FOOD WASTE PROBLEM RAISES ALARM

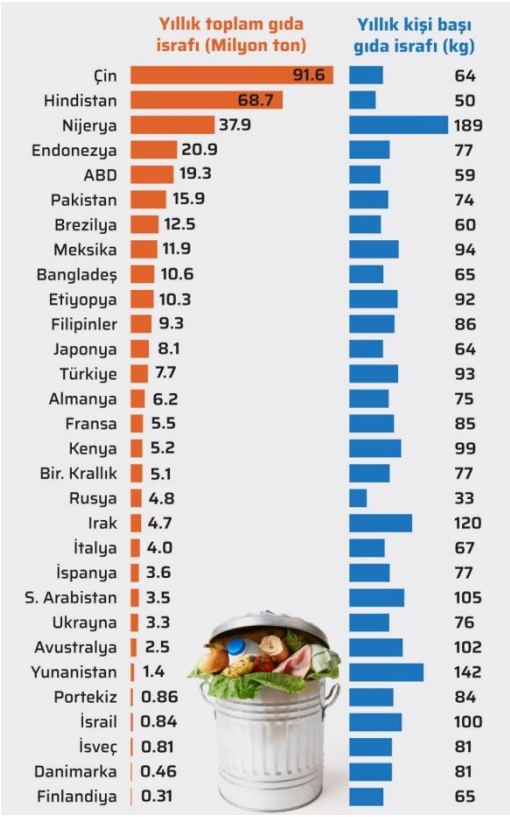
To feed our developing world, humankind recklessly makes use of all resources; but 1/3 of the food produced feeds the garbage, not the hungry people.

For most of the population, the ability to buy more food than needed has become normalized, and food that is not eaten on plates, goes to waste has become innocent, while the other three billion people in the world cannot afford an adequate and balanced diet. According to the 2021 food waste Index report, prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) using data from 54 countries, more than 820 million people are suffering from chronic hunger. This number is expected to increase sharply due to the impact of the covid-19 outbreak. However, 1.3 tons of food is thrown in the trash every year, reinforcing the climate crisis due to energy waste. UNEP executive director Inger Andersen, emphasizes that “climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, pollution and waste if we want to get serious about the fight against worldwide businesses, governments and citizens must do their part to reduce food waste”.

The state of the world in food waste

In our country, 7.7 million tons of food is thrown away annually. While the natural resources are rapidly consuming in the world; humanity is in artificial abundance. Turkey uses an already serious problem of drought for the production of food will not be eaten alive while 25% of clean water. A year, 4400 plates of food per person go to waste.

The problem of food waste, which is within the scope of Target 12.3 (Responsible Production and Consumption Substance), which is one of 2030, 17 Sustainable Development Goals, has reached a global dimension. Marcus Gover, CEO of Wrap, which conducted the research, said: “With only 9 years to go, we will not achieve SDG 12 Target 3 if we do not significantly increase investment in tackling food waste in the home globally. This must be a priority for governments, international organizations, businesses, and philanthropic foundations.”



Resource: UN Environment Programme 2021

Positive examples against food waste in Turkey

There are associations and companies on food waste in Turkey. More Food Company and Food Recovery Association are social initiatives that attempt to reduce food waste, carbon emissions by technological methods and continue their activities since 2017. Berat Inci touched on how excess foods are used. “The source of the waste should be reduced respectively, the surplus product should be brought to people; animal feed should be made, if it is not suitable for animal feed, industrial (biogas and similar recoveries) use and composting can be done. **But in Turkey, 98% of discarded food that the last step being considered waste landfill/incineration is the way it is used.**

In our interview with Berat İnci, founding partner of the More Food Company and Chairman of the Board of the Food Rescue Association,

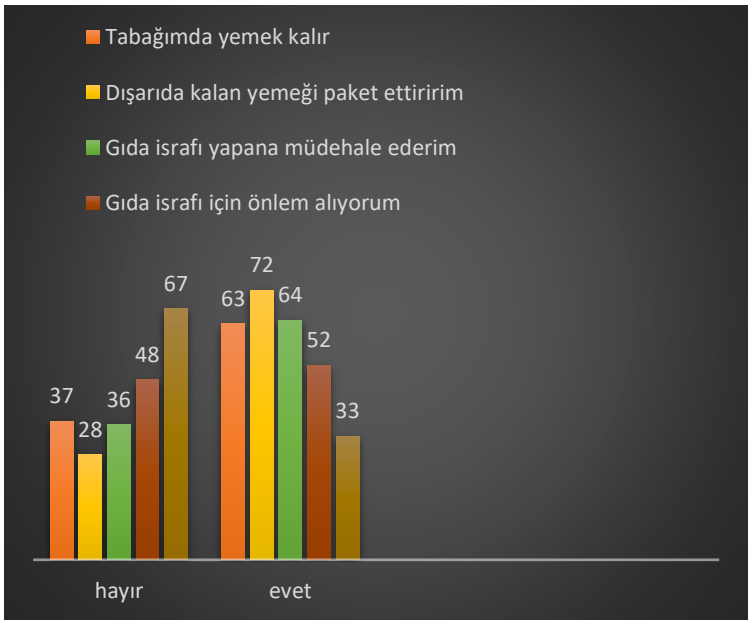
The Food Index report says 45% of food waste is done without entering a home. This points to the waste of food services, markets, and restaurants. Berat İnci stated," for this reason, they first started their work from this field". We interviewed Ozan Belkıs, the owner of the hotel and restaurant on this issue.

He cited measures taken against food waste in his hotels as: "The exact listing and reporting of all unused, discarded and spoiled products or materials before disposal. Especially care for proper storage of food materials. Discriminating and sorting for garbage". Besides, he emphasized that the sensitivity to waste recovery is primarily due to an economic necessity, so if there is leakage in waste, it is mostly caused by lack of training.

Restaurant owner Ozan Belkis

In our interview with Şükran Nurlu, head of climate change and Environmental Control Protection Department of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality about zero waste stated that "they are planning a project to make compost from food waste collected from institutions and organizations in the city". Berat İnci emphasized, "Izmir is one of the places where food waste is most intense, so this region needs all kinds of projects". He added that "Izmir and its surroundings are a very important geography for food production and mobility, and it has a strategic importance to this conversation,"

The United Nations Food Waste Report found that 60% of the food entering the house was thrown away. However, individual awareness is very important. According to our survey to measure food waste attitudes and behaviors of food waste, 37% of respondents, is left on your plate; 72% remaining on the food package was dining out; 36% it doesn't interfere with people who waste food around, and 48% stated that they do not take effective measures in their lives to prevent food waste.



Food waste survey results

The Easiest Way to Become an Environmental Hero

A statement by Şükran Nurlu showed where we should start to solve this problem; "We have to live like our grandmothers". Grandparents know very well how to live economically. We should say stop today's waste by taking examples from previous generations and heed our conscience. Unless we re-shape our usual movements by thinking, we can easily become the savior of our environment, our food.

- We should not fall into the traps that the manufacturing companies have prepared for us. We must determine the products we need in advance.
- Shopping baskets have grown by 20% in the last 15 years. To avoid shopping too much, we can carry the products in hand or handbasket.
- We can prioritize perishable or near-expiry foods at home and plan a meal according to the ingredients at home. We can pickle or dry excess vegetables and fruits.
- Seeds, stems, and shells are not garbage; we can add them to our meals and sauces

We can reduce our portions. Using just 10% smaller plates reduces waste by 26%, according to a study in Denmark. Most importantly, by sharing our food, we can make the world a better place.

Today, serious food waste is taking place. To prevent this, we must prevent the creation of non-consumable products. While every 3 food was thrown away; For the sake of environmental, social, and financial benefits, we must state our demand with correct regulations, increase awareness, and support non-governmental organizations. The problem can only be avoided if it can be measured in full size. As a citizen and young spokesperson of the future, we invite everyone to be aware of food waste and take action.

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