

How food waste affects environment

EDITOR: Food waste might seem harmless at first glance — a forgotten tomato in the fridge, leftovers tossed after a party, produce lost in transit.

Yet the journey of food from farm to plate is long and resource-intensive, and when food is wasted, everything invested in getting it to us is wasted too.

Food waste refers to food intended for human consumption that is lost or discarded along the supply chain — from the farm to the market to our households. Once food reaches a landfill, it decomposes without oxygen and releases methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Methane traps heat for roughly 12 years, accelerating global warming.

Researchers estimate that improving global food waste management could reduce 11% of greenhouse gas emissions — a staggering number for something as preventable as uneaten food.

Food waste also strains our land resources. Agriculture uses 11.5 million hectares of the world's land surface. That includes arable land and non-arable land.

As we approach the festive season — a time known for abundance— let us embrace responsible consumption. By planning meals carefully, sharing surplus food, storing food properly, and supporting food recovery initiatives, we can collectively reduce our ecological footprint. Food waste is not simply a household issue it is a global environmental challenge.

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