

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## Resources for More Information



### General Information

- EPA Organic Materials web page: [www.epa.gov/foodrecovery](http://www.epa.gov/foodrecovery)
- EPA and USDA, Waste Not/Want Not: A Guide for Feeding the Hungry and Reducing Solid Waste Through Food Recovery: [www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/pubs/wast\\_not.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/pubs/wast_not.pdf)
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service: [www.csrees.usda.gov/](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/)

### Food Donation

- Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act: [www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appc.htm](http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appc.htm)

### Animal Feed

- USDA's list of state veterinarians: [www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/downloads/vsavic.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/downloads/vsavic.pdf)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's directory of state health departments: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/international/relres.html)

### Composting

- EPA Composting Web site: [www.epa.gov/composting](http://www.epa.gov/composting)
- U.S. Composting Council: [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Supermarket Composting Handbook: [www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/smhandbk.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/smhandbk.pdf)



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# Putting Surplus Food To Good Use

Every day, food service providers, such as supermarkets, hospitals, universities, restaurants, and food preparation companies, make decisions about what to do with surplus or leftover food. This surplus food, also known as food scraps, food waste, or organic materials, includes all prepared foods, produce, bakery and dairy items, and meat. There are many ways food service providers can improve the environment and provide benefits to communities by reducing, reusing, and recycling uneaten or unused food rather than throwing it away. This guide helps food service providers start a food waste reduction and recovery program at their facilities.

### To Recover or Not to Recover: Why Do It?

Separating and managing your excess food can result in both economic and environmental benefits.

#### Economics: It Pays to Reduce and Recover Food Resources

Reducing and recovering excess food may save you money by:

- Decreasing disposal fees. Food banks and renderers often provide free pick-ups for excess food, and composting fees can be less than landfill/incineration tipping fees.
- Decreasing sewer treatment and electricity costs since food waste is not going down the drain.
- Decreasing purchasing costs because you are only buying what is needed.
- Increasing tax deductions for food donations to charities.
- Increasing revenue from selling compost made from food scraps.

#### Environment: Saving Resources And Reducing Waste

Putting surplus food to good use benefits the environment by:

- Creating a nutrient-rich soil amendment when composted, which improves overall soil health.
- Eliminating potential dumpster issues such as odors, pests, and fires.
- Conserving landfill space and decreasing methane and other greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.
- Decreasing the volume of waste managed at incinerators, which reduces air emissions and the volume of incinerator ash that needs to be landfilled.

Source Reduction

Feed People

Feed Animals

Industrial Uses

Composting



### Shopping for Change

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Massachusetts Food Association partnered to increase organics recycling at supermarkets in their state. These two organizations established a voluntary supermarket recycling certification program to promote recycling and re-using food waste and other materials. Participating supermarkets save money and receive both positive recognition and waste load inspection regulatory relief. In August 2005, 62 supermarkets, nine haulers, and six composting facilities achieved a 60 to 75 percent recycling rate of food scraps and other organics. The supermarkets reportedly saved \$3,000 to \$20,000 annually per store by simply diverting organics!

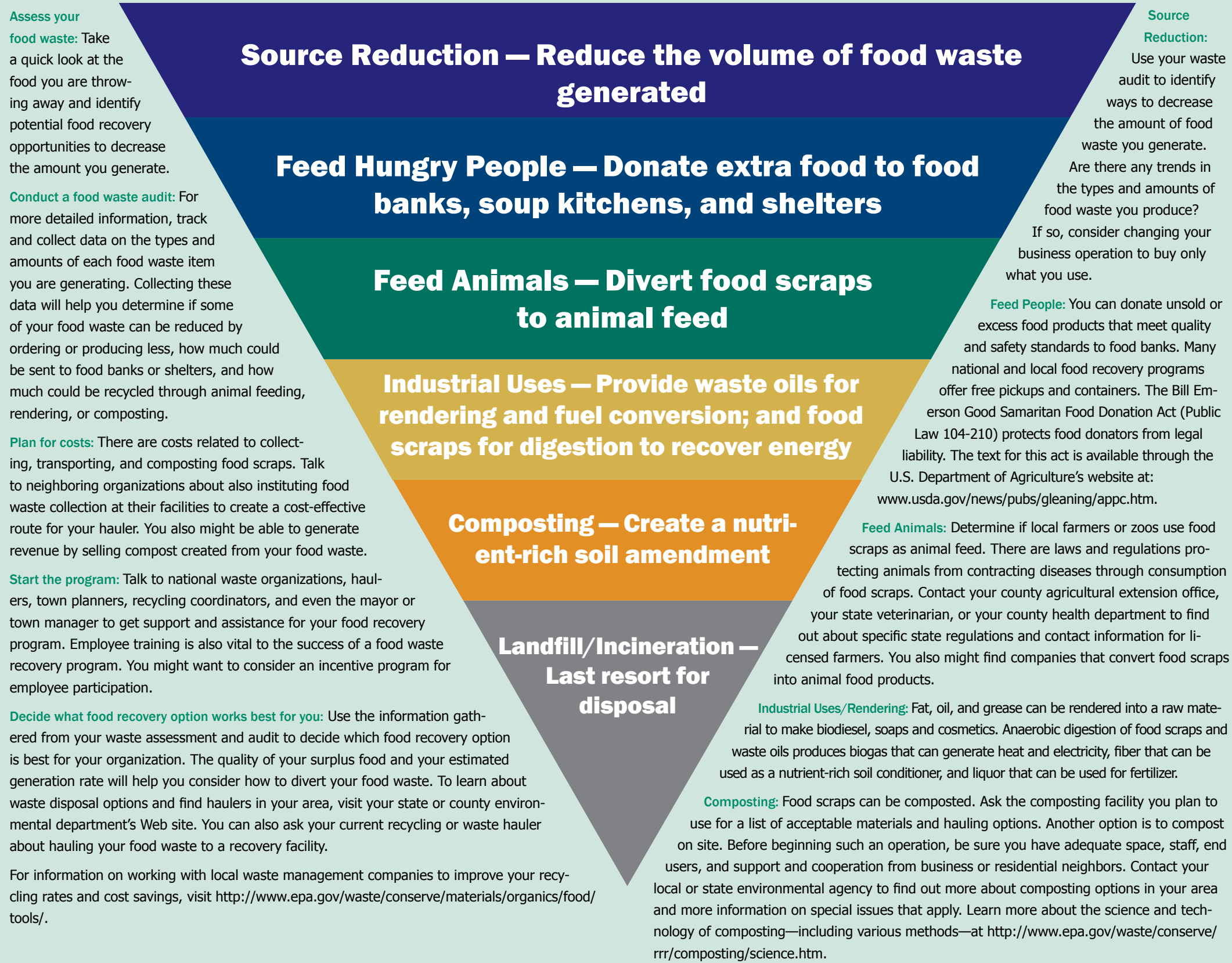


### A Lesson in Successful Partnerships

The San Francisco Recycling Program (SFRP) used stakeholder involvement to create a successful composting program at local schools. SFRP and Sunset Scavenger, a division of Norcal Waste Systems, met with interested teachers, principals, subcontractors, and custodial staff to discuss roles and responsibilities during the different steps in the composting process. Stakeholder meetings allowed SFRP to identify and solve potential problems and foster a sense of responsibility needed to sustain its programs. SFRP's stakeholder involvement also led to student and parent interest in food waste recovery. In 2000, the four public elementary schools and one private high school participating in the program diverted nearly 200 pounds of food scraps daily. The City of San Francisco uses its successful partnership approach to expand its food diversion program to haulers, composting facilities, dairy farmers, local colleges, and other organizations.

# Reducing and Recovering Surplus Food

Surplus food can be beneficially used in a variety of ways. The food recovery hierarchy prioritizes methods of reducing food waste.



### Food for Thought

- Coca-Cola sends leftover food from its cafeteria and banquets to Atlanta's Table, a local branch of Foodchain (a network of prepared and perishable food rescue programs).
- Stonyfield Farm Yogurt donates leftover yogurt to local hog farms.
- The University of Vermont composts 115 tons of its dining hall food waste per year for an annual savings of nearly \$11,000 in avoided landfill tipping fees.



### Hungry for the Basic Facts

- Almost half the food in the United States goes to waste.
- Food is now the #1 material sent to landfills and incinerators each year.
- Food waste makes up almost 14 percent of all the municipal solid waste generated in the United States.
- Less than 3 percent of food waste is recovered.
- Food waste losses account for up to \$100 billion per year; \$30-40 billion occurring within the commercial or retail sector (e.g., restaurants, convenience stores) and \$20 billion from farming and food processing.

To learn more about food waste, visit [www.epa.gov/foodrecovery](http://www.epa.gov/foodrecovery)