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## **Consumer consciousness around food waste has more than doubled to 72% in two years**

- *Over 90% of consumers prefer brands which are reducing food waste*
- *60% of consumers feel guilty about wasting food, 61% of them want retailers and brands to do more*
- *With the help of technology, manufacturers and retailers can scale their food waste initiatives, engage consumers and employees, build intelligent supply chains, and put governance structures in place to meet consumer expectations*

**Paris, June 20, 2022 – Consumer consciousness around food waste has more than doubled in the past two years as rising food prices, supply chain challenges, the pandemic, and sustainability concerns are impacting consumer behavior. Today, seventy-two percent of consumers are aware of their food wastage as compared to only 33% of consumers before 2020. This is according to the [Capgemini Research Institute's](#) latest report, "[Reflect. Rethink. Reconsider. Why food waste is everybody's problem](#)" which surveyed 10,000 consumers and executives from 1,000 large organizations in food manufacturing and retail.**

According to the new report, consumers are already looking into ways to reduce their food waste. There has been an 80% year-on-year growth in social media searches for methods to increase the life of food items. Cost savings (56%), concerns around world hunger (52%) and climate change (51%) are the primary reasons contributing to this.

Although consumers admit their own culpability, with 60% feeling guilty about wasting food, they also perceive that retailers and food manufacturers aren't doing enough to help them curb this issue. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of consumers want brands and retailers to do more to help them tackle food waste and 57% are disappointed as they feel that businesses don't care enough about the issue.

As per the report, organizations are taking positive action to tackle food waste in-store, in consumers' homes, as well as providing tips to ensure leftovers are not wasted. But, consumers report that they don't believe these actions go far enough. For instance, 60% of organizations say that they help consumers understand terms like "best before", "consume by" and "expiry date", but only 39% of consumers are satisfied that this information is clear enough. Consumers want organizations to do more in areas such as product innovation, packaging, clarity of date labels, and consumer education. For instance, consumers would like to see digital labels (QR codes, etc.) that will provide them with more information on the product's journey and quality.

In fact, consumers feel they are too often left to their own devices regarding reducing food waste. When it comes to increasing food longevity at home, two-thirds (67%) are going to third-party sources for information (friends, family, influencers, and social media) with only a third (33%) getting information from packaging, commercials or campaigns run by food manufacturers and retailers.

### **Food businesses can better educate and support the consumer**

As consumer awareness around the issue of food waste grows, food retailers and manufacturers must take



action to win consumer confidence, cites the report. 91% of consumers say that they are willing to buy from brands and retailers that disclose information on their food waste, while 58% will increase their spend with companies taking active steps to manage food waste.

*"The increased awareness amongst consumers and the initiatives being taken by businesses to tackle food waste is a positive step forward", said Tim Bridges, Global Sector Lead, Consumer Products, Retail and Distribution at Capgemini. "With the help of technology, organizations can track and assess food waste at every stage of the food value chain to enable action at the right time, while also engaging with their consumers by inculcating waste avoiding behaviors and making them an active participant in waste reduction. An agile, intelligent supply chain can also enable an effective collaboration across the value chain to create a sustainable and future-ready ecosystem."*

### **A fragmented food chain**

Although reducing food waste at the retail and consumption phase is an important facet, much more food is lost during production and distribution (1.5bn tons vs 931m tons).<sup>1</sup> More than three in four (77%) organizations say they have committed to the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals 12.3 (UN SDG 12.3), a framework which focuses on halving per-capita food waste at retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, by 2030. However, only 15% of organizations say they have achieved or are on track to achieve their targets.

According to the report, this is due to a fragmented approach to addressing food waste and loss across the food chain. Although food retailers and manufacturers focus on reducing food waste in upstream logistics (44% of retailers and 50% of manufacturers) and processing and packaging (43% retailers, 46% manufacturers), few players pay the same attention to agricultural production (22% retailers and 23% manufacturers) or downstream storage (18% retailers and 21% manufacturers). With produce often crossing international borders, getting a handle on where, when, and how much food loss and waste is occurring is proving a challenge for manufacturers and retailers.

### **Technology can help accelerate the fight against food waste**

The report recommends a three-pronged approach to tackle food waste, backed by technology:

- Engage consumers and employees in food waste management initiatives: Organizations can use technology to inculcate waste-avoiding behaviors among consumers, bolster awareness initiatives and incentivize employees to encourage proactive behavior
- Collaborate across the value chain: Implementing and scaling technology solutions such as data driven demand forecasting, temperature monitoring, inventory management can help organizations maximize impact. An agile and intelligent supply chain with data sharing ecosystems, increased collaboration across the wider ecosystem can help accelerate change
- Set, monitor, and report food waste-related metrics: Organizations need to set up goals, measure progress, and have the right governance structure in place to understand root causes of waste, and course correction mechanisms. With the right use of technology, organizations can track, assess, report, and reduce food waste across the value chain.

To read the full report, [click here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> WWF, "Over 15% of food is lost before leaving the farm - WWF report," July 21, 2021.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, "Definition of food loss and waste," UN: 17% of all food available at consumer levels is wasted," March 4, 2021.



## **Methodology**

The Capgemini Research Institute surveyed 10,000 consumers over the age of 18, as well as executives from 1,000 large organizations in food manufacturing and food retail. The global survey was conducted in 11 countries across North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific in April and May 2022.

Twenty-three in-depth interviews were held with experts from large organizations, universities, startups, NGOs, and regulatory bodies involved in the areas of food manufacturing, food retail, restaurants and food platforms, food cooperatives, and food packaging and distribution.

## **Notes to editors**

As per the United Nations Environment Program "Definition of food loss and waste":

Food loss refers to food that gets spilled, spoilt, or otherwise lost, or incurs a deterioration in quality and value before reaching the final product stage. Food loss typically occurs at the production, post-harvest, distribution, or processing stages.

Food waste refers to food that has progressed to become a consumable product but is not consumed. Food waste may occur for any variety of reasons:

- Fresh produce that deviates from its optimal state, for example in shape, size, or color, is often removed from the supply chain during sorting operations.
- Foods that are close to, at, or beyond their best before dates are often rejected by consumers and/or discarded by retailers.
- Large quantities of wholesome, edible food are often surplus to requirements and subsequently discarded by household kitchens and eating establishments.

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