



10 Minutes For The Planet

A Shameful Waste part 1: And People Still Go Hungry ©

by Sarah Heath and Catherine Balter-Kendall

Stressed syllables are underlined and in **bold**.*

Hello! I'm Sarah Heath and you're listening to 10 Minutes for the Planet on EnglishWaves.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture **Organisation** has put an estimate on the number of people worldwide who go hungry: out of a global population of around 7.6 billion, 815 million are suffering from **starvation** or chronic **undernourishment**. That means 10.7% of all those living on our planet are **going without** regular food - the vast **majority** of whom live in **developing countries**. **Shamefully** for those who govern western **societies**, there are around 11 million who live in these so-called **developed nations** who are **nevertheless** also going hungry.

Which makes the fact that the **staggering** amount of food lost or **wasted** each year – **approximately** 1.3 billion tonnes – all the more scandalous and immoral. This food waste equates to €2.3 trillion every single year and is enough to feed those 815 million starving people four times over! If this food were not wasted, world hunger would be a thing of the past.

Not only is this obscene amount of food wasted, so is the energy to produce it, package it and transport it. If food waste were to be transposed into a country, it would be the third largest carbon polluter on planet Earth.

The World Resources Institute has **compiled a study** on the differences in how food is wasted in different countries and there is a **striking** difference between those on opposite ends of the **income scale**. They **calculated** that in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, 83% of food waste occurs during production, **handling** and storage, and processing with just 5% being wasted by consumers. However, in North America, 32% is lost during earlier stages of production while a **huge** 61% is wasted by consumers.

In France, the statistics are also a cause for concern: the French

starvation (n.) severe lack of food

undernourishment (n.)
malnutrition

to go without (n.) to not have

developing countries (n.)
countries in the process of
developing

shamefully (adv.) acting in a
manner deserving blame

developed nations (n.)
industrialized countries

staggering (adj.) shockingly high

wasted (adj.) discarded, thrown
away

to compile a study (exp.) to do
research

striking (adj.) large, noticeable

income scale (n.n.) range of
salary or revenue

handling (n.) packaging and
labeling

population squanders just over 100 kilos of food per person every year according to a report by the Barilla Centre for Food and Nutrition. This figure is however, **dwarfed** by the stats in the US which are almost double that, at just under 200 kilos per person per annum.

The French Agency for the **Environment** and Energy (ADEME), has revealed that 10 million tons of food is wasted here in France each year at a cost of €16 billion. This has a **knock on environmental** impact – wasted food emits 15.3 million tonnes of CO2 which is a third of France's total CO2 emissions.

So why is so much food being thrown in the bin by consumers in first-world countries? There are several **contributory** factors. One entirely **superficial** reason is that produce is too **ugly**! Aesthetic standards for fresh fruit and vegetables, as specified by EU law until 2009, meant that almost half of fruit and vegetable crops were **deemed** too visually **unappealing** and thus discarded. While this law is no longer in place, supermarket chains have continued to insist on the same requirements meaning produce is still being wasted.

Another key reason is **misleading information** on **sell-by** and **best before dates**. In the EU these are **arbitrarily** set by the manufacturers themselves and are largely **meaningless** being a “**guesstimate**” of how long the produce should last. The **European** Commission has estimated that of the 88 million tons of food waste in the EU, 10% is entirely **down to** date labelling which results in consumers throwing away perfectly edible food.

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huge (adj.) very large

to squander (vb.) to waste

dwarfed (adj.) made to look very small in comparison

knock on (adj.) with an inevitable though indirect consequence

ugly (adj.) horrible to look at

deemed (adj.) considered

unappealing (adj.) not attractive

misleading (adj.) leading to confusion

sell-by date (exp.) date by which a perishable product should be sold

best before date (exp.) date after which a product loses its optimal quality

guesstimate (n.) (guessed estimate) an estimate based on guesswork and calculation

***Tip!**

Four syllable words may have their main stress on the first syllable:

calculated, estimated,

second syllable:

majority, societies, environment,

third syllable:

population, superficial, information, European,

or (rarely) the final syllable: **nevertheless**

Word stress may shift in words coming from the same root depending on the number of syllables: **environment, environmental**

