Retailers know the importance of cutting waste; it’s what their customers expect and makes good business sense. This is demonstrated through our A Better Retailing Climate (ABRC) initiative and our comprehensive report detailing progress on issues such as reducing waste and packaging and helping consumers make more sustainable choices.

ABRC contains a set of ambitious voluntary targets and commitments agreed by retail signatories to be met by 2020. These include a target to divert waste from landfill so that less than one per cent of retail waste is landfilled by 2020 and a commitment to report annually on retail food waste. We publish annual progress reports, with the next update due in early 2017.
INTRODUCTION

We understand why our members are being challenged about food waste. This is one of the most important issues in sustainability in which everyone needs to play their part, but where our members can and are playing a leadership role.

The definitive source of data on food waste in the UK is WRAP – an independent expert charity focusing on resource efficiency. WRAP estimates that post farm gate annual food waste in the UK is around 10 million tonnes, 60 per cent of which could have been avoided. Its most recent figures confirm that retail makes up two per cent of this, with household waste accounting for the majority1.

The UK is the only country with an annual measured and published retail industry food waste figure. In 2013, our members agreed a set of common rules and working with WRAP, calculated a UK retail waste figure. This figure has been updated based on 2015 data and has remained at 2.4 per cent of the UK grocery market).

While the BRC figure shows that retail food waste levels in 2015 were beginning to plateau, it is important to bear in mind the following:

- Some variations in data will be a result of changes in methodologies used for measuring food waste at retail
- The 2015 data does not capture recent retail initiatives which will significantly increase the amount of surplus food redistributed to those who need it
- Measuring retail food waste has enabled retailers to identify their operational food waste hotspots, such as in-store bakeries, and to ensure that steps are taken to reduce food waste in these areas in the future
- Retail food waste figures can be sensitive to changes in operating models such as moving away from longer life products towards shorter life and fresh products
- The 2015 retail food waste figure equates to 2.4 per cent of all UK post farm gate food waste so there are still bigger challenges in the supply chain and at home that we all need to address together

The best way to make a real difference in cutting food waste is to focus on where the majority of waste occurs.Whilst most food waste physically happens in the home or in the supply chain, retailers have a shared responsibility for this. The solution therefore lies in working in partnership with suppliers and helping customers as well as tackling waste in retail operations. Our members are key to making a difference as they clearly have a pivotal role to play in reducing food waste from farm to fork.

The causes of food waste in the retail supply chain are complex which is why we need to use a range of solutions. Our members are working with farmers and producer groups to tackle food waste and losses in agriculture, making the most of the entire crop in the field or more of the carcasses of animals. Other measures include reviewing current specifications for produce, looking at smarter ways to forecast and exploring opportunities to improve storage and transportation.

As well as tackling waste we need to change food culture, in terms of the quality customers look for when shopping. For nearly 30 years EU-wide marketing standards have dictated the size and shape of 36 types of fruit and vegetables. The majority of these standards were abolished in 2009 following lobbying efforts led by the BRC; however, ten specific marketing standards still apply where it is illegal for retailers to sell it outside of the specifications.

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THE SUPPLY CHAIN

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In changing the ways they look at their processes and food waste, retailers have managed to collaborate with their suppliers, growers and producers to reduce even more waste in their supply chain.

**M&S - SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD**

Through the M&S Sustainability Scorecard, suppliers are encouraged to behave in a more sustainable way across environment, labour standards & lean manufacturing. It details the building blocks to enable a step change in performance, with Silver level representing performance above the norm. Food waste requirements have been made tougher with suppliers unable to meet Silver level if they send food waste to landfill. A high expectation is also placed upon suppliers to ensure non-food is diverted from landfill. Currently 60% of M&S suppliers are zero waste to landfill, with 48% of sales (by volume) coming from factories at Silver level.

**TESCO – LINKING GROWERS WITH MANUFACTURERS**

Tesco’s overall approach has always been to make as much use of the edible crop as possible. Through its partnerships with producers, Tesco is able to understand where its supply falls outside of specifications or demand. It makes business sense for Tesco that its suppliers receive a fair return on surpluses that Tesco does not take. Increasingly, Tesco is helping to create strong and stable demand for these ‘seconds’ by making links between growers and fresh and frozen suppliers. For example, Tesco is supporting its potatoes supplier, Branston, to supply one of its manufacturers, Samworths, which produces mashed potato - creating jobs and increasing crop usage.

**SAINSBURY’S - MATCHING DEMAND TO SUPPLY**

Through working ever more closely with its growers and farmers, Sainsbury’s is ensuring that quantities grown by its producers match the amounts purchased by customers as precisely as possible. The supermarket is currently working with a salad supplier aiming to provide a precise crop schedule which changes according to climate and other factors. With another supplier Sainsbury’s is also monitoring growth stages of potatoes to predict their yield. These projects are helping to plan availability better and reduce food waste.

In a further collaboration with its suppliers, Sainsbury’s is sourcing directly from producers enabling the product to get from farm to shelf even quicker and allow customers a few extra days of product life.

**MORRISONS - PORK SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY PROJECT**

Morrisons, Woodheads (abattoir) and Farmers Boy (processors) have concluded a whole chain review of the pork supply chain efficiency with the support of WRAP. Analysis demonstrates significant potential savings for Morrisons through reductions in waste associated with pig feed.

Morrisons operates a vertically integrated pork supply chain as it owns and manages Woodheads and Farmers Boy. Another feature of Morrisons is it operates with in-store butchers who complement their pre-pack offer for consumers. This has enabled Woodheads to supply primal directly to stores, as well as through Farmers Boy, where they are pre-packed.

**THE CO-OP - PORK SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY PROJECT**

Whole chain collaboration between The Co-op and its pork supplier, Tulip, has delivered declared annual retail savings of £395,000 – and identified significant further opportunities. These benefits were realised following an examination of the value chain, from the farmers who rear pigs to the households that consume the bacon and gammon products. The aim was to pinpoint ‘hotspots’ of material use, greenhouse gas emissions, water and waste and then to find ways of using less resources without compromising commercial performance.

“Our members are taking a number of steps to reduce the amount of misshapen fruit and veg going to waste such as regularly buying whole crops from suppliers and using any misshapen fruit and vegetables to make ready meals and soups.”
Retailers continue to address their own food waste. BRC members’ overriding priorities are to provide fresh, quality food at the best price to all of their customers and to prevent food waste from occurring in the first place.

Food waste arises for a variety of reasons such as expiry of use by date; product recalls; breakages; damages; and products that have been taken out of the chill chain.

Supermarkets are working on projects to increase the shelf life on a number of products and to promote products that are close to their end of life through prominent placements on the shelf. By reviewing and innovating packaging for a selection of products, product life has been extended. Asda has continued to review the shelf life of its products, enabling the retailer to keep even more products on the shelf for longer. Product life reviews have been undertaken this year by ASDA’s Date Team which looks at dates and how things are selling in each store to calculate stock better. M&S has phased out multi-buy promotions such as ‘buy one get one free’, or ‘3 for £5’ in favour of lower regular prices. These changes provide greater flexibility for customers, without having to buy multiple items to enjoy great value. The change also reflects customer feedback.

Morrisons has also invested in technology that keeps food fresher for longer, including increasing the amount of meat and fish that are vacuum-packed. Vacuum-packaging reduces the air around the product and for some food (beef steaks) can help the product mature better than old packaging technologies. ASDA has also continued to conduct packaging reviews across product lines to ensure that it protects food and keeps it fresh.

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Tesco was the first UK retailer to publish food waste data for its own operations and will continue to do so annually with third party assurance provided by KPMG. In 2015/16, 59,400 tonnes of food went to waste, primarily in stores, equivalent to one per cent of the number of products sold in stores. This figure also includes 17,800 tonnes of bakery waste sent to animal feed. Tesco estimates that around half of the total food waste figure, c. 30,000 tonnes, could have been eaten.

One of the key benefits of publishing its data is that it allows Tesco to identify hotspots and take targeted action. For example, bakery accounts for 27 per cent of Tesco’s total food waste figure. It has put in place a plan to reduce in-store bakery waste that includes more accurate production planning.

Earlier this year, SAINSBURY’S phased out multi-buy promotions such as ‘buy one get one free’, or ‘3 for £5’ in favour of lower regular prices. These changes provide greater flexibility for customers, without having to buy multiple items to enjoy great value. The change also reflects customer feedback.

The “Still Fresh” policy from ASDA’s Whoops! products that are reduced on the day of ‘use by’ MORRISONS’s use of careful stock management as well as discounting products close to expiry dates to minimise its in-store food waste Product life reviews have been undertaken this year by ASDA’s Date Team which looks at dates and how things are selling in each store to calculate stock better. M&S has continued to review the shelf life of its products, enabling the retailer to keep even more products on the shelf for longer. New innovations in packaging have also helped our members to reduce food waste within the store. By reviewing and innovating packaging for a selection of products, product life has been extended.

In-store software instructing staff by how much to reduce products reaching their end of life

New innovations in packaging have also had the benefit of conducting packaging reviews across product lines to ensure that it protects food and keeps it fresh.

Vacuum-packaging reduces the air around the product and for some food (beef steaks) can help the product mature better than old packaging technologies.

THE CO-OP has introduced vacuum-packaging for meat products which has extended the life of some products by up to 9 days when compared to conventional packaging. This innovation could save the retailer around 150 tonnes of food waste per year.

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WATROSE has introduced a new type of packaging for salad potatoes which has reduced waste volumes by 30 per cent and plans to extend this packaging to all potato varieties. The packaging has been designed to prevent light penetration, stopping the potatoes going green when on shelf in the supermarket. Following customer demand, some packs will also be reduced in size to help reduce waste in some households. The waste reductions when the packaging is introduced to all potato varieties is expected to be significant.

In March of this year, TESCO made a straightforward commitment: by the end of 2017, no food that is safe for human consumption will be wasted inside the Tesco UK operation.
REDISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS FOOD

Food surplus and food waste are two separate things. Surplus food is food suitable for human consumption which would go to waste if not redistributed. Food waste is food which is not suitable for human consumption for a variety of reasons.

Food redistribution is not the primary way to prevent or reduce food waste; it is a way of ensuring that any surplus that does arise is eaten rather than disposed of. Effective food waste reduction measures should also minimise the amount of surplus food available for redistribution.

WRAP’s recent research on the quantification of food waste and surplus estimated that 55,000 tonnes of food could be suitable for redistribution by retailers each year by 2025. This equates to around 0.1 per cent of retail food sales by weight.

When our members have useable excess stock they work with charities, manufacturers and redistribution organisations across the UK to make sure as much as possible goes to people who need it.

Our members work with a range of organisations across their business operations to ensure that surplus food is redistributed. They have made huge strides in recent years in redistributing surplus food from their depots and are now focusing on ways to overcome the logistical and practical challenges around redistribution from their stores, including date coding, food safety and safe storage space.

WAITROSE have been redistributing surplus food since 2011 and, earlier this year, extended its food donations programme to include not for profit organisations in addition to registered charities, thereby benefitting more organisations.

WAITROSE has also been working with Company and Community Shop, to ensure that any surpluses that arise from Waitrose suppliers are channelled to achieve positive social and environmental impact. Since beginning the trial between its distribution centre in Lancashire and Company and Community Shop in July 2015, Waitrose has redistributed 54 tonnes of food, equating to over 125,000 meals. This has also saved 216 tonnes of CO2 emissions and 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools’ worth of water.

Asda has also begun to work with Community Shop as a trial to redistribute food with less than three days’ life.

A S D A has continued to work in collaboration with its suppliers and FareShare, a partnership that has existed since 2013. This has been particularly beneficial in Asda’s distribution centres, when suppliers have sent extra stock that has not been ordered. Without the collaboration, these products would be sent back to suppliers and disposed of as food waste.

Last year TESCO launched a programme in partnership with the charity FareShare and social enterprise FoodCloud. This programme enables Tesco stores to redistribute surplus food left over at the end of the day. Tesco is now rolling out the scheme nationally under the name Community Food Connection. Stores use the FareShare FoodCloud app to let local charities and community groups know how much surplus food they expect to have for donation at the end of the day. Charities respond to confirm they will collect the food. Community Food Connection is now live in all 805 of Tesco’s large stores and has been extended to 122 convenience stores.

Tesco is working with over 3,000 charity partners and has donated over three million meals to date. Tesco’s target is to have rolled out this programme to all UK stores by the end of 2017 as part of its commitment to ensure no food safe for human consumption goes to waste.

Every M S S owned store has been linked with a local charity through Neighbourly to redistribute products that have reached end of life at the end of each day. Over 12,000 trays of food are redistributed to local charities, each month, across the UK. Since the start of the partnership between M&S and Neighbourly over 660,000 meals have been redistributed to over 600 charities.

M&S is also working with City Harvest to trial a second redistribution programme for frozen products from back of stores. This programme has shown that chilled foods can safely be frozen back of store and redistributed.

All M O R R I S O N S stores can now redistribute edible surplus food to local community groups. Over 80 per cent of the retailer’s stores are now connected, working with over 420 community groups. Morrisons will donate over 2 million products in its first year of the full programme.

On a local level, S A I N S B U R Y’S has over 2,000 partnerships with local charities, donating food from either customer donations or surplus stock. This network of charities is able to redistribute the food to people who need it most. Seventy per cent of stores have a food donation partnership in place and the supermarket is working towards having all stores linked to at least one food donation partner by 2020.

Following a successful trial partnership between THE CO-OP’S Castlewood Distribution Centre (CD) and FareShare Yorkshire’s Regional Centre, a new process was established in September 2015 for all DCs to divert their fresh surplus food to a nearby FareShare Regional Centre. This process consolidated the work that was already being done by the Co-op to redistribute its edible surplus food to the charity. One year on from the country-wide roll out, the Co-op has provided enough surplus food to make 1.3 million meals for some of the most disadvantaged individuals and families, via FareShare’s charity membership base.

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We know customers want to do more to get the best value from the food they buy and that retailers are well placed to help them do that.

Since 2009, UK grocery retailers have signed up to voluntary targets under the WRAP Courtauld Commitments to reduce household food waste and have helped customers reduce the food wasted in their homes by 15 per cent between 2007 and 2012.

Our members have been working with their customers through WRAP’s Love Food, Hate Waste campaign and the Ten Cities campaign to help them reduce household food waste, make it easier to purchase the right amount and to store food in the best way to prevent food waste. Retailers offer advice on how to use existing store leftovers in store, on packaging and online. They have also amended freezing guidance advising customers to freeze food as soon as possible up to the product use by date, and have reviewed the use of ‘use by’ and ‘best before’ dates.

Packaging has become more streamlined and innovative in order to keep food fresher for longer and easier to reseal once opened. In addition, several products now come in a variety of portion sizes so that customers can purchase the amount they need.

Promotions in store have also been changing; multibuy offers have been reduced in preference of everyday lower pricing and dedicated promotions. This trend offers great value and is better targeted to avoid the temptation of over-purchasing food which could end up being wasted.

Our members are investing in a number of initiatives including; providing funding to a UK town to identify those measure which make the biggest difference; developing a series of actions based on consumer insight; and the provision of storage and use by information on till receipts.

The solution for household waste is likely to be a combination of improved awareness, information and technology.

On-pack guidance was reviewed to make it clearer for customers to see when a product could be frozen. Working with WRAP’s 10 cities campaign, M&S has funded cookery classes for residents in Manchester to help better plan meals, prepare food and prevent waste.

Morrisons has helped customers to be inspired to use up food that may otherwise have gone to waste. The content is tailored to specific calendar events such as Halloween and Christmas. This is complemented by its Love Food Hate Waste section on the Morrisons website which gives information about storage, planning and recipe ideas.

Tesco – Product and Packaging Innovations

Tesco is working on a range of product innovations and packaging technologies with the aim of extending product shelf life. For example, in November 2015 it introduced frozen avocados with the aim of reducing the 54,000 tonnes of stone fruit wasted in Britain each year. It has introduced skin packaging on beef and lamb products which gives customers up to an extra 5 days of freshness. Recently, the supermarket has redeveloped packaging for two portion chicken fillets packs with a separate compartment for each fillet and a tear seal between the two. This will enable customers to ‘eat one and keep one’ which will help them to reduce food waste at home.

Waitrose – Meal Kits and Staff Learning Module

Waitrose is trialling a new meal kit bag, providing customers with a quick and convenient solution for cooking from scratch which also reduces food waste. Initially launching in five branches, the ‘Dinner for Tonight’ kits contain a recipe and all the ingredients required to cook a meal for two. Everything is measured out to ensure no wastage or leftovers. There are two new recipes a day, one meat and one vegetarian, and a wide variety of flavours and cuisines. The trial will be rolled out to further branches if successful.

Waitrose has also launched a new learning and development module for its 60,000 staff. Its aim is to draw attention to household food waste and to show ways to reduce food waste in the home.

Sainsbury’s – Waste Less, Save More

Last year Sainsbury’s introduced its £10 million Waste Less, Save More programme – a plan to cut household food waste. During a 12-month trial in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire, various initiatives were trialled including: technology (smart fridges and kitchen gadgets); community engagement and work with local schools. Any successful approaches will be rolled out across the UK and outcomes will be made public. Although still in the trial phase, promising results have already been seen with the audit of the first local school involved showing a food waste reduction of 37 per cent. A successful trial of fridge thermometers has already been rolled out nationwide, giving away one million thermometers to customers. Sainsbury’s trial of food sharing app, Olio, has seen over 2,000 items successfully shared between local households.

THE CO-OP – PACKAGING INFORMATION

The Co-op encourages consumers to freeze products to maximise life, and has recently updated its freezing advice to: ‘for best quality, freeze as soon as possible and always within the ‘use by’ date. This moves away from ’freeze on day of purchase’ providing flexibility for the customer.

The Co-op will be rolling out a product storage initiative in the form of ‘keep me’ information across all large pack produce lines, with additional ‘top tip’ information and Love Food Hate Waste web links on back of pack. This is in addition to the bread, morning goods and some produce products that already have this information on pack.

The Co-op is working to establish targeted ways to reach consumers and its members about reducing household food waste. Work will include enhanced digital communications and prompts.

MORRISONS – MARKET STREET

Through its Market Street offer, Morrisons customers can buy from specialist counters staffed by craft trained butchers, bakers and fishmongers. Customers can receive advice from these specialists on storage, preparation and cooking methods in order to reduce waste. This service also enables customers to buy the exact amount of product they need.
UK RETAIL INVOLVEMENT IN COLLABORATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

The on-going work by our members outlined in this report demonstrates the importance of addressing food waste from farm to fork rather than focusing on one part of the food chain or one sector. Collaboration between and across sectors is imperative.

The global dimension to the food waste issue is clear - we will need about 60 per cent more food calories in 2050 than in 2006 if global demand continues on its current trajectory. Yet, more than one third of the food produced today is lost or wasted.

UK supermarkets are engaged in several collaborative initiatives which aim to significantly reduce food waste both in the UK and globally.

COURTAULD 2025 (UK)

UK retailers have been taking a collaborative approach to reducing food waste since 2005 through the Courtauld Commitments facilitated by WRAP and signed by all four UK governments.

The current voluntary initiative, Courtauld 2025, announced earlier this year, commits signatories from the food retail, manufacturing, and hospitality and food service sectors, to collectively reduce food waste in the UK by 20 per cent by 2025. The commitment puts the UK on track to halve household and retail waste by 2030, thereby delivering on the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3.

The agreement has wide scale support from BRC members, who collectively account for over 95 per cent of grocery sales and can bring that scale to make a huge contribution to meeting the target.

This approach of bringing businesses together on a voluntary basis to set challenging but achievable goals, will do more to tackle food waste wherever it occurs, than a target could which is imposed on any one part of the food supply chain.

THE CONSUMER GOODS FORUM FOOD WASTE RESOLUTION

Many UK retailers are members of the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF). In June 2015, this international grouping of consumer goods manufacturers and retailers announced a commitment to halve food waste within the operations of its 400 retailer and manufacturer members by 2025.

Central to the Food Waste Resolution is the aim to set a clear benchmark for food waste levels and to set measurable goals to reduce food waste in the future. The Resolution specifically commits to aligning the industry around the Food Loss & Waste Protocol developed by the World Resources Institute. The Resolution aims to prevent food waste in the first instance and then to maximise its recovery.

CHAMPIONS 12.3

The UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 seeks to ‘ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.’

The third target under this goal (Target 12.3) calls for halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reducing food losses along production and supply chains by 2030.

The coalition is working to create political, business and social momentum to reduce global food loss and waste and is being led by example, motivating others to reduce food waste, and communicating the importance of food loss and waste reduction.

A recent report assesses the world’s progress toward Target 12.3 and recommends that nations, cities and businesses move quickly to set reduction targets, measure progress and take action to reduce food loss and waste.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE FOOD LOSS & WASTE ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING STANDARD

One major hurdle to meeting global commitments such as Target 12.3 and the Consumer Goods Forum Resolution has been a lack of consistent guidance on reporting and measuring food loss and waste. This need has been addressed by the launch of the Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard (FLW Standard) developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI).

The first-ever global guidance on measuring and reporting food loss and waste establishes consistent definitions, requirements, and guidelines on what companies need to measure and how they should measure it. M&S and Tesco contributed insights and feedback during the development of the Standard.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOOD WASTE PLATFORM

In order to support achievement of the SDG 12.3 Target on food waste and maximise the contribution of all actors, the European Commission’s 2015 Communication on Circular Economy called on the Commission to establish a Platform dedicated to food waste prevention. The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste aims to support all actors in defining measures needed to prevent food waste: sharing best practice; and evaluating progress made over time.

The Platform brings together public entities (Member States/EFTA countries, EU bodies and international organisations) and actors in the food value chain including consumer and other non-governmental organisations. Members include EuroCommerce - the European trade association for retail, whose membership includes the BRC.

TESCO’s CEO, Dave Lewis, is chairing Champions 12.3 - a coalition of leaders from government, businesses, international organisations, research institutions, and civil society, which is dedicated to accelerating progress towards achieving Target 12.3.

The coalition is working to create political, business and social momentum to reduce global food loss and waste and is being led by example, motivating others to reduce food waste, and communicating the importance of food loss and waste reduction.

A recent report assesses the world’s progress toward Target 12.3 and recommends that nations, cities and businesses move quickly to set reduction targets, measure progress and take action to reduce food loss and waste.

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE FOOD LOSS & WASTE ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING STANDARD

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ABOUT THE BRC

Retail is an exciting, diverse and dynamic industry undergoing transformational change. The BRC is at the forefront – enhancing, assisting, informing and shaping. Our mission is to make a positive difference to the industry and to the customers it serves. Our broad range of stakeholders demonstrates how retailing touches almost every aspect of our culture.

The BRC leads the industry and works with our members to shape debates and influence issues and opportunities that will help make that positive difference. We care about the careers of people who work in our industry, the communities retail touches and competitiveness as a fundamental principle of the industry’s success – our 3Cs.

CONTRIBUTING RETAILERS

ASDA
The co-operative
M&S
MORRISONS
Sainsbury’s
TESCO
Waitrose