**Save money – reduce waste**

**The Increasing Cost of Food Waste**

Food is essential, but in recent years the cost has been steadily increasing. Poor harvests both locally and abroad mean that prices are likely to increase further. Unusual weather across the world have led to a 30% increase in the price of grain, which could impact on many other products, e.g. bread.

A recent report called ‘Hard to Stomach’ produced by the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland showed:

* 87% of consumers are worried about the cost of food
* 96% noticed an increase in food prices over the past 12 months, with 64% saying they thought food was now much more expensive

**What Can I Do?**

The Consumer Council report showed that the three biggest changes people had made to their shopping were;

* Making fewer impulse buys (34%),
* Buying less overall (29%) and;
* Planning meals more carefully to avoid waste (28%).

**Love Food Hate Waste**

For tips on reducing food waste along with recipes visit [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com). It has information on use by dates, recipes for using up leftovers and tips for smart shopping. For example:

* Did you know that if you go shopping when you’re hungry you’re more likely to buy food that you don’t need and you will spend more money?
* Checking what you have in the cupboards, fridge and freezer before you go shopping, and making a shopping list will help you to buy only what you need, and you’ll save money too
* You can store certain items in the freezer to extend their life, e.g. sliced bread can be toasted straight from the freezer.

**Recycle your food waste**

Remember all your food waste, including peelings, tea bags, bones and plate scrapings, should go in your brown bin (along with your garden waste) or food waste collection if you have one. At Belfast City Council we are expanding the food waste collection to all households with recycling boxes during 2013. This will allow everyone in Belfast to recycle their food waste.

If you live elsewhere why not ask your council if you can expect a food waste collection soon? All councils in Northern Ireland have strict targets to meet, so you might find that they are planning something similar.

**What happens to the food and garden waste?**

The food and garden waste is sent to a local facility where it is used to make compost. Every bin lorry load sent for composting saves the council around £330 compared with landfill. This is money we can use for other things such as improving parks and other leisure facilities. It also helps keep rates increases as low as possible.

For more information on waste and recycling in Belfast see [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste) or call our free Wasteline on 0800 0328100.