

Are Extension Staff & Volunteers Ready to Tackle Household Food Waste Reduction Education?

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trashed_vegetables_in_Luxembourg.jpeg

Overview

Californians throw away nearly 6 million tons of food waste each year, contributing 18% of the total material that goes into landfills.¹ This food waste produces methane a greenhouse gas (GHG) that contributes to the climate change crisis. In September 2016, California rolled out SB 1383 to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2025.¹

Households contribute the greatest amount of food waste in the US and consumer education is one strategy needed to divert this waste from landfills.² Cooperative Extension programming can play an integral role in reducing consumer food waste. However, there is a lack of data on California Extension staff and volunteers' food waste knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and readiness to provide food waste reduction education.

1. CalRecycle. <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/food/?emrc=63f6ba4807b1a>
<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/nav/organics/>

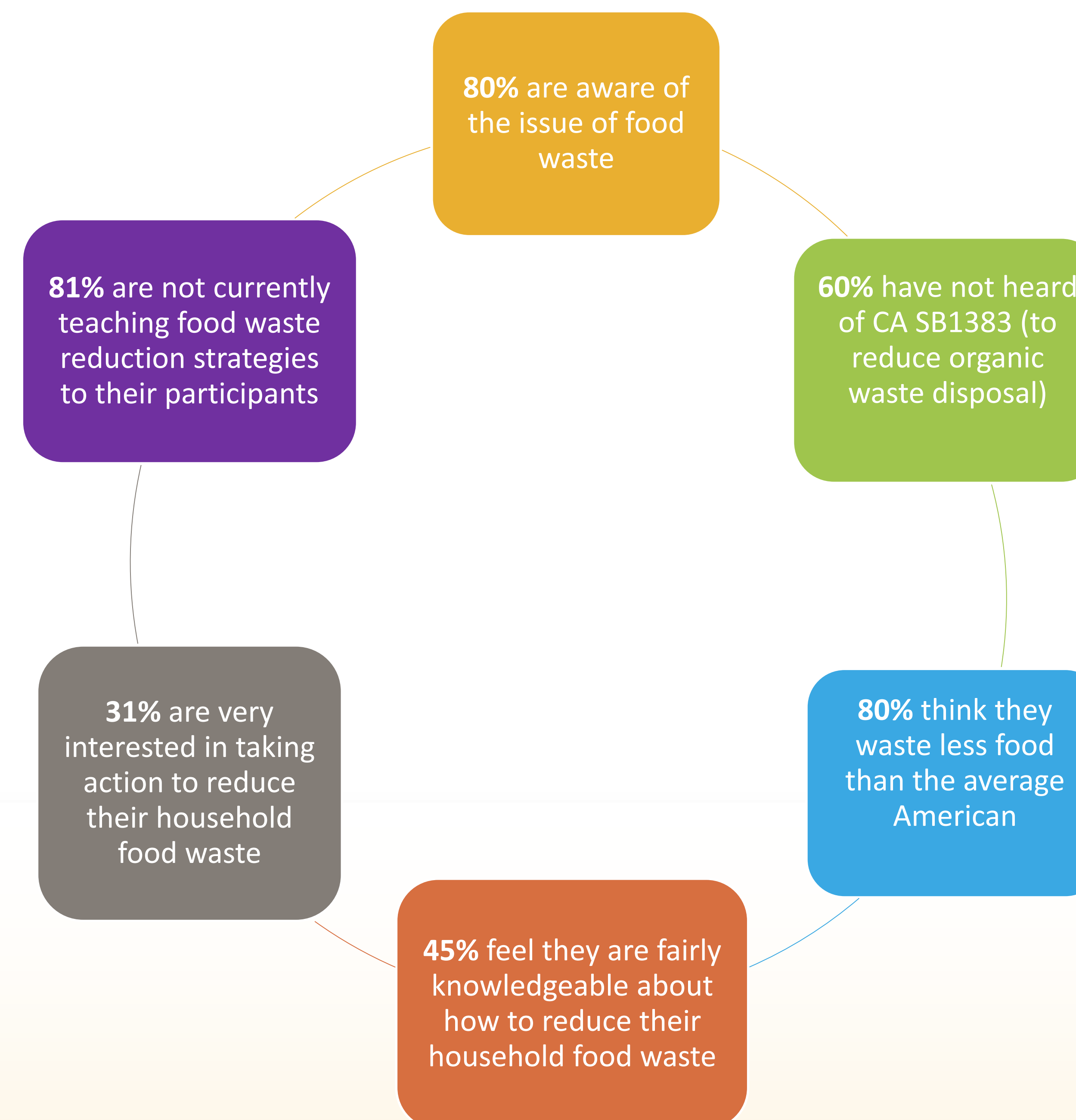
2. ReFED. <https://refed.org/food-waste/consumer-food-waste/>

Aims

- To assess UCANR staff and volunteers' awareness, attitudes, motivators, barriers, and practices related to household food waste.
- To assess the readiness of UC ANR staff and volunteers to provide household food waste reduction education to their participants.

Results

1566 Extension staff and volunteers completed the survey

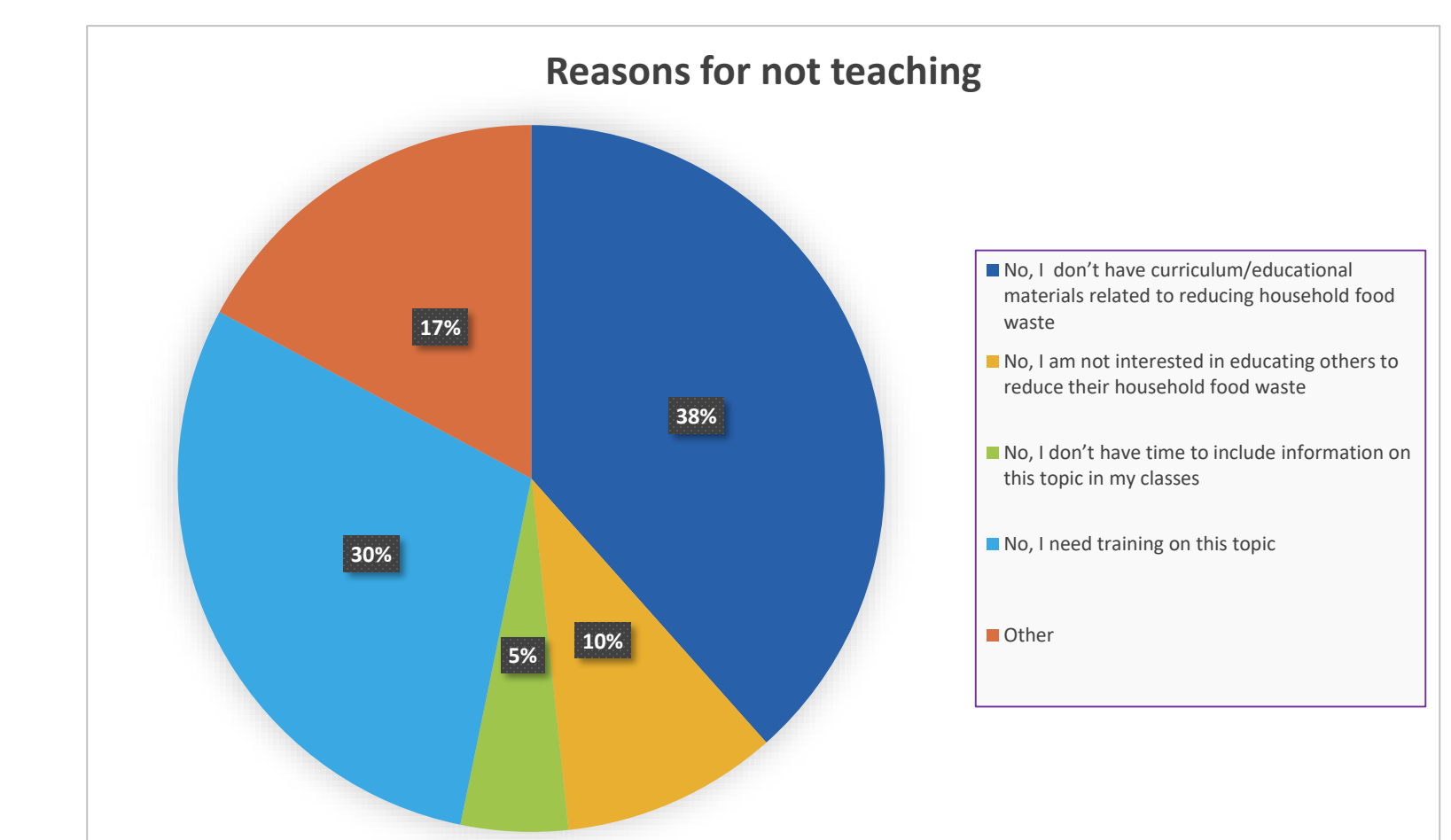


Methods

- An online Qualtrics survey link was emailed to consumer-facing Extension program staff and volunteers in the fall of 2022. Programs represented included the statewide CalFresh Healthy Living, UC and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs, in addition to the UC ANR Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, and 4-H programs.
- Preliminary survey data results were obtained from Qualtrics.

Conclusion

Study confirmed there are great needs in developing food waste reduction trainings and education materials for consumer-facing statewide programs.



Curriculum/educational resources and training were the top two needs identified for them to include food waste reduction education in their programs.

Future Direction:

- More research with program participants
- Develop and field test food waste reduction messaging and educational material
- Develop training for consumer-facing staff and volunteers to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate food waste reduction education