

UC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ANNOUNCES FOOD WASTE PREVENTION WEEK, MARCH 5th-9th



The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) in the Central Sierra, along with Governor Jerry Brown and other California officials and agencies announces March 5th-9th, 2018, as “Food Waste Prevention Week” in the State of California. UCCE Central Sierra pledges to raise employee and public awareness about the economic, environmental and social impacts of unused food.

According to recent estimates almost 12 billion pounds of food gets thrown away in California each year, and individual consumers are responsible for more food waste than grocery stores and restaurants combined. Forty percent of all food waste happens in homes or by individuals, and nine out of ten Americans throw away food too soon because they misunderstand the confusing system of ‘expiration date’ labels that come on food packages. With the exception of infant formula, these dates typically refer to freshness or perceived quality, not to food safety.

Food waste has consequences for communities in the Central Sierra region. California Food Policy Advocates estimate that one in seven residents of Congressional District 4 in the foothills don’t always have enough food to eat, but the Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that an average American family of four tosses out about 1,000 pounds of food each year, wasting roughly \$1,500 on food that goes unused. \$1,500 of food a year could make a big difference for families trying to put healthy meals on their tables.

When food is thrown away, valuable resources like water and energy are wasted as well. For example, it takes around 55 gallons of water to get one egg from chicken to refrigerator. Food waste is also the single largest component of landfills, where it decomposes and releases methane - a climate pollutant 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂) over a 20 year period.



Food Waste Prevention Week aims to raise awareness about the economic, environmental and social impacts of unused food, and inspire Californians to take action. To join in the effort, consider where waste is happening and what can be done about it. Solutions might include seeking out imperfect produce, asking for composting bins to be installed at the office or a community center, or working with school administrators to set up a share table in the cafeteria.

For more information on how to store, save and use food, visit [SaveTheFood.com](https://www.savethefood.com). For more information on safe food storage and handling practices, visit [FoodSafety.gov/keep/](https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/).