR FOOD SCRAPS if you can't feed animals or send them for use in energy generation or other industrial uses. Composting food scraps creates a product that can be used to help improve soils, grow the next generation of crops, and improve water quality.

Yard waste and small quantities of food scraps can be composted onsite by food facilities. Animal products and large quantities of food scraps cannot be composted onsite. Use the following resources to learn how to start a small scale composting operation onsite or find a composting facility near your facility.



<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>



<http://www.findacomposter.com/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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