HOW TO MONITOR FOOD LOSS?

A GUIDE TO NATIONAL AND EU FOOD LOSS REGISTRIES

FOLOU POLICY BRIEF D7.4

THIS POLICY BRIEF IS ADDRESSED TO

- Regional, national and European policymakers
- Public administrations
- Governments
- Other agents shaping laws, instruments, regulations and agreements.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

The EU concept of food waste only considers post-harvest/post-slaughter losses and waste. Primary production food loss is thus not addressed in the harmonised measurement methodology and reporting framework nor in the binding reduction targets recently adopted in the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC).

THE PROBLEM: A BLIND SPOT IN EU DATA

Each year, a significant amount of food is lost at the primary production stage. Recent estimates suggest that **about 40% of all food is never consumed when on-farm losses are considered**, with the farming stage alone accounting for 15.3% (WWF-UK, 2021). Yet data on the magnitude, causes and destinations of food loss in primary production remain scarce across the EU.

This is due to a lack of engagement and political commitment, often justified by the apparent complexity and cost of measurement, and to the lack of harmonised definitions, measurement methodologies and reporting requirements.



THE IMPACT – WHY IT MATTERS

Food loss has important consequences across the agri-food chain:

- **Environmental:** inefficient use of land, water, energy and other resources, avoidable greenhouse gas emissions and pressure on ecosystems.
- **Economic:** primary producers absorb labour, input and production costs without the expected return, miss sales opportunities and face handling or disposal costs.
- **Social:** the loss of edible food matters for food security and the sustainable use of available resources.

RISK: THE COST OF NOT MEASURING FOOD LOSS

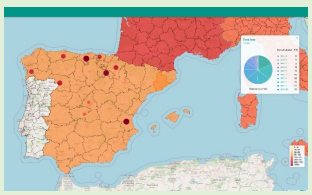
As long as food loss is not quantified systematically over time, the magnitude of these impacts and the trade-offs between them remain uncertain. Without reliable, harmonised and comparable data, public authorities cannot identify priorities, design effective prevention measures, allocate resources efficiently or monitor progress. Voluntary initiatives are useful for learning, but on their own are unlikely to provide complete, representative and durable coverage.

THE GOAL: MEASURING FOOD LOSS THE SAME WAY EVERYWHERE

The first step to reducing food loss is to **collect data through systematic and continuous quantification, followed by monitoring** at regional, national and European levels. A monitoring system sets the baseline and tracks progress over time.

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597 sets a common methodology for measuring food waste, but there is no equivalent for food loss in primary production, despite the EU commitment under SDG target 12.3. FOLOU fills this gap with the Food Loss Quantification Methodology and the Food Loss Registry.

THE FOLOU FOOD LOSS REGISTRY ENABLES:



FL Registry

Visualisation tool

- **Sizing** food losses along the food supply chain and raising public awareness of the problem.
- **Evidence-based policy:** sound strategic choices and measurable progress.
- **Action by farmers:** developing and deploying prevention and reduction actions.
- **Comparable data:** coded by activity and product (NACE/CPA) and territory (NUTS), in line with EU agricultural statistics (SAIO Regulation).

THE PATHWAY TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION

Effective monitoring needs four building blocks, each supported by a FOLOU tool.



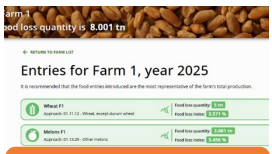
1 DEFINE

A clear, shared food loss definition, complementary to EU food waste rules (Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/1597), contained in the *FOLOU Food Loss definitional framework*.



2 MEASURE

Harmonised methods to quantify food loss, consistent with food waste measurement, using the FOLOU Quantification Manual and the Online course "*Measuring Food Loss*".



3 REPORT

National and EU Food Loss Registries (N-FLR and E-FLR) for long-term monitoring at regional, national and EU level, including a *visualisation tool*.



4 REGULATE

Include the registries in future regulations, with incentives for their use, starting with the Waste Framework Directive review (Art. 9a(8), by 31 Dec 2027).

For more information, see the complementary policy brief
D7.5 "How to measure food loss? A practical guide to measuring it on your farm"

All resources available here:

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