

Ambition 2025: Unilever

Unilever has been serving the UK and Ireland for over a century. Today, Unilever brands are in more than 9 out of 10 homes. Unilever's purpose is to make sustainable living commonplace. As part of their commitments to reduce waste, Unilever is addressing food loss and waste across their value chain.

One way they are addressing food waste is by working with peers and industry partners. CEO, Alan Jope, is a member of Champions 12.3 – a global coalition of leaders dedicated to accelerating progress toward achieving UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

In the UK, Unilever are a founding signatory of WRAP's Courtauld 2025 commitment. Unilever has also signed up to the government's Step up to the Plate Pledge and are committed to using the UK Food Waste Reduction Roadmap.

Each of Unilever's manufacturing sites in the UK and Ireland has a programme in place to reduce food waste, working to move food waste generated as high up the food waste hierarchy as possible.

In 2019, more than a quarter of the food waste from Unilever's UK and Ireland factories was redistributed and used to generate biogas or sent for anaerobic digestion where it is fed into the National Grid.

Unilever's Burton factory takes in brewer's yeast, a by-product from beer production, to make Marmite. Waste from the manufacturing process goes into an on-site anaerobic digester which produces bio-gas used to fuel the boilers. This process provides 50% of the gas needed to power the Burton factory.

Their Gloucester factory makes ices brands including Magnum, Cornetto and Solero. If products do not meet quality specifications, they are recovered and reworked into other products. If this is not possible, it is sent off-site for animal feed.

In 2019, over 190 tonnes of product was redistributed to feeding people. Working closely with charity partners, Unilever redistributes products that they cannot be distributed through usual retail channels. One of their partners, Community Shop, are a social enterprise supporting local communities by giving people access to discounted food. Another partner, FareShare, saves surplus food going to waste by redistributing it to charities that turn it into meals.

Unilever's total food production in 2019 was 181,400 tonnes. Their food waste was calculated to be 5,134 tonnes, which equates to 2.8% of the food produced.

"At Unilever we've worked hard to eliminate or redistribute any food waste throughout our entire value chain, from field to fork. We're pleased with the progress we've made so far but we are committed to exploring all new options and innovations to reduce waste even further."

Jon Strachan, Head of Supply Chain, Unilever UK & Ireland

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