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Roughly one quarter of the calories and one third of the mass of the world’s food crops are wasted. This waste happens in each phase of our food’s journey from farm to fork (or trash bin). When combined, though, the world wastes enough calories to feed 1.9 billion more people the diet the World Health Organization says is needed to be healthy and satisfied.

The term “food loss” usually refers to a failure of infrastructure and systems in the supply chain that reduces the mass or nutritional value of food, such as lack of refrigeration and storage, logistics, insufficient training, or poor access to markets. “Food waste,” on the other hand, happens mostly because our behavior and conditions in our homes, institutions, restaurants, and grocery stores cause edible food to be discarded or to spoil. In this report though, we use “waste” for simplicity, but we discuss aspects of food loss throughout.