# How Much Food Is Wasted in Israel?

According to the estimates included in the report “Food Waste and Rescue in Israel 2019,” ‎ 2.5 million tons of food were wasted in Israel in 2019, with an economic value of NIS 20.3 billion. Food waste in Israel is estimated at approximately 35% of overall domestic food production.

# The Environmental Impact and Cost of Food Waste/Loss

* **3.2 billion NIS – total environmental cost of food waste in Israel.**
* **Of this amount, 1.4 billion NIS comes from wasted natural resources, 1 billion NIS from GHG emissions, and 800 million NIS from waste collection and processing**.
* 6% of GHG emissions in Israel are created by food waste. 180 million cubic meters of water are wasted, sufficient to fill 56,000 Olympic swimming pools // enough for every resident in the country to shower every day for a year.
* One million dunams of agricultural land, equivalent to 20 times the area of Tel Aviv.
* 33% of household garbage in Israel consists of food waste.
* 190,000 truck are required each year to transport food and packaging waste to end facilities // equivalent to 520 trucks filled with waste, every day for an entire year.
* **55%** of the environmental damage is caused by food wasted by consumers, which also includes the environmental impact of its production, transportation, and processing prior to reaching the consumer.
* Animal-based food products have the largest environmental impact.

# How Much of This Food Can Be Rescued?

50% of the food wasted is rescuable and is suitable for human consumption; 1.2 million tons of food is suitable for rescue annually and is valued at 7.1 billion NIS.

# Rescuable Food

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|  | Value of Rescuable Food |
| **Agriculture** | ‎1,560‎ |
| **Sorting & Packaging** | ‎420‎ |
| **Industry** | ‎220‎ |
| **Retail & Distribution** | ‎3,600‎ |
| **Institutional** | ‎1,300‎ |
| **Total** | ‎**7,100‎** |

# Why Rescue Food?

Food rescue is very worthwhile for economic, social and environmental reasons:

* **Environmental Benefit** – Food rescue is a winning solution for optimal use of the natural resources that have already been invested, and also for producing food without excessive, unnecessary use of ‎natural resources, reducing pointless emissions of GHG, air and land pollution, and the need to process surplus waste.‎
* **Economic Benefit** –Food rescue is an alternative to food production that avoids using the resources and incurring the costs associated with food production, preventing much of the negative environmental impact inherent in production. Every shekel invested in food rescue generates a direct economic value of 3.6 NIS. Moreover, when taking GHG emissions and air pollution into account, every shekel invested in food rescue generates a direct economic value of 4.2 NIS for the national economy. ‎
* **Social Benefit** – Food rescue reduces social gaps and increases food security for the underprivileged populace.

# Economic Benefits of Food Rescue

* Food rescue is clearly preferable to alternative methods of bridging the food insecurity gap: allocations, donations, subsidies or support for the needy.
* Without food rescue, it would cost 3.2 billion NIS annually to purchase food to cover the gap.
* At a cost of 880 million NIS, it would be possible to rescue food valued at 3.2 billion NIS, which is equivalent to the entire consumption gap between Israelis suffering from food insecurity and Israelis who enjoy normative levels of consumption.
* Food rescue achieves the same societal goal at a significantly lower cost – for 880 million NIS, annually—a savings of 2.3 billion NIS.

# How Much Food Needs to be Rescued?

Rescuing 500 thousand tons of wasted food each year—approximately 20% of the rescuable food that is wasted in Israel—would be sufficient to completely bridge the consumption gap between Israelis suffering from food insecurity[[1]](#footnote-1) and Israelis who enjoy normative levels of consumption.

# Recommended Policy

Highlighted section

# How Much Food Is Wasted i**n** the Household Sector?

* 8.2 billion NIS worth of food was wasted in 2019 by Israeli households, amounting to 880 tons.‎
* In addition to this direct cost, the environmental cost of the household sector’s food waste is approximately 0.9 billion NIS.
* On average, every household discards food worth 3,300 NIS every year.
* The impact of food waste on the cost-of-living is equivalent to an approximately 11% increase in the cumulative cost of food per household. ‎‎

# How Much Food Can Be Rescued in the Institutional Sector (Hotels, Catering, Events, IDF, etc.)?

* 700 million meals are wasted annually, worth approximately 1.3 billion NIS
* There are 240 thousand tons of total institutional food loss annually, valued at 3.9 billion NIS
* The direct, external environmental cost of food waste in the institutional sector amounts to approximately 420 million NIS.

# How Much Food Can Be Rescued in the Retail and Distribution Sector?

* 4.5 billion NIS worth of food is wasted in the retail and distribution sector annually, approximately 440,000 tons.
* Approximately 50% of the rescuable food is from the retail and distribution sector.
* Three principal causes of waste: short expiry dates, aesthetic flaws or flaws in packaging, and damaged food.
* Approximately 740 million NIS is the direct, external environmental cost of food waste in the retail and distribution sector.

1. Based on the gap between food insecurity and normative levels of expenditure for food. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)