

Garbage? Study challenges claim that Americans waste \$165 billion of food each year

Say you're a journalist, and you've been assigned a story about food waste. You're on a deadline, and you need some handy numbers to put a sprawling, overwhelming issue into context. Whether you're writing about [the relationship between hunger and wasted food](#), the [latest scrappy startups](#), [freegans](#), or [the trash generated by social media-induced body shame](#), odds are good that two factoids will find their way into your work: First, Americans waste about \$165 billion worth of food each year. Second, 40 percent of all food in the United States goes uneaten.

Over the past five years, journalists have repeatedly, almost reflexively reached for both stats.

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But how do we know they're true?

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A new [study](#) by researchers from the University of Minnesota's Department of Applied Economics, and published in *The American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, argues that commonly cited food waste estimates are likely to be inaccurate, incomplete, overstated, or contradictory. The biggest issue the authors point out? No one knows exactly what we mean when we use the term "food waste." It turns out that definitions differ significantly from study to study, resulting in "wildly different estimates" and, ultimately, different policy conclusions.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [We've all heard the staggering statistics about food waste. A new study says they're wrong.](#)