



Save Food. Waste less.  
Τέρμα στη σπατάλη τροφίμων!

Online survey - September 2022 (10th)

## We waste food! Do we know the cost?

Cypriot consumers still underestimate the problem of food waste, believe they waste less and have a reduced perception of the environmental costs they cause, according to the new FOOTPRINT online survey.

The 10<sup>th</sup> online food waste survey was conducted as part of the LIFE - FOODPRINT project "Awareness - raising campaign to prevent and manage food waste between customers, the food and hospitality industries" and aimed to analyse the public's views on food waste reduction habits and understanding of the food waste problem. The survey was carried out online through Dias Group websites (Sigmalive, Sportime.com.cy, I love style, City.com.cy, Check In, Economy today, MyCyprusTravel.com) during the period 30/09/2022 - 03/10/2022. The sample ranged from 1159 to 1764 people depending on the question. Since the survey is conducted online, a percentage of the participants may not be Cyprus residents and the sample of participants is random in every survey conducted. The 10<sup>th</sup> survey included 3 questions, of which the first 2 were repeated in a previous online survey in January 2021, while question 3 is new. The purpose of repeating questions is to measure potential changes in public opinion over time. The questions investigate the extent to which consumers associate the reduction of food waste with the protection of the environment and whether there is an understanding of the real size of the problem of food waste. Below is the analysis of the 3 questions and their responses. Table and Figure 1 present the results of the first question, compared to the corresponding results of the January 2021 survey.

1. Compared to other actions you can take, how important do you consider the reduction of food waste to protect the environment?

	Answer	2021	2022
A	Very important	52.7%	53.9%
B	Quite important	25.6%	16%
C	Somewhat important	9.9%	8.8%
D	Not so important	6.5%	6.1%
E	Not important	5.4%	15.1%
	<b>Total</b>	100%	100%
	<b>Number of participants</b>	943	1764



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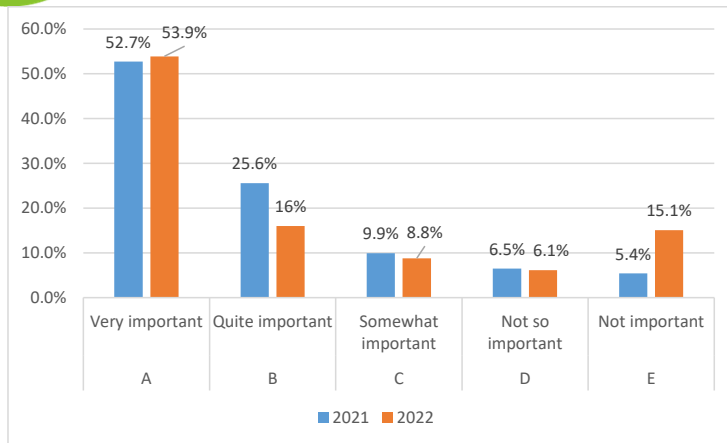


Table and Figure 1: 1<sup>st</sup> question results for 2021 and 2022

In the 2022 survey, 70% of participants consider reducing food waste very or quite important to protect the environment, while the corresponding percentage in 2021 was 78%. Comparing the results between 2021 and 2022 we see a deterioration in public opinion on the importance of reducing food waste to protect the environment. The participants who support the opposite view, i.e. that it is not important or not so important to reduce food waste for the protection of the environment has increased and is equal to 21% in 2022 and correspondingly to 12% in 2021. It is evident that there is a change in opinions, where fewer citizens believe that reducing food waste is linked to environmental protection. As has become clear from previous questionnaires, food waste and the damage it causes to the environment, is not widely understood and does not act as an important motivator for reducing food waste. Other than the loss of valuable resources used to produce food (energy, soil, water), food waste contributes significantly to the climate change problem. Based on a 2013 UN FAO study<sup>1</sup> food waste accounts for 7% of total greenhouse gas emissions. Food has an environmental footprint, not only when it biodegrades in landfills but throughout the entire food supply chain. In fact, the greatest environmental impact of food occurs at the food production stage. Therefore, preventing food waste becomes important at all stages of the food value chain.

Table and figure 2 below present the results of the second question in comparison with the corresponding results of the January 2021 survey.

<sup>1</sup> Food Wastage Footprint - Impacts on Natural Resources<sup>1</sup>. 2013. Fao.Org. <https://www.fao.org/3/i3347e/i3347e.pdf>



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2. In the average Cypriot household, 50% of waste is food waste. In your household food waste is...

Answer	2021	2022
A Less	42.7%	64.5%
B At the same level	50.5%	27.8%
C More	6.7%	7.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>1009</b>	<b>1384</b>

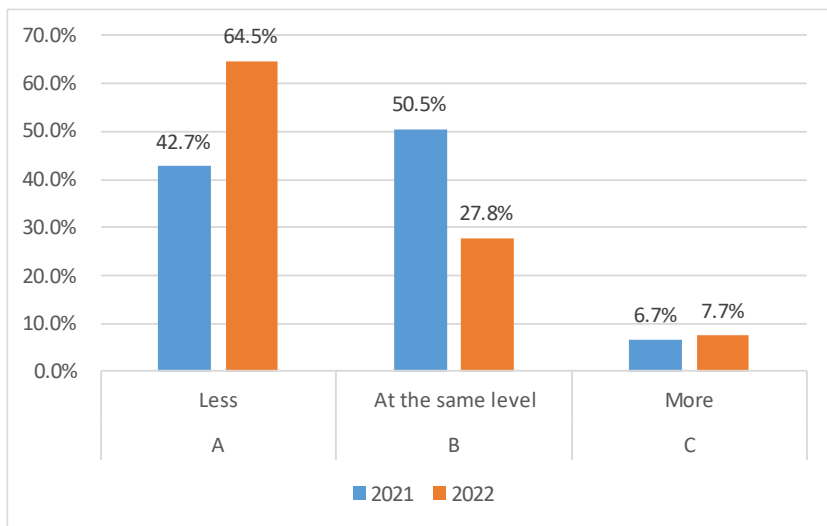


Table and Figure 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> question results for 2021 and 2022

Compared to 2021, in 2022 a significantly larger percentage of participants consider their food waste to be less than the average Cypriot household (64.5% in 2022 and 42.7% in 2021). Also, far fewer consider their food waste percentage to be the same as the average household (27.8% in 2022 and 50.5% in 2021) while those who consider it greater are at the same level between the 2 surveys (7- 8%). Our results show that the underestimation of the problem of food waste is bigger than it appeared to be in the 2021 survey



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and has significant upward trends. Most consumers consider that they waste less food than the average Cypriot household. Although it is difficult for each consumer to calculate the exact percentage of waste, the fact that the problem is underestimated affects all other parameters (such as whether they consider it an important environmental problem (question 1)), but mainly it limits the motivation to solve the problem. Similar results, however, are also found in international surveys comparing corresponding views in different countries, where in most countries consumers underestimate the magnitude of the food waste problem. The magnitude of the problem can be better understood through the use of the online food waste calculator which was created as part of the actions of this project (can be found at: <https://foodprintcy.eu/calculator/>) which allows the calculation of food waste and the indication of the potential costs they have on the environment, the society and the consumer's pocket.

Table and figure 3 below present the results of the third question. There is no comparison with previous surveys for this question.

3. Many of us, while shopping, buy more than enough to keep stocks at home that will last for some time. While shopping, do you consciously think that this might be a practice/habit causing harm to the environment?

	Answer	2022
A	Yes	28.6%
B	No	28.0%
C	I do not buy more than necessary quantities	43.5%
	<b>Total</b>	100%
	<b>Number of participants</b>	1159



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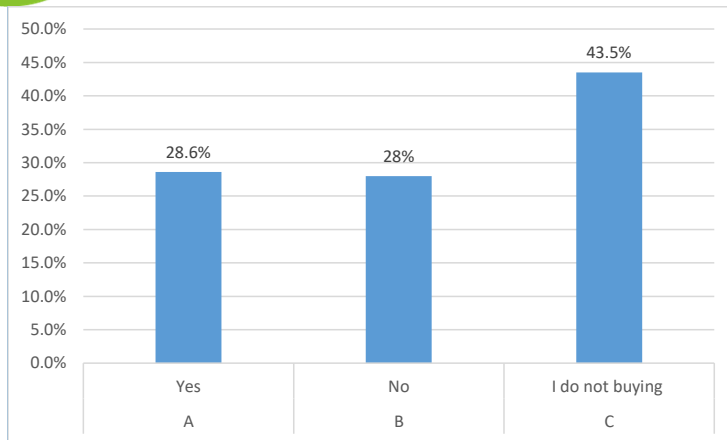


Table and Figure 3: 3<sup>rd</sup> question results for 2021 and 2022

The 3<sup>rd</sup> question investigates whether consumers associate food waste and its impact on the environment with the practice of buying more than necessary quantities of food. The main conclusion is that about half of the participants (43.5%) state that they do not buy additional quantities. This is a common opinion even though we have high rates of food waste in Cyprus (in comparison to other EU countries), a fact that may be possibly linked to the underestimation of the problem by the public. The remaining participants are divided between those who do not realize that the tactic of buying surplus food contributes to food waste and those who do. Overall, it can be concluded that a significant percentage of participants do not believe they buy more food than they need, while half of those who believe that they buy more, do not associate it with food waste. Both results are a problem for the effort to reduce food waste.

It is evident, from previous surveys, that the Cypriot consumer is used to buying more food than needed and has a preference to keep food stocks in the household. Food waste starts with what we buy, therefore changing this habit can also change the amount of food waste produced. Some good habits to follow are a) preparing the shopping list before visiting the supermarket and avoid impulse buying, b) avoid purchasing pre-packaged fruits and vegetables, buy only the quantities you need, c) avoid going to the supermarket on an empty stomach.

One of the main pillars of the communication campaigns of Life Foodprint project is the development of better habits in the food market in order to limit unnecessary purchases that create surpluses. At the same time, an effort is being made through messages and tools developed by the project to better understand the magnitude of the problem of food waste and the environmental consequences it has.



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Commented [AE1]: Change answer C in the chart to : "I do not buy more than the necessary quantities "