

# The WI Food Waste Weekend of Action 19th –21st May:

## Discussion guide



### About this discussion guide

Thank you for taking part in the WI's Food Waste Weekend of Action on 19th—21st May.

This document is intended to be used as a discussion guide which you can use to inform your meeting with your supermarket manager, local media, or other interested parties.

It sets out some background to the Food Matters campaign, how you might go about arranging to meet your supermarket manager and publicising your weekend of action, as well as some common questions and queries you might be asked about the campaign. It should be used in conjunction with the WI Food Waste Manifesto and the Food Matters campaign action pack which has more details about the campaign aims. You can also find a press release on the WI website that you can use to promote your weekend of action with local media.

For further information, please contact Mary Roberts on [m.roberts@nfwi.org.uk](mailto:m.roberts@nfwi.org.uk) or telephone 0207 371 9300, ext 243.



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### The WI's Food Matters campaign

The Food Matters campaign was launched following the 'Avoid food waste, address food poverty' resolution which was passed at the WIs 2016 Annual Meeting. The resolution calls on supermarkets to sign up to a voluntary agreement to tackle food waste and to pass on surplus food to food charities.

The first part of the Food Matters campaign saw more than 5000 WI members take part in surveys about common supermarket practices, such as multi-buy deals, multipacks and date labelling, and how they feel these impact on the amount of food that is wasted in the home. Members also surveyed almost 1000 supermarkets to find out how commonplace these retail practices are on the shelves.

### What are we asking supermarkets to do?

The WI believes that supermarkets can play a much more positive role in helping customers reduce food waste in the home. Whilst supermarkets often tell you that they are only responsible for a fraction of overall food waste, our survey found that their marketing and buying practices are having a huge influence on how we buy, use, consume, and ultimately waste, food.

### The WI has set out four actions that retailers can take to help reduce food waste:

#### 1. Practices which encourage overbuying must stop

Practices which encourage overbuying, such as multi-buys and multipacks are endemic in supermarkets. This can lead to food waste in the home and must stop.

#### 2. Customers need more time to consume a product at home

Confusing date and 'once-opened' labels can mean consumers are throwing food out prematurely. Supermarkets can improve practices to stop this from happening.

#### 3. Wonky fruit and veg should be sold as standard

Fruit and veg is often graded out because it is too 'wonky' causing waste at supply level. Supermarkets need to relax their grading standards and supply wonky fruit and veg.

#### 4. Supermarkets need to be transparent on food waste

So far only Tesco has published detailed food waste statistics, and Sainsbury's has published top-line data. A lack of data means it is difficult to see how supermarkets are making progress.

# How to take part

## Organising your meeting

It is best to write to the manager of your local supermarket ahead of the event, explaining about the WI's Food Matters campaign and Weekend of Action, and asking if she / he are available for a face to face meeting. Suggest a couple of dates and times and make clear you are happy to visit them. You or your WI may already shop at your chosen supermarkets or have links with the manager, be sure to highlight any contact you have, particularly if it is positive.

If you haven't heard back regarding your request, you could always phone or visit the supermarket before the Weekend of Action to invite them to a face to face meeting. Ideally ask to speak to the manager to arrange this, if the manager is not available, ask to speak to the deputy manager, or leave a message with customer services.

If you haven't had any contact with the Manager before the Weekend of Action, or they refuse a meeting with you, you could write to them enclosing the Manifesto and a copy of our report. If you feel comfortable doing so, you could also drop the Manifesto off at the supermarket in person.

There may be other supermarkets local to you who would be happy to meet with you to discuss the Manifesto. If so, you could let your local supermarket know that other supermarkets in the area have been receptive to your concerns.



## Publicising your meeting to the media

Collectively, local media can be a really powerful way of getting a campaign message to a large number of people. Whilst you can invite a journalist along to the event, bear in mind that they will be very busy; providing them with a press release and high quality photos that they can reproduce is your best bet to get coverage.

You can find a template press release on the *Food Matters* pages of the WI website. This can be sent to your local media outlets to publicise your event and manifesto recommendations, but make sure you tailor it to your event.

Providing the media with a 'hook' can help ensure you get media coverage – this could be some kind of stunt such as a collage made from wonky fruit and veg, or the presence of a well-known local personality supporting the campaign.

Make sure you include all key details about the event in your press release. Explain in your correspondence that photos of the event will be available for the media to use, and provide details of a spokesperson who can provide a quote as well as an interview.

They may also decide to send their own photographer so provide a date, time, location and contact number to make sure that they don't miss you.

You can find out the names of your newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations from websites like [www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk](http://www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk), which provide lists of regional weekly and daily newspapers and their telephone numbers. Give them a call and ask which journalists cover your area and make sure you get their name and contact details. You may have a contact in your local paper who you can send the press release to, but it's always a good idea to send the press release to the general news desk address too. This can usually be found in the front of the paper or relevant website.

If the local supermarket has explicitly refused to meet with you to discuss the Manifesto, you may want to diplomatically mention this in your press release. Remember, the manifesto recommendations have been developed with the aim of reducing food waste, and as a first step to do this, supermarkets need to engage with their customers on this issue.

Finally, don't forget to send your press release to the local radio station, news channel or any online news provider who may be interested in your story.

Remember to let your supermarket know if media will be coming along on the day.



## Attending the meeting

You've secured your meeting, the press have said they are interested, what do you do now?

1. Plan what you're going to say, and who will say what. Appoint a spokesperson to lead the discussion. They can outline the main points of interest and ensure that the key issues are covered. Allocate each person attending a different area to speak on – for example one person might speak about the wonky fruit and veg findings, another on multipacks and multi-buys. The spokesperson can refer to the correct person for any specific questions if necessary.
2. Ideally try and limit the number of people attending the meeting to about three or four; this will stop the supermarket manager from feeling overwhelmed and will mean that people are less likely to talk over one another. It will also give you a better opportunity to get your point across.
3. Try to emphasise the key messages of the manifesto outlined at the beginning of this guide. Don't forget to ask the manager to escalate your concerns to the supermarket head office and to feedback on how they're going to address them.
4. Make sure you get a photo of you with the supermarket manager and the Manifesto (we have printed this in A3 so it should come up really clearly in any pictures!). If you're taking the photo yourself, find a well-lit area and use a digital camera if possible, the clearer the picture, the better. Take a selection of photos, including some close ups, group and individual shots. Make sure you have everyone's names if you're sending the photo to the press!



## Following up

1. It's a good idea to follow up the meeting with a letter thanking the manager for meeting with you and asking them to feedback on any response that they receive from head office.
2. Let us know what you did! Don't forget to let us know what you did and if you do receive feedback from head office, please do send this on to the NFWI so we can collate responses and see what practical action retailers have pledged.
3. We would love to receive any photos or hear about any other activities you've been involved with.

## Further action

The Weekend of Action is the first part of the *Food Matters* campaign. You can still take action following the weekend of action to publicise the aims of the Food Waste Manifesto. You could:

- Write to other supermarkets in your area asking how they're taking action, enclosing a copy of the Manifesto and asking them to escalate it to their head office.
- Publicise the Manifesto and its campaign aims through other events you have coming up – you may have a stall at the local county or agricultural show, for example.
- Get in touch with us regarding follow-up work to the *Food Matters* campaign, as well as our forthcoming work on food poverty; we will be asking members to organise debates in their communities to discuss this important issue.





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