COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

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International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (29 September)

Food waste has become a habit for so many of us: buying more food than we need, letting fruits and vegetables spoil at home or taking larger portions than we can eat. These habits put extra strain on our natural resources and damage our environment. When we waste food, we waste the labour, effort, investment and precious resources (like water, seeds, feed, etc.) that go into producing it, not to mention the resources that go into transporting and processing it. In short, wasting food increases greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to climate change.

It's up to us to change our habits to make not wasting food a way of life. When we throw food away, it's costing us the earth – literally! There's a lot we can do. For example, here are just a few things:

- *Store food more wisely*: Move older products to the front of your cupboard or fridge and new ones to the back. Use airtight containers to keep open food fresh in the fridge.
- *Pick ugly fruits and vegetables*: Oddly shaped fruits and vegetables are often thrown away, but they taste the same! Use mature fruit for smoothies, juices and desserts.
- *Understand food labelling*: There's a big difference between "best before" and "use-by" dates.

(Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations)

In a recent interview for the ABC's "War on Waste" program, Ronni Kahn AO (founder and CEO of food rescue charity OzHarvest) said that if there was one thing we could do, one habit we could change, to make a positive difference to our environment, it would be to stop wasting food.