

PATRICK'S ESSAY: THE INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

In Europe, food waste is considered a major nutritional and environmental problem. It also detrimentally affects the stability of the whole food chain. According to a recent report, 90 million tons of food is wasted every year in European countries, on average, 180 kg per person (Europe Commission, 2011).

Food waste has many sources which include households, manufacturing, food service and retail. The European Commission (2011) estimated that the proportion of food waste at the retail stage is about 5% of total food depletion in the EU, accounting for approximately 4.4 million tons of food. Food waste has several extensive yet harmful effects on food security, food quality, and also food safety. Even economic development and the environment can be negatively impacted by food waste (Gustavsson et al, 2011). Although at the retail stage food waste may be considered small in comparison with the amount of food waste overall, it is still an issue which can lead to significant economic loss as well as environmental and social problems. However, if this waste can be recycled effectively, it can potentially have huge value economically, environmentally and socially. This essay will demonstrate this potential, by explaining the value of food waste and introducing some recycling methods.