

Abstract:

For decades, humans have been the culprits of large amounts of food waste. As food production became more industrialized, individual consumers became more and more removed from the process. There used to be an unacceptable amount of food waste, nearly 40% by 2018. Perfectly good, healthy, nutritious, safe food was not being consumed and ending up in landfills to rot.

Prior to 2020, most of the food waste was occurring during agricultural production and with the consumer. Other areas of waste, but in a smaller amount, took place during post harvest, distribution, and processing. Two main reasons for food waste during post harvest and agricultural production were that farmers were often over producing and due to the concept of the ideal looking piece of food. Farmers were over producing either due to subsidies or because prices were so low that they had to produce large amounts in order to make reasonable profit. Additionally, over time, consumers have developed the ideal looking food and they expected all food that is sold in stores to fit this standard. This left little to no choice to farmers who harvested deformed food, often fruits and vegetables. Due to a deformity, odd shape or change of color the piece of food instantly dropped in value and was often hard to sell. These deformed pieces of food often went unsold, were wasted, and often ended up in landfills. The most commonly wasted food, in order of most wasted to least wasted, were fruits and vegetables, cereals, dairy, meat, and fish.

Through this Wordpress page the evolution of food waste will be outlined leading to what life is like in 2040 and how it is significantly better than life before. It took many years and a lot of steps along the way but it has been a worthwhile and extremely positive change. The ultimate goal is to reduce food waste by source reduction, not producing in excess and buying what is needed. However, there are also steps to help with food that is produced. If the food is still safe to eat it can be donated to food banks and shelters to feed the hungry or to farms to feed the animals. This way the food is still being used. If there are unuseable food scraps or the food is no longer safe to eat then the food will be composted and the compost can be used as fertilizer. Now in 2040 there is full municipal composting and it is illegal to send food waste to landfills. Industrial farms are a thing of the past, now most food is produced locally or regionally. There are local, community, and personal farms where people can grow their own food and be more connected to the food cycle. There has been a standardization of dates placed on food packaging to mean the same and send a clear message to consumers of how long the food is good for. Food prices have also increased to help make consumers more conscious of what they are consuming. In 2040, individuals are also smarter consumers, being more purposeful in their shopping and only buying what is needed.

By 2040, society has embraced the change and has fully adjusted. Life full of over production, the perfect piece of food, and food waste is something of the past. With this outline, society is living a more healthy and sustainable lifestyle that will be able to thrive for years to come.