

# INTRODUCTION

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the National Food Waste and Rescue Report. First published in 2015 by Leket Israel and BDO, the Report is now in its third edition in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and its sixth in partnership with the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

The current edition includes a special, in-depth chapter exploring the implications of food waste and rescue over the past decade. In that time, the Israeli economy has sustained food losses valued at a cumulative NIS 211b (USD \$57B) – excluding the additional environmental and health-related costs, which have also grown significantly. Although Israeli consumers are wasting less food – reflected in a 13.3% decrease in per capita food loss, from 300 to 260 kg annually – the combined impact of rising living costs and population growth has kept the overall volume and value of food loss alarmingly high. The total cost of food loss and waste, including its environmental and health repercussions, continues to climb, further deepening the economic toll on the national economy.

The past decade has been marked by significant events that have underscored the many benefits of food rescue, particularly its contribution to strengthening food security as a core component of national resilience. The Swords of Iron war disrupted agriculture in both the north and south of the country, increasing national food loss and undermining food security. However, thanks to the swift mobilization of volunteers involved in food rescue efforts, some of the damage was effectively mitigated. The COVID-19 pandemic also had a lasting impact on food purchasing, consumption, and waste patterns, accelerating the shift to online shopping and remote work – trends that continue to influence behavior today. Taken together, these events highlight the vital role of reducing food loss and expanding food rescue in bolstering social and national resilience, both in times of stability and in emergencies.

According to estimates presented in the Report, in 2024 alone, the total volume of food loss in Israel reached 2.6m tons, with an economic value of approximately NIS 26.2b (USD \$7B). This loss represents about 39% of the country's total

food production. Of this amount, over 1.2m tons, worth an estimated NIS 9.9b (USD \$2.7b), were edible and potentially rescuable food.

In Israel, where food prices are relatively high by international standards, food loss is a major factor contributing to the cost of living. It affects household expenses directly, through excessive spending on food, and indirectly, by driving up food prices. The Report estimates that in 2024, the impact of food loss on household food consumption added an average cost of NIS 10,785 (USD \$2,900), per household.

In addition, the climate crisis and the Israeli government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions highlight the need to reduce food loss and waste and expand food rescue as strategic policy tools. Preventing food waste and rescuing surplus food are essential economic and environmental measures in support of Government Resolution 171, issued July 2021, which aims to reduce landfilled waste by 71% by 2030. According to the Report, in 2024, an estimated 2m tons of food and packaging waste were discarded, a volume that contributed to significant environmental harm, with the associated damage valued at around NIS 4.2b (USD \$1.1b).

The Report's findings underscore the strong economic, social, and environmental case for investing in food rescue. For every shekel invested, food valued at NIS 3.6 is directly recovered. When the environmental benefits of avoiding the production, transportation, and distribution of wasted food are taken into account, the return increases to NIS 4.2 per shekel at the national level. Including the health benefits of providing nutritious food to underserved populations, the total economic value to the national economy rises to NIS 10.7 for every shekel invested in food rescue.

Since this Report was first published, we have consistently presented recommendations addressing the regulatory, economic, and policy dimensions of food rescue in Israel. Looking back, we are pleased to see that many of these recommendations have been implemented over the years.

A major milestone came in September 2025, with the launch

of a national plan to reduce food loss and waste, led by the Ministry of Environmental Protection in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture. A dedicated chapter on this topic was also included in the National Food Security Program. For the first time, Israel has a comprehensive government-backed strategy, complete with clear targets and recommended policy tools to address the issue at a national level. The task now is for the government to ensure the plan is funded and effectively implemented, so that these important recommendations can be translated into meaningful action.

We hope this Report will continue to inform public dialogue on food loss and waste and serve as a practical resource for driving national policy forward, ultimately helping to bring about real change in food loss and rescue patterns across Israel.



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