



Summary of Peer Review Comments on the Household Food Waste in the United States: An Evidence Scan Report

In 2025, the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) completed an evidence scan on household food waste in the United States. The purpose of this scan was to describe the volume and characteristics of current research related to household food waste to help inform future reevaluations of the USDA Food Plans. Prior to publication, the evidence scan underwent peer review by USDA nutrition scientists external to the project in a process coordinated by FNA staff.

Process

Peer Review Process for the Household Food Waste in the United States Evidence Scan

FNA staff identified potential peer reviewers through outreach to Federal scientists within USDA with an advanced degree and expertise specific to the questions being reviewed. All peer reviewers were external to the evidence scan process.

Two peer reviewers were assigned to the evidence scan, one from FNA and one from USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). The reviewers were welcome to provide feedback on any aspect of the evidence scan, but were specifically asked to:

- determine whether the evidence scan as implemented was appropriate, aligned with the protocol, and captured all relevant evidence.
- ensure that the description of evidence is clear and comprehensive.
- confirm that all important research recommendations have been identified or suggest additional research recommendations to encourage future research to inform agency programs, guidance, and/or policy.
- determine whether the correct judgement has been made as to whether the volume and characteristics of evidence identified is sufficient to conduct a rapid review.

Each reviewer was instructed to submit their comments in written form. In addition, reviewers were informed that the agency would be required to make the peer reviewers' names, affiliations, and a summary of the peer review comments available to the public, but that comments would not be attributed to a specific, named peer reviewer.

Summary

Summary of Peer Review Comments on the Household Food Waste in the United States Evidence Scan

The comments received from peer reviewers were generally positive, as peer reviewers complimented the clear writing and well-organized summary of household food waste research. Its value as a resource both for researchers and for future policy evaluations was emphasized. Most of the feedback was editorial in nature. Many of these editorial comments included suggestions to clarify terminology, study methods or characteristics, and/or provide additional information. Changes were made to the evidence scan to address these comments. Peer review comments also focused on research recommendations and evidence scan methodology, as described in more detail below:

Peer reviewer comments on research recommendations

FNA staff identified gaps and methodological limitations of the included evidence which were used to develop recommendations to strengthen future research on this topic. Peer reviewers made additional suggestions, including the need for further research on food labeling and educational campaigns, validation studies for self-reported waste, improved measurement of liquid waste, and inclusion of population-specific factors in study design. The report was updated to include these recommendations.

Peer reviewer comments on evidence scan methodology

Peer review comments characterized the evidence scan methodology as rigorous and clearly described. There were a few instances where a peer reviewer asked for additional clarification on the way data was presented, and/or suggested that FNA staff explain variations in terminology between studies included in the report. Authors

incorporated these suggestions into the evidence scan through combining categories in figures, correcting typographical errors, and improving clarity in tables and text.

Reviewers

FNA Evidence Scan Peer Reviewers

The following individuals served as peer reviewers for the Household Food Waste in the United States Evidence Scan and were identified to have expertise specific to the topics and/or methods addressed in the report.

Marlana Bates, MPH, RD

Food and Nutrition Administration, USDA

Linda Kantor, MS

Economic Research Service, USDA