

# Throwing It Out: Introducing a Nexus Perspective in Examining Citizen Perceptions of Organizational Food Waste in the U.S.

Bryce Hannibal



Institute for Science  
Technology and Public Policy

The Bush School of Government and Public Service  
TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY.

# Food Waste

- Recently, food waste has received increased attention thanks to social media, documentaries, and other reports.
  - 40% of food in the U.S. is wasted
  - 1.3 billion tons of edible food are waste globally each year
  - Food waste is the largest contributor to MSW
- Individual behaviors and preferences
- “reduce food waste by 50% by 2030”
  - Production, manufacturing, retail, consumers, recovery, regulation
  - Raise public awareness, education, & outreach
  - EPA Toxic Release Inventory lists the food industry as one of the top ten polluting industries for the past decade

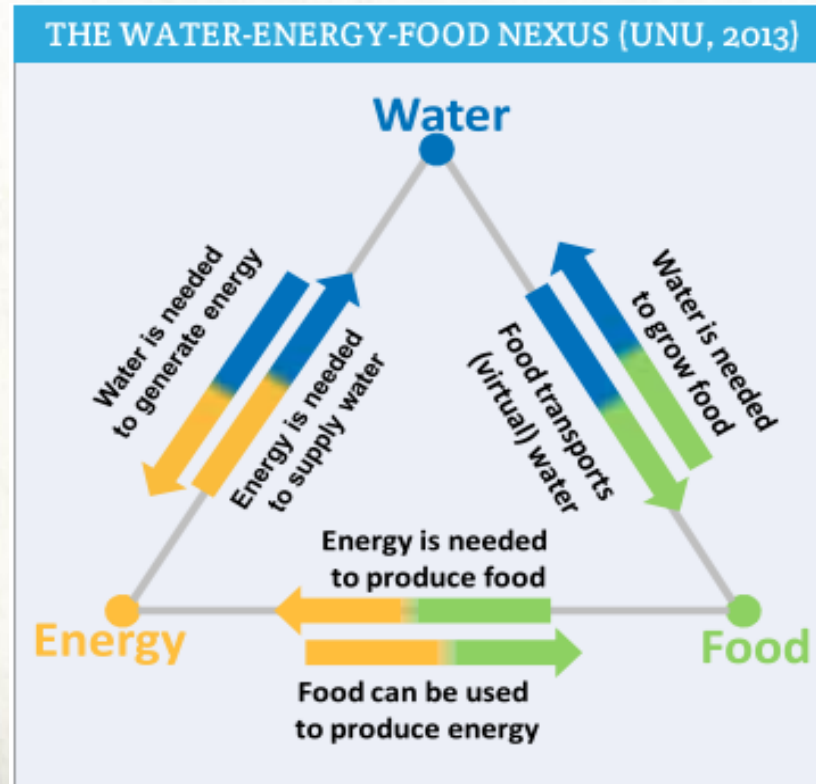


# An Organizational Problem?

- Food is wasted at every point along the supply chain
  - 150 million pounds of food from grocery stores, restaurants, and convenience stores are thrown out every day
  - “Food waste is a sign that the store is meeting quality control (cosmetic imperfections) and full-shelf standards.”
    - 12.6% of fruit, 11.6% of vegetables, 12.7% of meat, poultry, and seafood are wasted (USDA)



# Food Waste and the Nexus



# Food Waste and the Nexus

- Interrelations between W-E-F
  - Wasted food also wastes the water and energy required to grow, harvest, treat, and transport the wasted food and increases the costs of disposal.
  - 10% of U.S. energy budget is used getting food “farm to fork” and agriculture uses 80% of all freshwater consumed (NRDC)
  - The most common methods of food disposal, incineration and anaerobic digestion (landfills), are also the most energy intensive.
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- Reducing food waste by 50% will not happen if organizational waste isn't made a priority.



# Current Study

- To what extent do individuals show concern about food waste from retail organizations, and what, if anything, do they want done about it?
  - 2 gaps: nationally representative data & organizational waste
- Nationally representative survey data from August, 2015
- Dependent Variables:
  - Concern about food wasted by grocery stores, restaurants, and cafeterias
  - Policy support for additional licensing fees for organizations that do not follow a food waste reduction plan
  - Policy support for reducing food waste through construction of composting facilities



# Nexus Awareness

- To what extent are individuals aware that there are connections between food, water, and energy?
- FW index – mean of 15 survey questions
- FE index – was a mean of 7 survey questions, only 1 question used in study

# Some Results

- Concern for food waste:
  - Females, Individuals with more general environmental concern, FE nexus awareness, & FW nexus awareness show more concern for food waste
- Higher licensing fees:
  - Political liberals, Individuals with higher environmental concern, FE nexus awareness, & FW nexus awareness support policies to increase licensing fees to restaurants that do not follow an approved food waste reduction plan
- Composting facilities:
  - White non-Hispanic, Individuals with higher levels of education, environmental concern, FE nexus awareness, & FW nexus awareness support reducing food waste through construction of composting facilities



# Some Conclusions

- The importance of nexus awareness (only consistent predictors across all models)
  - Requires individuals to make the connection between the resources
- Awareness may likely reduce amounts of food waste & provide avenues for policy implementation

Thank You!

