

[Press release: Food Waste Champion rallies major players to 'Step up to the Plate'](#)



A variety of fruit on supermarket shelves

Major players from the worlds of food retail and hospitality, along with social media influencers and chefs, will join forces today to pledge groundbreaking action to drive down food waste, a driver of climate change.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove and Minister Thérèse Coffey were among the first to sign up to the pledge – which includes a goal to halve food waste by 2030 – and will today be joined by players in the world of food including Nestlé, Tesco, Sainsbury's, and Waitrose to help halve food waste by 2030.

This comes as [Food Surplus and Waste Champion](#) Ben Elliot will today host a major symposium 'Step up to the Plate' at London's prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum.

Attendees are expected to sign up to a number of commitments on measuring and reducing their own food waste and inspiring others to follow their lead.

Speaking at the event Environment Secretary Michael Gove is expected to say:

I want to thank our Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot for bringing together the biggest players from the world of food today to 'Step up to the Plate' and slash food waste.

Every year, millions of tonnes of good, nutritious food is thrown away.

This is an environmental, economic and moral scandal, and I am determined to tackle it.

I urge businesses to join me in signing the pledge to deliver real change to stop good food going to waste.

Food Surplus and Waste Champion Ben Elliot is expected to say:

Climate change is no longer a buzzword – we must all stand up and be counted. We squander 10 million tonnes of food and drink every year.

Businesses throw away food worth an estimated £5 billion and £15 billion is wasted from our homes (on average around £500 a year), the emissions this creates is the equivalent of every third car on the road. We simply must put an end to this.

[The pledge asks attendees](#) to reduce food waste by:

- setting an ambitious target to halve food waste by 2030 in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.adopting the WRAP and IGD [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#) to have half of all 250 of the UK's largest food businesses measuring, reporting and acting on food waste by 2019.
- embracing a Food Conversation week of action in November 2019 to highlight the changes we can all make.
- using their voice and profile to empower and encourage citizens, including the younger generation.
- changing their habits as an individual to be a Food Value Champion at work and at home, buying only what they need and eating what they buy.

The food waste symposium runs alongside the V&A's [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, which will explore similar themes when it opens to the public on Saturday 18 May.

Currently around 55,000 tonnes of surplus food is redistributed from retailers and food manufacturers every year. It is estimated a further 100,000 tonnes of food – equating to 250 million meals a year – is edible and readily available but goes uneaten. Instead, this food is currently sent away for generating energy from waste, anaerobic digestion to be used for fuel and fertiliser, or animal feed. Wasting food squanders the energy and resources used in producing, transporting and packaging, and when sent to landfill it rots and produces methane, contributing to our greenhouse gas emissions.

Earlier this year the government launched a [£15 million scheme](#) to tackle food waste, building on its landmark [Resources and Waste Strategy](#) which sets out how the government will introduce annual reporting of food surplus and waste by food businesses. The first round of successful applicants [receiving £4 million of funding has just been announced](#). Should progress be insufficient, we will consult on legal powers to introduce mandatory targets for food waste prevention.

The Resources and Waste Strategy also sets out how the government will ensure weekly collections of food waste, which is often smelly and unpleasant, for every household – restoring weekly collections in some local authorities, subject to consultation.

The government is committed to supporting the [United Nation's Sustainable](#)

[Development Goal 2 to end hunger by 2030.](#)

Notes to editors:

- The food waste symposium runs alongside the V&A's [FOOD: Bigger than the Plate](#) exhibition, and bring together big players from the worlds of food retail, hospitality, chefs and social media influencers to promote awareness of food waste and help drive it down from all sources.
- In 2017, [205,000 tonnes of surplus food in the retail and food manufacturing sectors was wasted](#). Some of the surplus is difficult to minimise, costly in that it would need to be reworked or repackaged, and some surplus would not be edible. It is estimated by WRAP that 100,000 tonnes of this is both accessible and edible with the remaining being more difficult to redistribute.
- Food waste in the UK totals 10.2 million tonnes per year, of which 1.8 million tonnes comes from food manufacture, 1 million from the hospitality sector, and 260,000 from retail, with the remainder from households.
- Anyone can sign up to the 'Step up to the Plate pledge' through sending a signed copy of the pledge to events@stopfoodwaste.net.