

Wasted Food Solutions: Spotlights from New Haven



Why Wasted Food Matters

Food makes up over 20% of all waste disposed in Connecticut and represents the single biggest opportunity when it comes to diverting waste from disposal. The state is working to expand organics collection and processing infrastructure, and since 2015, the Center for EcoTechnology (CET) has helped bolster activity by working with commercial businesses to implement strategies to reduce wasted food. This work is possible thanks to strong partnerships with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), other government agencies, non-profits, sponsors like the U.S. EPA, and the food rescue organizations, haulers, and processors that bring the marketplace to life.

Beecher Road Elementary

Beecher Road Elementary School in Woodbridge is a model for sustainable wasted food management in schools. In 2019, with support from CET, and a contingent of parents and staff, including the principal, teachers, nutrition services, and custodians, the school began donating edible surplus and diverting food scraps to anaerobic digestion. Combined, they are helping feed over 3,500 people and preventing nearly 7 tons of food from disposal per year.

“To be honest, I was skeptical at first but food waste diversion was so inexpensive to set up, and the kids quickly learned to separate edible food and food scraps from other waste. I’m so glad we’ve implemented this program because of its environmental impacts.”

- Jane Roddy, Kitchen Manager



ShopRite of Milford

The ShopRite of Milford, owned and operated by Harry and Ann Garafalo, is an inspiring example of thoughtful food waste management practices yielding enormous value to the local community. In 2019, the store donated over 10 tons of food, the equivalent of 17,500 meals, to the Connecticut Food Bank and other local food pantries. They also donate bakery goods to vulnerable families through partnerships with Beth-el Shelter and other local church programs. In addition, ShopRite of Milford donates produce to the Council of Churches in Bridgeport's FEED program, which provides culinary training to urban residents for future food service employment opportunities.

The remaining food waste that isn't edible gets diverted from disposal. In 2019, the store diverted over 26 tons of meat, fat, and bones. The protein is used as animal feed, and a local vendor collects rendered fat. Ultimately, the fat is converted into renewable boiler fuel. Spoiled produce and other scraps are diverted to compost at a rate of about 10 tons per year.

"One of the defining aspects of our culture at the ShopRite of Milford is supporting our local community and helping our neighbors in need. That commitment includes fighting hunger and improving our environment to make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family. This is true not only at the ShopRite of Milford, but at every ShopRite store."

- Harry Garafalo, Owner

Get Started

Start with prevention: Check out CET's [Source Reduction Guidance](#) to learn how your business can start reducing wasted food.

Stay informed: CET's [Wasted Food Solutions website](#) includes details on the CT Commercial Organics Recycling Law and state-specific information on [liability protections](#), [tax incentives](#), and [protocols](#) for feeding food scraps to animals, prepared by Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic.

Donate edible surplus food: Learn best practices with CET's [Food Donation Guidance](#).

Recover edible food from schools: CET developed a [donation guide for Connecticut schools](#) that clarifies rules and regulations for share tables and external donation. The CT DEEP, Department of Public Health, Department of Education, and Department of Agriculture all contributed to and approved the guidelines.

Connect with local food rescue organizations: [Foodshare](#), [Connecticut Food Bank](#), [Haven's Harvest](#), and [Food Rescue US](#).

Pledge your commitment: [EPA's Food Recovery Challenge](#) is a program where participants pledge to prevent and divert wasted food in their operations. Participants may receive awards for their efforts!

Feeling moved to act? Contact [CET's Wasted Food Solutions hotline](#) to access free virtual or on-site technical assistance.

wastedfood.cetonline.org

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