



CHEFS FOR CHANGE GHANA FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE 2013 GHANA FOOD WASTAGE REPORT

THEME: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FOOD WASTAGE IN GHANA

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INTRODUCTION.

Food is the basic sustainer of life and simply too good to waste. Even the most sustainably farmed food does us no good if the food is never eaten. Getting food to our tables eats up over 15 percent of the total annual budget of Ghana and in 2013; we spent a total of \$1.5 billion on the importation of consumables to complement local productions. The Government of Ghana over the years has been developing strategies to improve agricultural production and make the country a self-sufficient nation however importation of food produce has been increasing over the years with the vast majority of the population relying on food imports. Even though the local production and importation of some food commodities in Ghana does not meet the national demand, Yet over 35% percent of food in Ghana today goes uneaten. **This does not only mean that Ghanaians are throwing out the equivalent of \$8.9 billion each year, but also the uneaten food ends up rotting in landfills as the single largest component of Ghana's solid waste where it accounts for a large portion of methane emissions. Reducing food losses by just 15 percent would be enough food to feed more than 7 million Ghanaians every year at a time when one in six Ghanaians lack a secure supply of food to their tables. Increasing the efficiency of our food system is a triple bottom-line solution that requires collaborative efforts by businesses, government and consumers.**

The motivation for the present study is to quantify in a comprehensive manner, for the first time, the annual economic impact of the food wasted in Ghana using the 2013 Ministry of Food and Agricultural progress report data and other related studies carried out globally. This is important given the current position of Ghana's economy, our over dependence of food imports, the rapid growth of our catering, hospitality and shopping industry. Given all the resources demanded for food production, it is critical to make sure that the least amount possible is needlessly squandered on its journey to our plates. This paper examines the economic impact and inefficiencies in Ghana's food system. By identifying food losses at every level of the food supply chain, this report provides the latest recommendations and examples of emerging solutions, such as having an all year round availability of food ingredients at affordable prices and feeding of surplus foods to less privileged citizens. By increasing the efficiency of our food system, we can make better use of our natural resources, provide financial saving opportunities along the entire supply chain, and enhance our ability to meet food demand.



The average Ghanaian consumer especially those in urban areas wastes 10 times as much food as someone in Asia, up 50 percent from Ghanaians in the 1970s, a time when we faced a food insecurity due to prolonged drought. This means there was once a time when we wasted far less, and we can get back there again. Doing so will ultimately require a suite of coordinated solutions, including changes in supply-chain operation, enhanced market incentives, increased public awareness and adjustments in consumer behavior.

Table 1.1 2013 Domestic food supply and demand of major food crops in Ghana

CROP	Total domestic production(M T)	Production Available for Human Consumption(MT)	Estimated National Human Consumption(MT)	Deficit/Surplus(MT)
Maize	1,817,000	1,163,000	1,195,000	109,000
Rice Milled	411,000	637,000	637,000	-279.53,000
Millet	179,000	133,000	133,000	23,000
Sorghum	277,000	133,000	133,000	109,000
Yam	7,260,000	3,318,000	1,328,000	2,491,000
Cassava	16,116,000	4,058,000	4,089,000	7,223,000
Cocoyam	1,268,000	1,062,000	1,009,000	143,000
Plantain	3,565,000	2,251,000	2,257,000	779,000
G'nut	475,000	319,000	319,000	109,000
Cowpea	206,000	133,000	133,000	43,000
Soyabean	153,000	53,000	53,000	77,000

Source: **MOFA**

Ghana's total fish requirement for the year 2013 was estimated to be 1,062,194 mt however, only a total of 434,120.32mt was produced from all sources including marine, inland and aquaculture. The production trend shows that total fish production in 2013 decreased by 5% compared to 2012. Further analysis shows that total fish imports into Ghana for year 2013 was 150,700.61mt valued at US\$135,118,500.77. Total fish availability therefore was 584,820.93 mt representing 55% self sufficiency of the country's annual fish requirement in 2013. This indicates that a margin of 45% of the country's annual fish requirement could not be met. However 903.8mt of the total fish availability was wasted amounting to 1.4million dollars.

Food wastage has become a global phenomenon that demands urgent solutions globally. Ghana and the African continent can learn from work that is already under way in Europe. Both the United Kingdom

and the European Union have conducted research to better understand the causes of food wastage and identify potential solutions. In January 2012, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to reduce food waste by 50 percent by 2020 and designated 2014 as the “European year against food waste.”

An extensive U.K. public awareness campaign called “Love Food Hate Waste” has been conducted over the past five years and 53 of the leading food retailers and brands there have adopted a resolution to reduce waste in their own operations, as well as upstream and downstream in the supply chain. Gains can be made quickly. In just five years, avoidable household food waste in the United Kingdom has been reduced 18 percent.

The complexity of the issue cannot be ignored. At the heart are two basic realities that must be acknowledged upfront. The first is that since the early 1990’s there has been a rapid increase of foreign recipes within the country, now most Ghanaians prefer foreign recipes especially American, European and Mediterranean recipes. This trend has increase Ghana’s annual importation of foreign food ingredients. This is evident with the springing up of food service operators and grocery shops across the country.

Secondly, there is the plain economic truth that the more food consumers waste, the more those in the food industry are able to sell. This is true throughout the supply chain where waste downstream translates to higher sales for anyone upstream.

Overcoming these challenges as well as the other drivers of food waste discussed in this document will require all hands on deck from the Ghanaian government to consumers and businesses. It will also require raising the priority of reducing food waste to the significant level it merits. The time to act is now. In fact, a recent report by a consulting firm McKinsey ranks reducing food waste as one of the top three opportunities to improve resource productivity.

Key prospects for change agents include:

- ❖ Government and agencies should as a matter of urgency conduct a comprehensive study for food losses and wastage in our food system and establish national goals for food waste reduction.
- ❖ One key action will be to standardize and clarify the meaning of date labels on food so that consumers stop throwing out items due to misinterpretation. A waste reduction organization in the United Kingdom has estimated this type of clarification could prevent about 20 percent of wasted food in households.
- ❖ Local governments should lead by setting targets and implementing food waste prevention campaigns in their jurisdictions as well as their own operations. One key opportunity for this is education alongside municipal waste management.
- ❖ Businesses should start by understanding the extent and opportunity of their own waste streams and adopt best practices. For example, Stop and Shop in the US was able to save an estimated \$100 million annually after an analysis of freshness, shrink, and customer satisfaction in their perishables department.

- ❖ Ghanaians can help reduce waste by learning when food goes bad, buying imperfect produce, and storing and cooking food with an eye to reducing waste. Increasing the efficiency of Ghana's food system is a bottom-line solution that requires a collective approach by decision-makers at every level in the supply chain.
- ❖ Investing in these food waste reduction strategies, together we can reap the tremendous social benefits of alleviating hunger, the environmental benefits of efficient resource use, and the financial benefits of significant cost savings.

FACTS AND FIGURES ON FOOD WASTAGE IN GHANA.

-Ghana in 2013 imported over 45% food commodities amounting over \$ 1.5billion to compliment local food production and demand.

-Ghana's major food staple which was known to be maize and cassava has been taken over by rice and chicken. Rice and chicken recipes is served in 1 out of every 3 occasions in Ghana.

-Ghana in 2013 lost 8.9 billion dollars to both avoidable and unavoidable food wastage with the highest wastage occurring within the distribution and consumer level of our food supply chain. With population increase we will need to increase our food production by 100% to meet the demand of Ghanaians by 2018.

-Currently over 45% of the food produced and imported in Ghana is wasted along the food supply chain. If left unchecked, Ghana will be losing over \$50 billion dollars by 2018 and this will have effects on our economy. Food imports in Ghana keep increasing at a rate of 10% annually.

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