

# Preventing Food Waste

Did you know that the Town of Killingworth spends \$131 to properly dispose of one ton of waste? This comes directly from our tax dollars. Waste from Killingworth gets incinerated at a trash-to-energy plant. If you've ever had a bonfire at home, you know it's easier to burn dry things than wet things. The same is true of our trash. Food scraps are high in water and are therefore harder to burn. In turn, we get less energy recovery from burning food scraps.



<https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/wasted-food-scale>

What can we do to decrease the amount of food that we throw away? In the graphic, the EPA has summarized a few strategies to decrease food waste. I wanted to talk today about the PREVENT strategy.

One thing I have been enjoying with my family is making a weekly grocery list. At first, I saw this as a tedious chore – it's hard to plan for a nutritious and affordable menu for diverse palettes! But, it's a muscle that one can build – the more you use it, the better you get. Making a grocery list is a good habit for keeping spending in your control at the grocery store – no impulse buys! It also helps reduce food waste because there is a purpose for each product that you buy.

Have a week that you loved every recipe? Keep the menu in a folder for a few months down the line.

Made too much? Freeze single-portions of a meal the day you make it for the best taste when you thaw it later.

Store doesn't have a key ingredient? Learn how to improvise with similar products – and have fun experimenting.

Understand those dates on your food packaging! USDA guidelines state that Use-By/Sell-By dates refer to the timespan when a product is at its best flavor or quality, not when it becomes unsafe to consume. Many people throw out perfectly good food that's gone past the "use-by" date even though it's not spoiled or stale. Only when food has developed "spoilage characteristics," such as off-odor, -flavor, or -texture, should it be disposed of for safety reasons. See the attached image for more information.

Is your freezer, fridge, or pantry full, but your creativity empty? Use a tool like "recipiekey.com" to find some new dishes using products you already have.

Embrace leftover night! Chili gets better with age. Enjoy the extra moments not spent cooking.

Of course, if you do have un-stomach-able leftovers, moldy cheese, failed culinary experiments, or chicken wing bones from the football-watching party, you can bring them to the Transfer Station FOR FREE RECYCLING in the Blue Earth blue bins. These bins accept more products than you may put in your compost bin at home, including bones, shellfish scraps, and dairy products.

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## Food Code Guidelines

This table provides guidance on how to use the dates on food packaging. Use your best judgment and senses of sight, smell, feel, and taste to determine if the food is edible. However, remember that many foodborne pathogens cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled. When in doubt, throw it out!

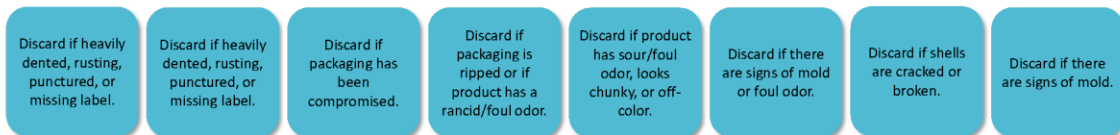
### Product



### Guideline - Quality



### Guideline - Physical



The only food item regulated by the Federal Government for safety and quality is infant formula.