

# Title: P-05-963 Require supermarkets to donate excess food to charity

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 23 Mehefin 2020  
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Reference: RS20/12730-4

**Petition Number:** P-05-963

**Petition title:** Require supermarkets to donate excess food to charity

**Text of petition:** Throughout the world, one third of all food produced annually is wasted. In the UK, that equates to about 9.5 million tonnes, which represents a huge waste of resources and unnecessary pressure on our environment. Despite this, from 2018 to 2019, Trussell Trust charity had to distribute a record 1.6 million food bank parcels in the UK. We believe that food should not be thrown away when there are people going hungry in this country.

In February 2016, France decided to take action against the food waste problem and mandated that its supermarkets donate all food nearing its sell-by-date to charity – a law that now rescues 46,000 tons of food from being thrown away every year, and has increased food bank donations in France by over 20%.

In 2019, the law was extended to encompass the institutional catering and agro-food industries. We believe that WE CAN DO THE SAME here in Wales by saving edible food and preventing our nation's supermarkets, restaurant chains and food suppliers from sending decent food to landfill. The Welsh Government has already been working with Fare Share Cymru to redistribute the equivalent of over 8 million meals since 2011.

By adopting the solution used in France, we can take a much bigger step towards ending hunger in Wales, as well as the Welsh Government's goal of halving food waste by 2025, which will also put us on the path to becoming Zero Waste by 2050.

Please sign this petition calling on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to pass a law similar to the one in France to take a stand AGAINST food waste and FOR those in need.



**Additional Information:** For more information see the following materials:

France's food waste law extended to agrifood and catering businesses

<https://iegpolicy.agribusinessintelligence.informa.com/PL222646/Frances-food-waste-law-extended-to-agrifood-and-catering-businesses>[Opens in a new browser window]

Is France's Groundbreaking Food-Waste Law Working?

<https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/frances-groundbreaking-food-waste-law-working>[Opens in a new browser window]

French law forbids food waste by supermarkets

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/04/french-law-forbids-food-waste-by-supermarkets>[Opens in a new browser window]

Welsh Government aims to halve food waste by 2025

<https://environmentjournalonline/articles/welsh-government-aims-halve-food-waste-2025/>[Opens in a new browser window]

The Trussell trust – <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>[Opens in a new browser window]

Fare Share Cymru - <http://www.fareshare.cymru/en/home/>[Opens in a new browser window]

WRAP Cymru -<http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/>[Opens in a new browser window]

## Background

Research by WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme) estimates that food waste in the UK in 2015 amounted to 10.2 million tonnes (156 kg / person / year). Of this, the majority - 7.1 million tonnes - was household food waste, with the remaining 3.1 million tonnes originating in the (post farm gate) food supply chain. Within this, **261,000 tonnes of food waste came from the retail sector and 754,000 tonnes came from hospitality and food service.**

The research estimated the total value of food wasted in the UK for 2015 was £20 billion. The value of food wasted for the retail sector was £0.8 billion and for hospitality and food service is was £2.9 billion.

The research was undertaken to form a baseline for the [Courtauld Commitment 2025](#), a series of voluntary agreements aiming to improve resource efficiency and reduce the carbon and wider environmental impact of the UK grocery sector. Courtauld includes food waste and [the major supermarkets have signed up to it.](#)

An [update report published by WRAP in January 2020](#) shows that while overall food waste reduced by 7% between 2015-18, **retail food waste was up by 6%, to 280,000 tonnes while hospitality and food service waste also increased, by 7% to 1.1 million tonnes.**

## French food waste legislation

In 2016 France adopted legislation aimed at preventing larger supermarkets from throwing away edible food by obliging them to work with food waste NGOs that can redistribute food that would have otherwise be thrown away. Stores not complying with the law can be fined. There has been much discussion of this legislation and its effectiveness in the food sector media, examples can be seen in the links provided by the petitioner above and also [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## Welsh Government action

In 2017 the now Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths announced the [Welsh Government's ambition to halve food waste in Wales by 2025](#), against a 2006-07 baseline.

The Welsh Government [consulted on its proposed circular economy strategy "Beyond Recycling"](#) between December 2019 and April 2020. The [consultation document](#) (PDF 1MB) states:

We will lead the way in eradicating avoidable food waste by looking at the whole supply chain and working with businesses from farm to fork to minimise waste and maximise resource efficiency.

and

To promote higher recycling of business and public sector waste, **our aim is to require recycling in all non-domestic settings**, separating waste in the way households already do [Research Service emphasis].

At the time of writing this briefing the Welsh Government had yet to publish the outcome of the consultation.

## Minister's letter to the Committee

The Minister wrote to the Committee in relation to this petition on 26 May 2020. In summary, the letter states:

- The Welsh Government has worked with the major food bank providers to understand the current situation for all food banks across Wales.
- During the Coronavirus pandemic, UK foodbanks have been assured donations from supermarkets, including £15m from Tesco, £10m from Morrisons, £5m from Asda and £1.5m from the Co-op.
- The Trussell Trust has confirmed that its food banks across Wales currently have sufficient food supply and volunteers to meet demand, and do not require financial

support from the Welsh Government. Approximately 50% of food banks in Wales fall under the Trussell Trust's umbrella).

- Reducing food waste is a priority for the Welsh Government, it is working with the food supply chain to ensure waste is minimised and surplus stock redistributed as necessary.
- The Welsh Government commends the voluntary actions taken by the sector under the Courtauld Commitment and will monitor their impact. Should it believe more action is necessary, the Welsh Government "should have the option to mandate surplus food redistribution under powers being sought for Welsh Ministers under the UK Environment Bill."

## Senedd action

While the general issue of food waste is raised relatively frequently in the Senedd, the specific issue of food waste from supermarkets has not been discussed in detail since a Short Debate on food waste led by Julie Morgan MS in 2015.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.