Digging In:
Consumer’s Role in Food Waste Reduction
What do consumers look for in their produce?

- Even color
- Smooth, round shape
- Bright green stem
- Shiny finish
- Fresh
- Sustainably or organically grown
- Sustainably packaged and stored
Consumer Perceptions

In the U.S., 40% of the post-harvest food supply is thrown out

- 13% reported not discarding any food
- 56% reported discarding 10% of purchased food
- 10% reported discarding 30% or more
- 73% surveyed reported that they discard less than the average American household only 3% reported discarding more

“Based on what is known about wasted food in the U.S., it is clear that respondents as a group are substantially under-reporting their waste levels, and they may also be over reporting their effort levels.” (Neff RA, Spiker ML, Truant PL)
Globally, 35% of waste takes place on the consumer level.

In the developing world, food waste amounts to 400 – 500 calories lost per capita, per day.

In the developed world, food waste amounts to 750 – 1,500 calories lost per capita, per day.

In the U.S., food waste on the consumer level amounts to a $371 loss per capita, per year. Or, $1,350 - $2,275 lost for an average American family of four.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations to reduce food discards</th>
<th>% respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saving money</td>
<td>Very important: 30%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 15%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Setting an example for children</td>
<td>Very important: 25%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 20%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing my household efficiently</td>
<td>Very important: 30%, Important: 45%, Somewhat important: 20%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking about hungry people</td>
<td>Very important: 25%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 20%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt about waste in general</td>
<td>Very important: 30%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 15%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making a difference through my actions</td>
<td>Very important: 25%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 15%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regret about time/money spent</td>
<td>Very important: 30%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 15%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenhouse gases, energy, and water</td>
<td>Very important: 25%, Important: 50%, Somewhat important: 20%, Not at all important: 5%</td>
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‘Original Unverpackt’: The first Zero Waste Grocery store in the world

http://original-unverpackt.de/

Café for ‘ugly produce’

http://www.culinarymisfits.de/en/

‘Saving Food from the Fridge’

http://www.savefoodfromthefridge.com/
Plan your meals in advance and always use a list when shopping to avoid buying food you don’t need.

Pay attention to use-by dates and freeze food you don't use before it goes bad.

Control portion size
Make smaller portions at home and be sure to take (and eat!) restaurant leftovers.

Get creative and repurpose foods that are about to go bad
For example, stale bread can be turned into croutons or breadcrumbs. Older apples can be used for baking.

Compost food scraps that can not be eaten.

Consumer Check List
Call to Action

Media

Retailers

Government

Consumers

Industry

Education

Farmers

Environmentalists
Sources