**By Beth Gardiner**

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LONDON — Chinese diners are posting pictures of empty plates online, urging friends not to order more than they can eat. South Korea is charging for garbage removal by weight in hopes of persuading families to discard less food. Massachusetts is barring large businesses from sending kitchen waste to landfills, and British supermarkets are improving labels and packaging so that customers throw out less of what they buy.

Around the world, food waste is increasingly seen as a serious environmental and economic issue. With many families on tight budgets and the global population growing every year, there is increasing awareness of the resources squandered to produce food that is never eaten. Businesses, governments and activists are working to get more of what is grown onto tables, and less into garbage cans.

The United Nations estimates that a third of all the food produced in the world is never consumed, making for a total of about 1.3 billion tons of waste a year. In the United States alone, about 40 percent of all food, worth an estimated $165 billion, is wasted, the Natural Resources Defense Council reported in 2012.

In the developed world, the food discarded by retailers and consumers alone would be more than enough to feed the world’s 870 million hungry people, José Graziano da Silva, the director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, said last year in introducing [Think, Eat, Save](http://www.thinkeatsave.org/), an anti-waste campaign that the organization runs with the United Nations Environment Program.