

# The annual impact of food waste in the United States is like...

driving  
one million  
loaded semi-  
trucks

**x1 million**

across the  
United States



wasting an area  
of agricultural  
land large  
enough to cover  
California &  
New York



every household tossing

**\$1,500**

into the wind

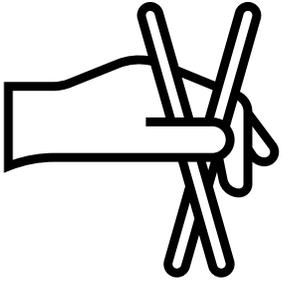


dumping the water filling 9 million  
Olympic swimming pools into an empty field

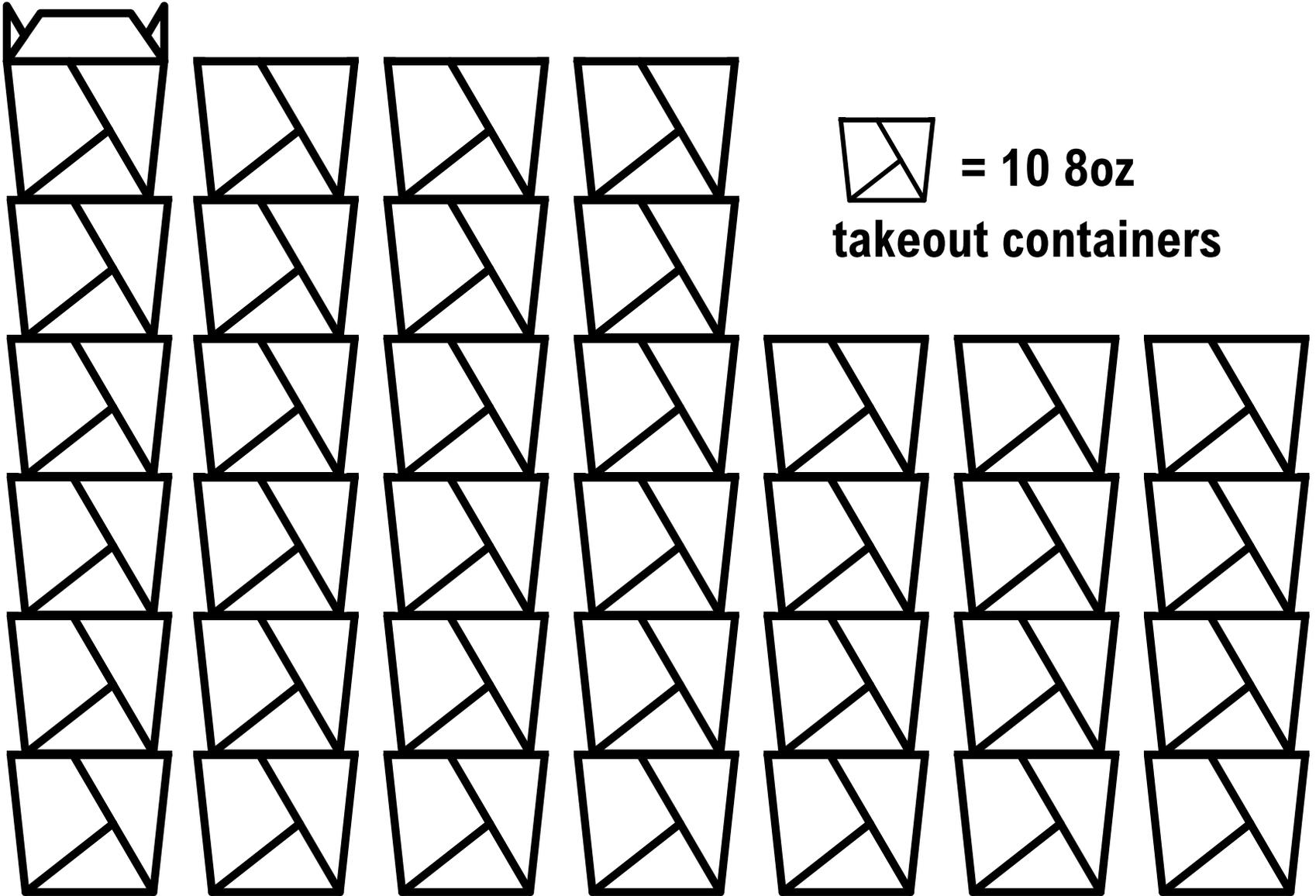
**x9  
million**

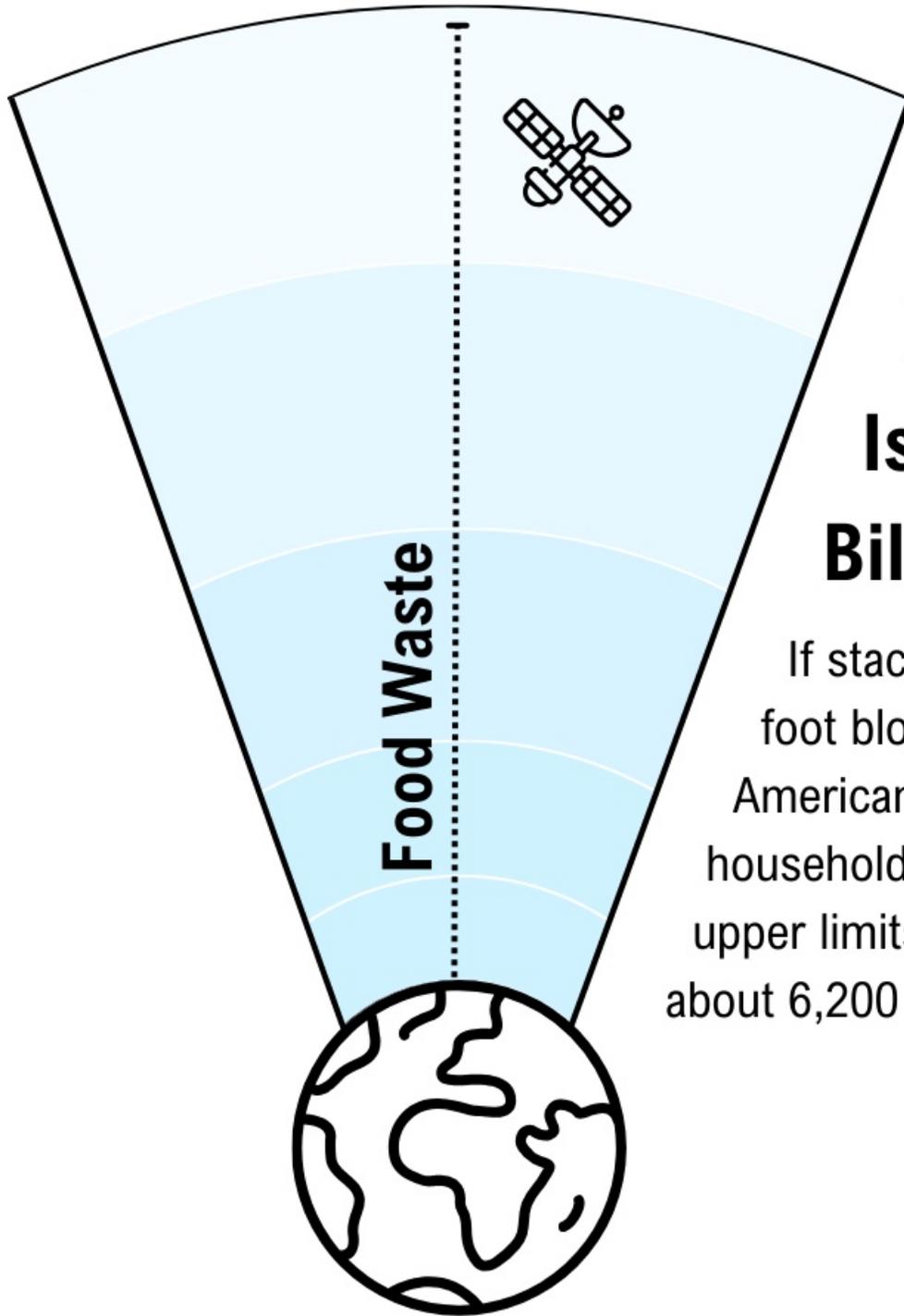


# Takeout the Trash



Food waste from each American household could fill nearly 360 takeout containers every year





## **How Much Is Almost 40 Billion Cups?**

If stacked in a tower of one foot blocks of waste, annual American food waste across all households would stretch to the upper limits of our atmosphere: about 6,200 miles high.

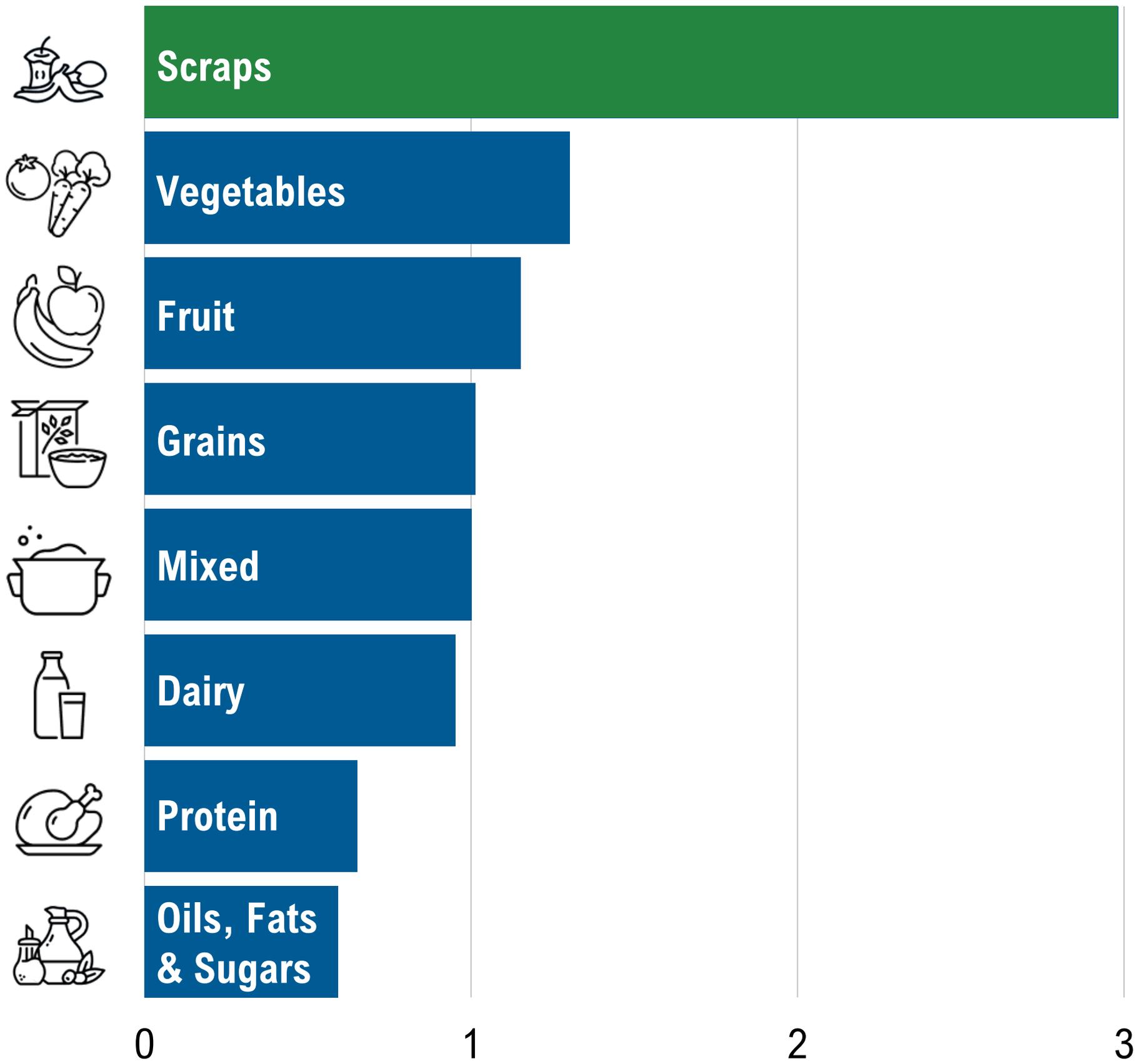
each year, food waste across  
American households is  
enough to fill over

**1 million  
dump trucks**



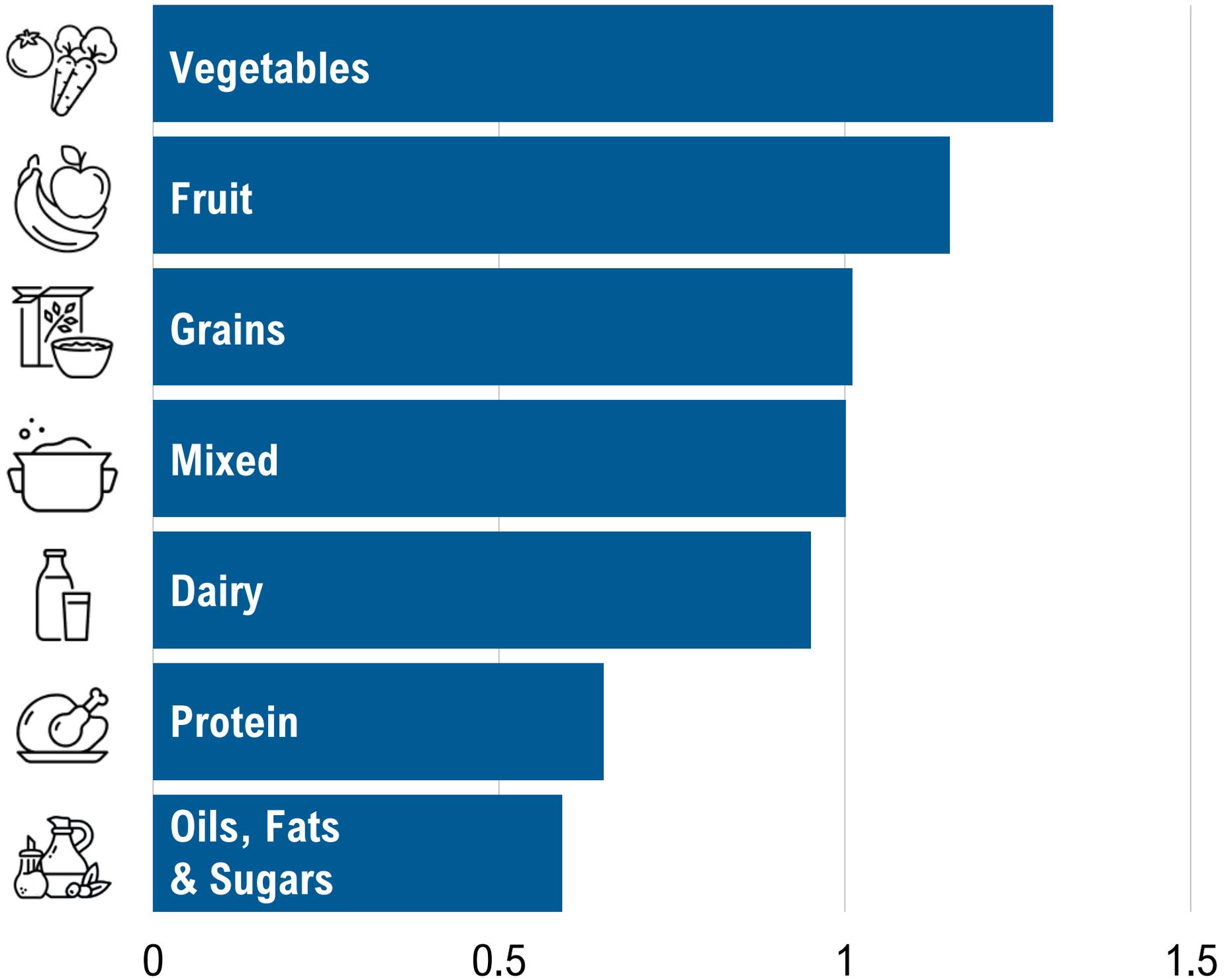
# Food Waste by Food Type

Average cups wasted per household over one week



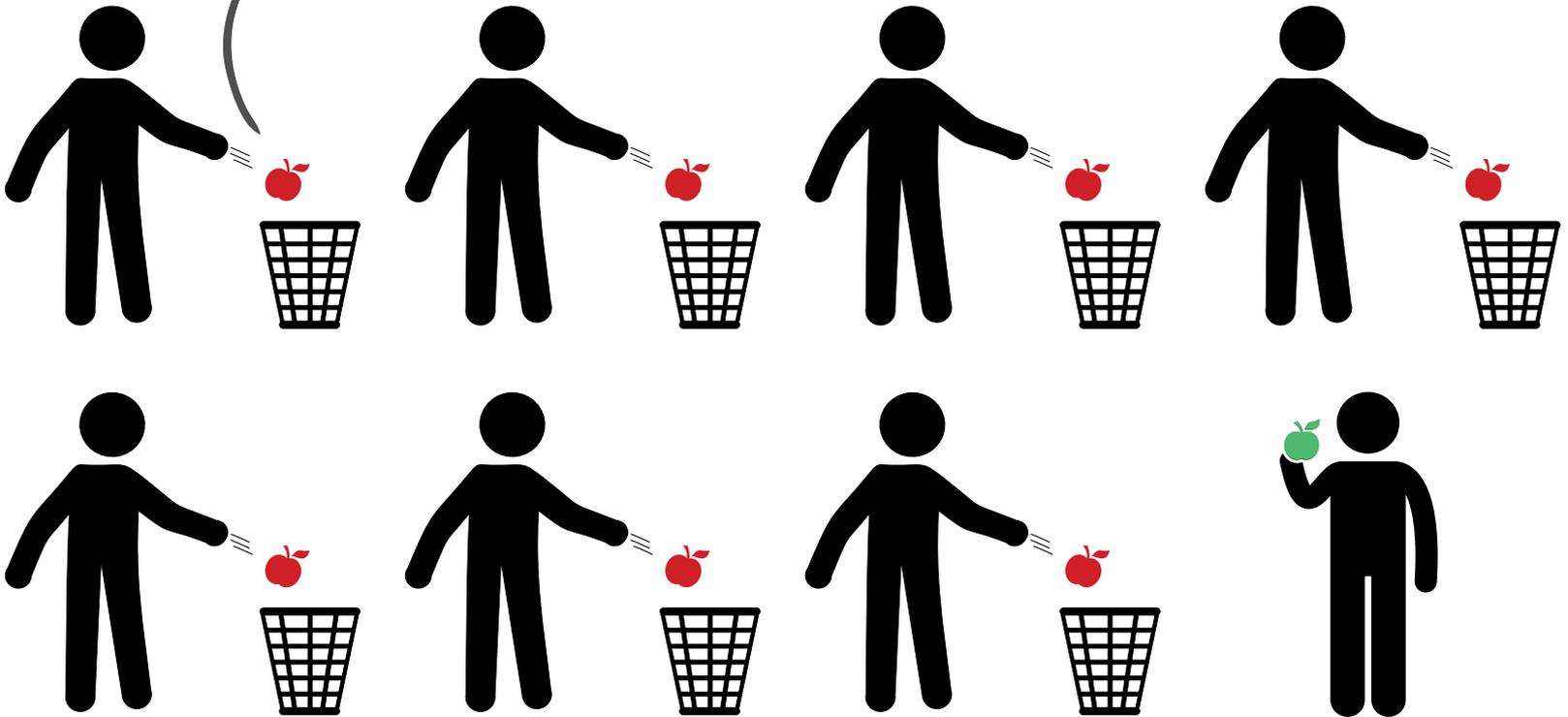
# Food Waste by Food Type

Average cups wasted per household over one week



7/8

households report wasting edible food in the last week

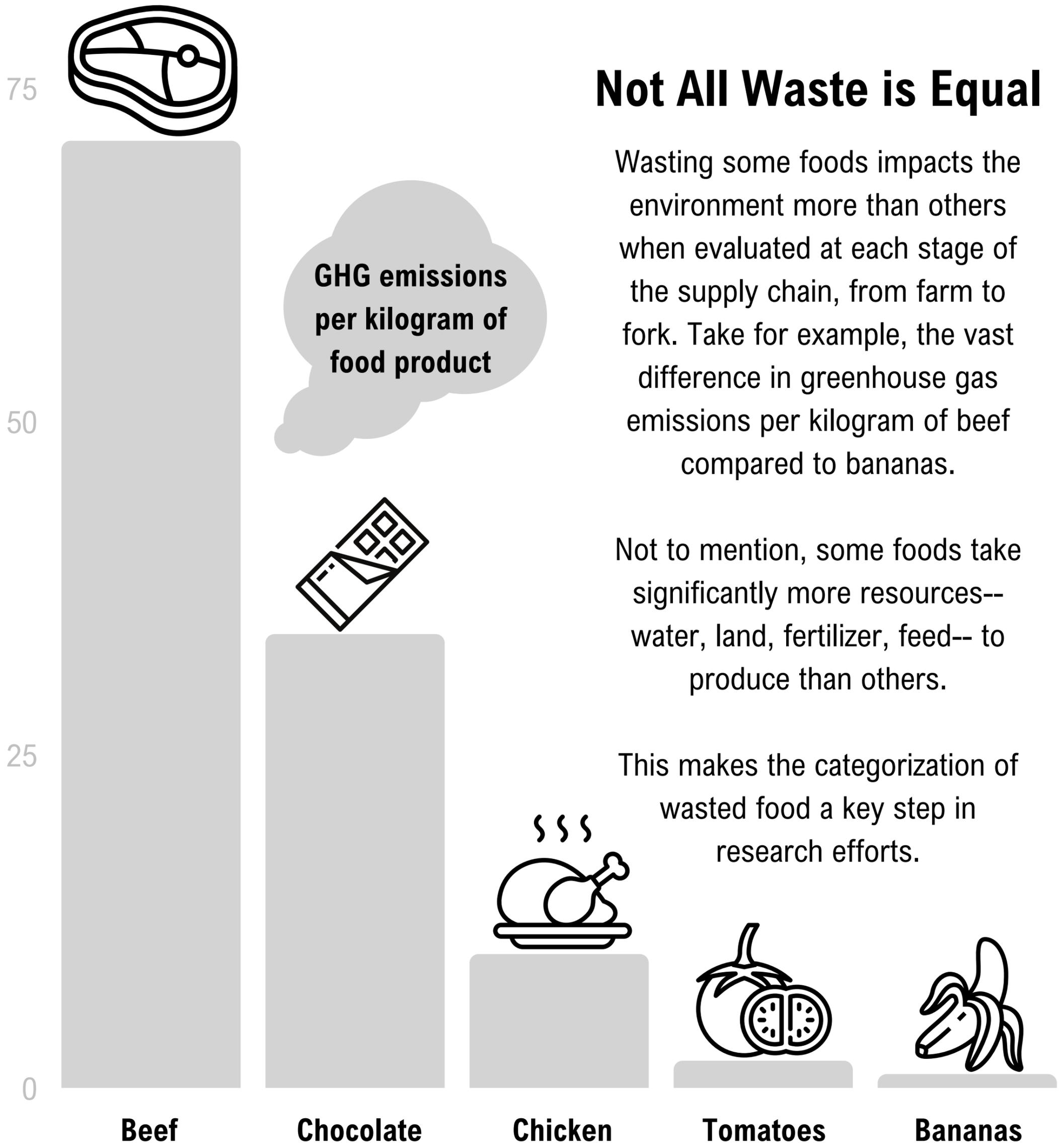


## Not All Waste is Equal

Wasting some foods impacts the environment more than others when evaluated at each stage of the supply chain, from farm to fork. Take for example, the vast difference in greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of beef compared to bananas.

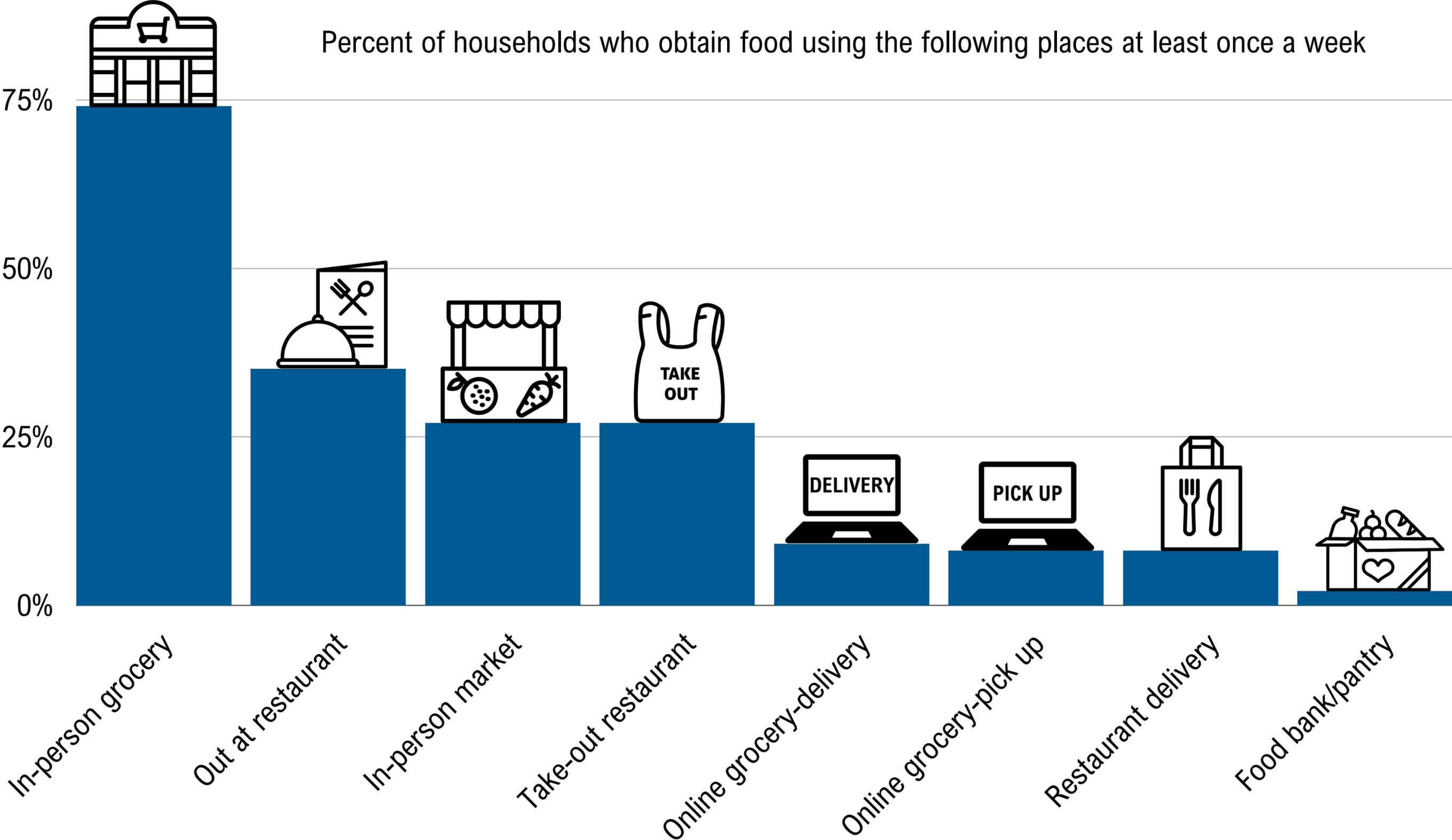
Not to mention, some foods take significantly more resources-- water, land, fertilizer, feed-- to produce than others.

This makes the categorization of wasted food a key step in research efforts.



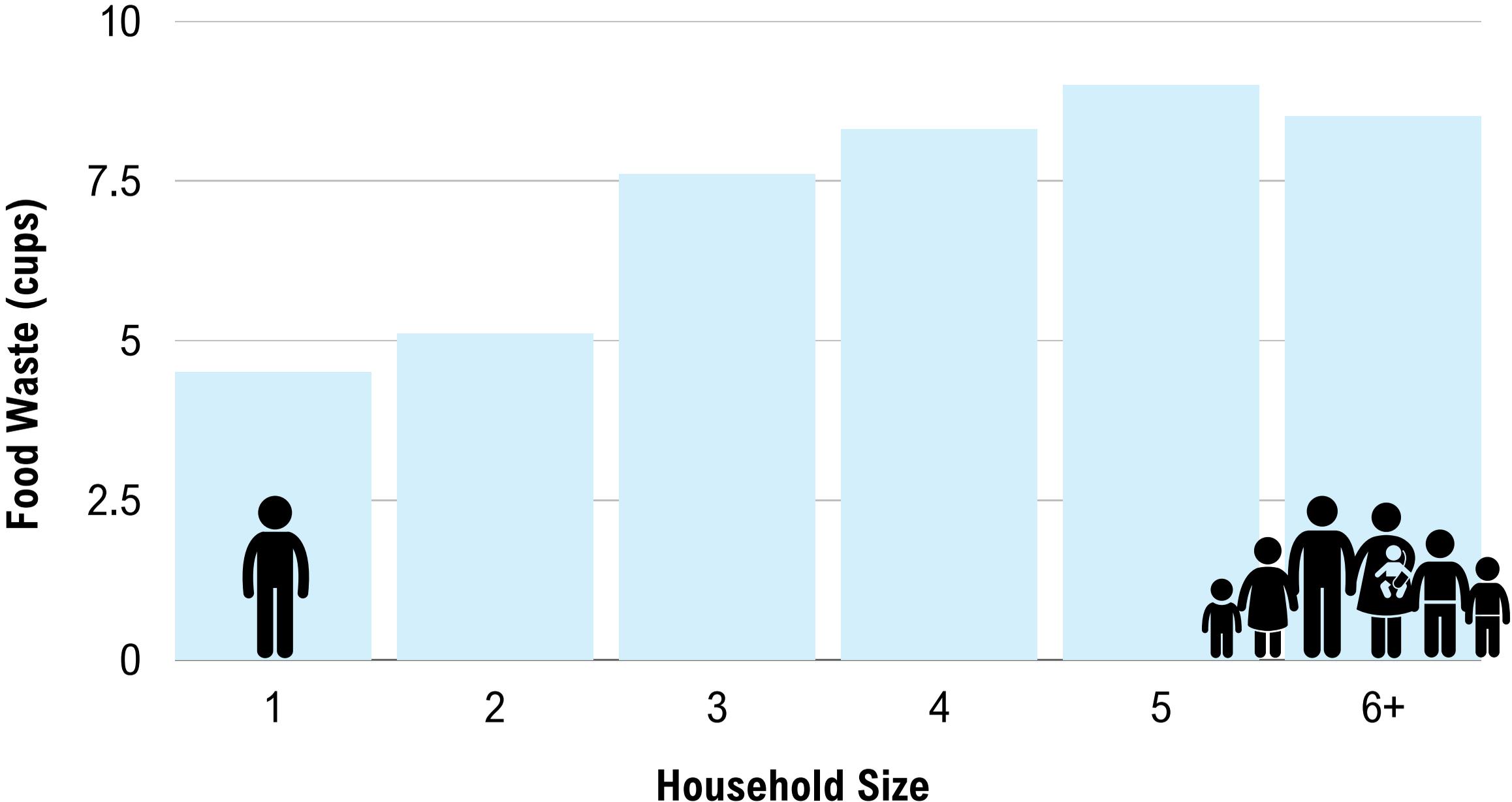
# Where Does our Food Come From?

Percent of households who obtain food using the following places at least once a week

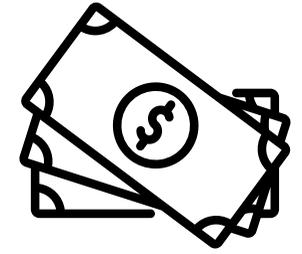


# Food Waste by Household Size

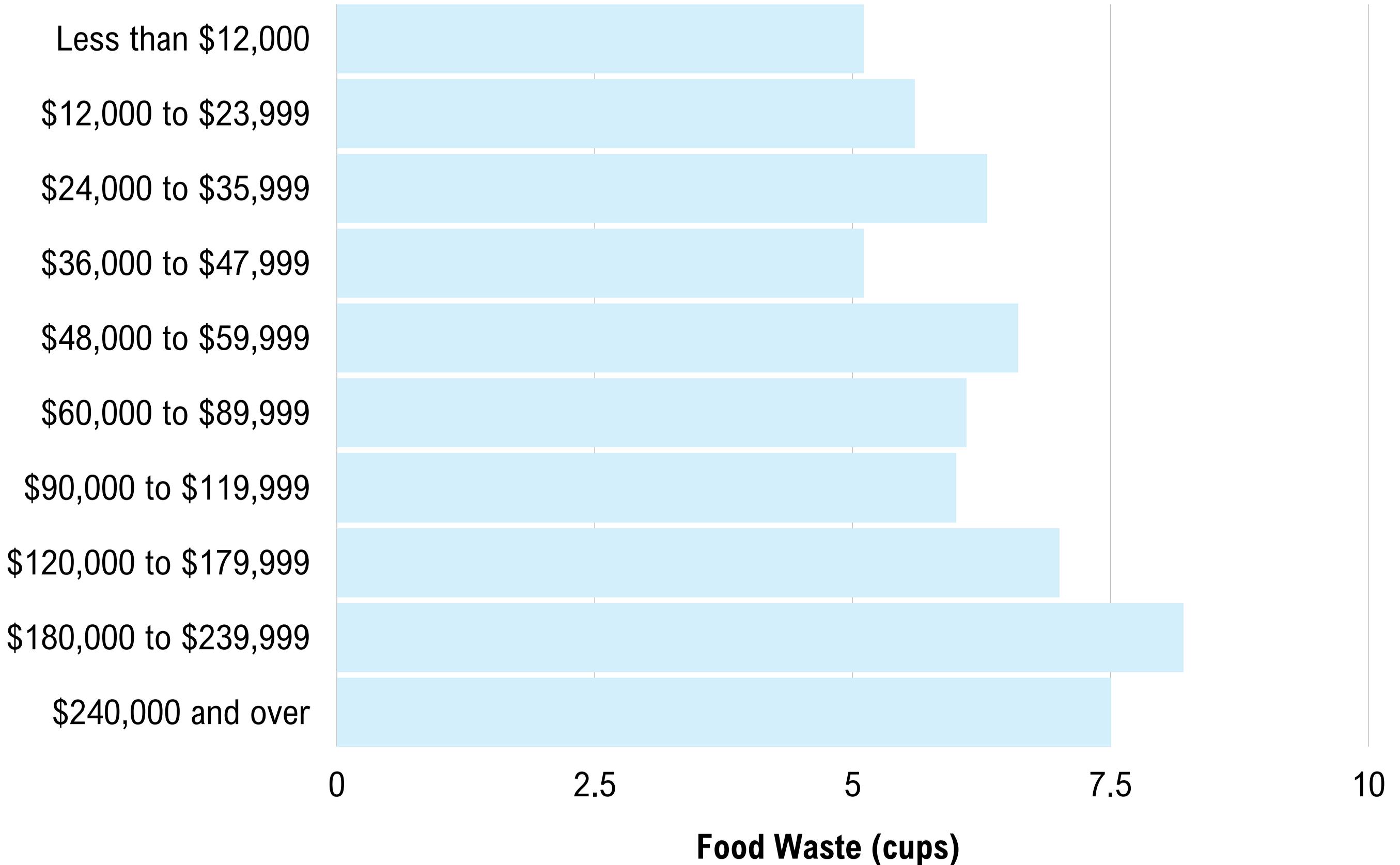
Average cups wasted per household over one week



# Food Waste by Household Income



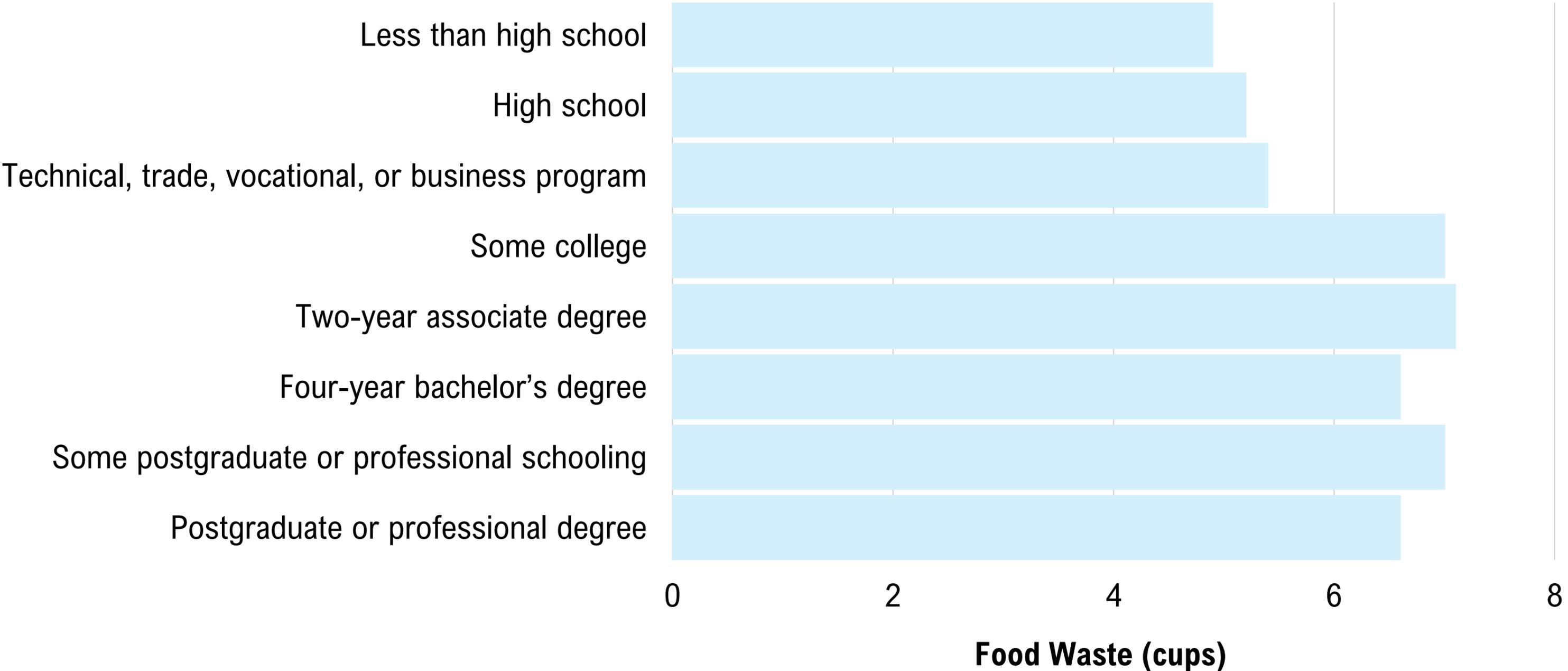
Average cups wasted per household over one week



# Food Waste by Highest Education



Average cups wasted per household over one week



# Is “Best By” the Best Measure?

Did you know date labels can indicate the safety OR quality of food, and are only federally regulated on infant formula? The language on date labels is unstandardized and misinterpreted by many, resulting in prematurely discarded food. For your safety, follow package date recommendations on high risk foods such as ready-to-eat deli meats that are typically consumed without being cooked; however, for most food, trust your senses when deciding if something is safe to buy or eat!



**31%** of Americans **dispose of food** that has passed its date label

**59%** of Americans are frequently influenced by date labels when **deciding to purchase a food item**

**18%** of Americans **worry about eating food past its “use by” date**, and **15%** past its **“best if used by date”** even with no signs of spoilage

## INSTEAD...



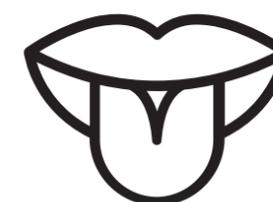
**LOOK** for discoloration, mold, or signs of spoilage



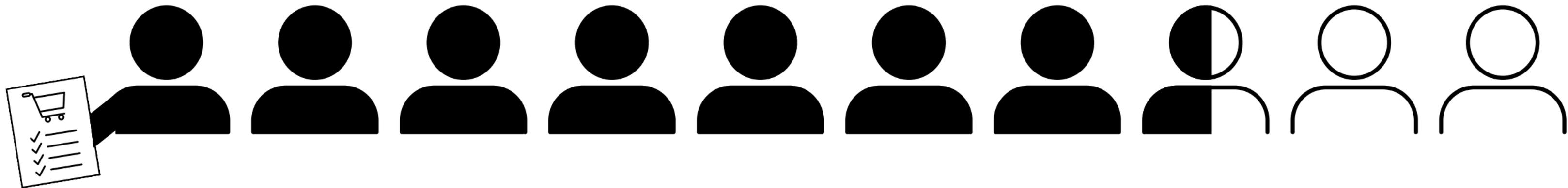
**SMELL** anything unusual? Check for rancid or unexpected odors



**FEEL** for bruising, sliminess, or staleness



**TASTE** a bite if it seems safe, to make sure the flavor is as expected



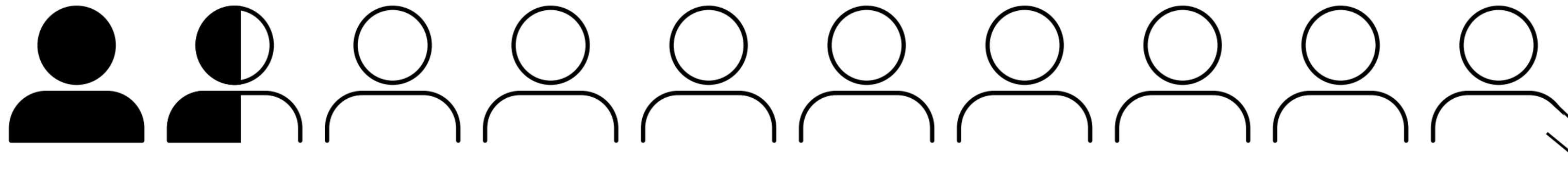
**76%**

use a shopping list

... but only

**16%**

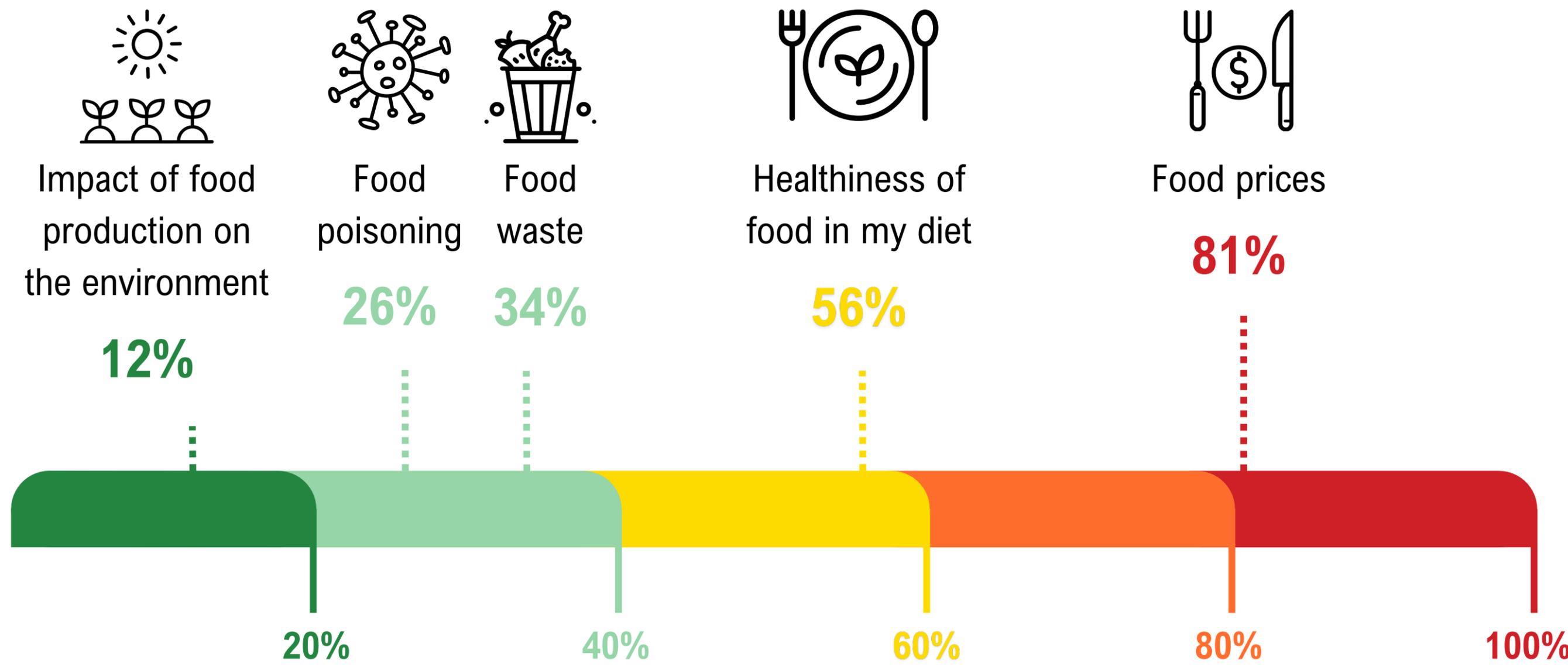
always stick to  
the shopping list



- 81%** Food prices
- 56%** The healthiness of food in my diet
- 34%** Food waste
- 31%** Hormones, steroids, or antibiotics in food
- 29%** Being able to afford to buy enough food for myself/my family
- 28%** The use of pesticides to grow food
- 26%** Food poisoning (e.g., Salmonella and E. Coli)
- 23%** Genetically modified food
- 19%** Availability of food in stores
- 17%** How food producers and farmers are treated
- 16%** The amount of food packaging
- 15%** The impact of food production and waste on climate change
- 14%** Animal welfare
- 12%** Difficulty recycling food packaging
- 12%** The impact of food production on the environment

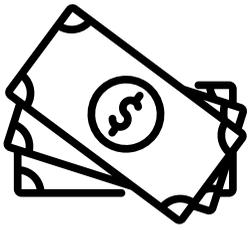
# What Worries Us?

Percentage of respondents who identified the food issue among their top five concerns



# Top Food-Saving Motivators

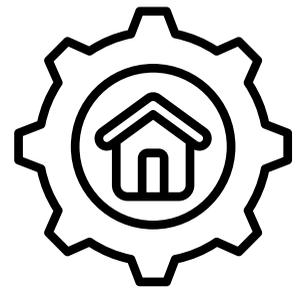
Percentage of respondents who indicate the issue motivates them “a fair amount” or “a great deal” to reduce their food waste



**82%** saving **money**

**76%**

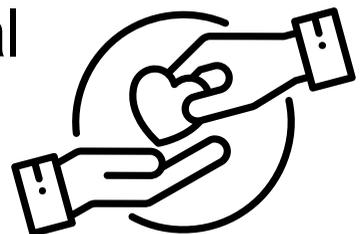
managing home  
more **efficiently**



**60%** feeling **guilty** when  
throwing away food

**44%**

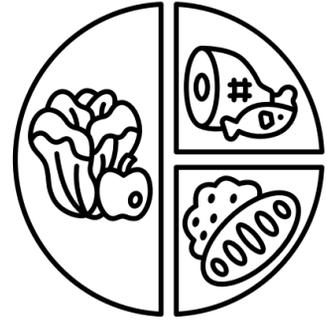
considering global  
or national **food**  
**shortages**



**40%** reducing impact on  
the **environment**

# When Abundance Becomes Excess

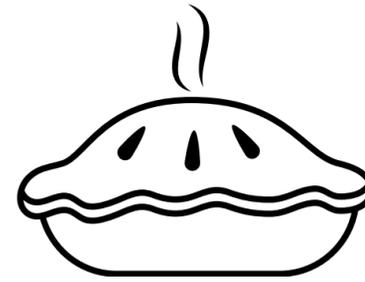
For many households, holidays are a time for enjoying good food in good company. Serving platters are heaped with a variety of options, and we pile our plates with the plentiful spread. While there's nothing wrong with enjoying an indulgent meal as part of your holiday celebration, keep these things in mind as you host or attend food-filled festivities:



**59% of Americans prepare portion sizes they know will be eaten**

## 1 PARE DOWN PORTIONS

**While eating:** Don't let your eyes be bigger than your stomach. Be realistic with the serving you take, and remember it's easier to go back for more than to un-cut that extra slice of turkey!



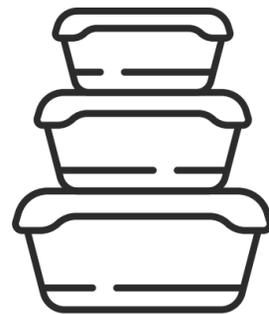
**Eat it up! 71% of Americans feel guilty throwing food away**

## 2 OPTIMIZE OPTIONS

**While cooking:** Is that 5th variety of pie going to make or break the dessert spread? Offer a mix of dishes without overwhelming your guests with options so more food is enjoyed fresh!

## 3 LUNCH ON LEFTOVERS

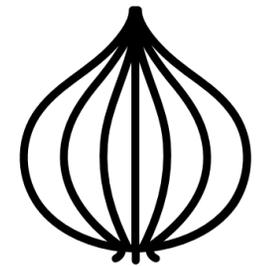
**While eating:** Just because the holiday is over doesn't mean the good food has to end! Pack up tasty extras and enjoy them for days to come. Make them last by freezing them, or mix things up by incorporating them into new dishes!



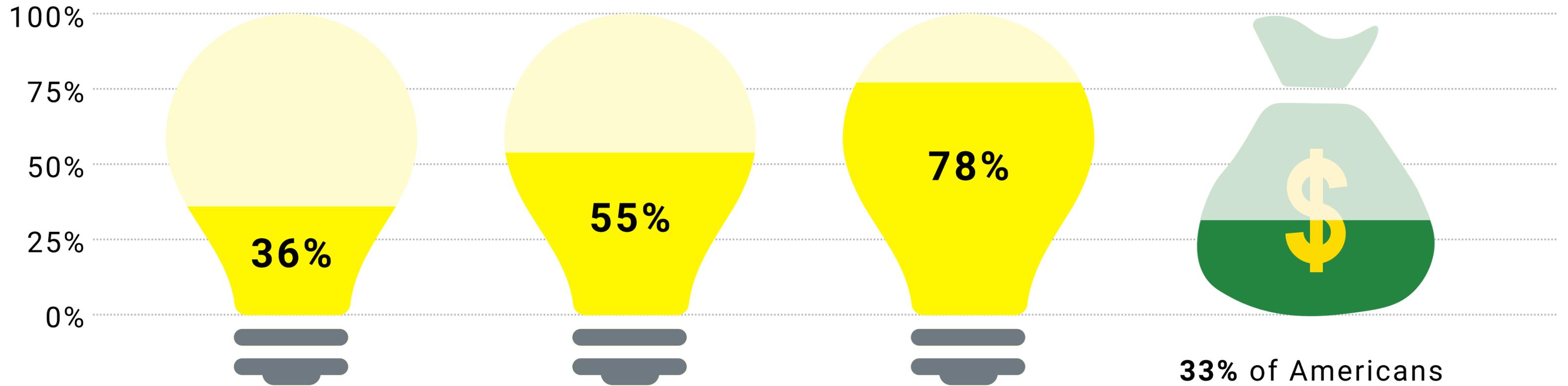
**49% of Americans eat leftovers as a meal by themselves more than once a week**

## 4 INTEGRATE INGREDIENTS

**While cooking:** Does your menu play nice together? Rather than having a shopping list a mile long and tossing out half-finished ingredients, choose dishes which use similar ingredients, or ingredients you already have on hand. Consider how excess ingredients can be used in your next recipe!



**Only 26% of Americans regularly use leftovers or partially used food as ingredients in future meals**



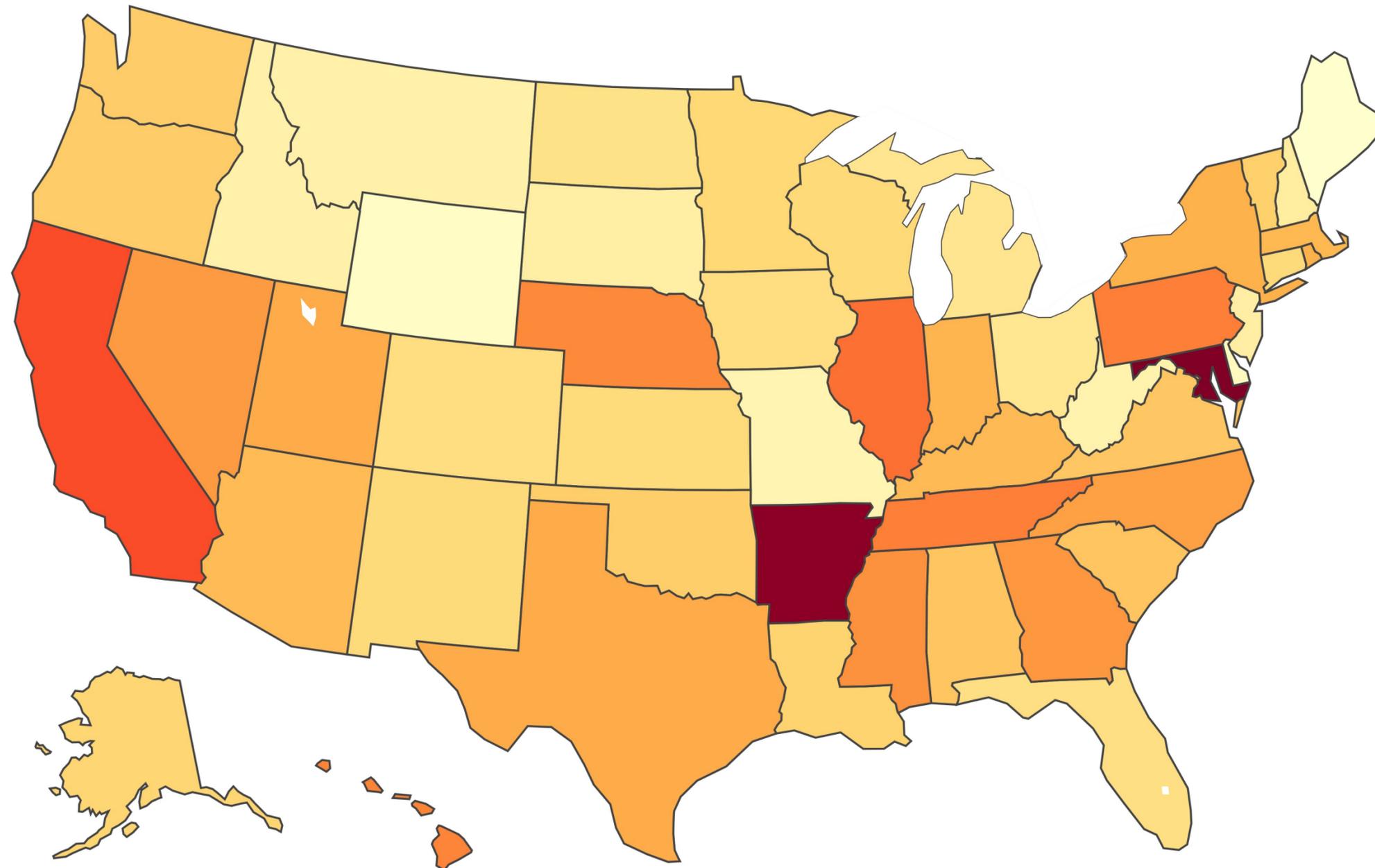
**36%** of Americans strongly agree more food is wasted in the U.S. than in most countries

**55%** of Americans believe that climate change is a consequence of food waste

**78%** of Americans believe the waste of water, energy, or natural resources is a consequence of food waste

**33%** of Americans know a typical household could save \$101 - \$300 each month, which equates to about \$1,500 of savings each year

# Cups of Food Waste: All (incl. Scraps)



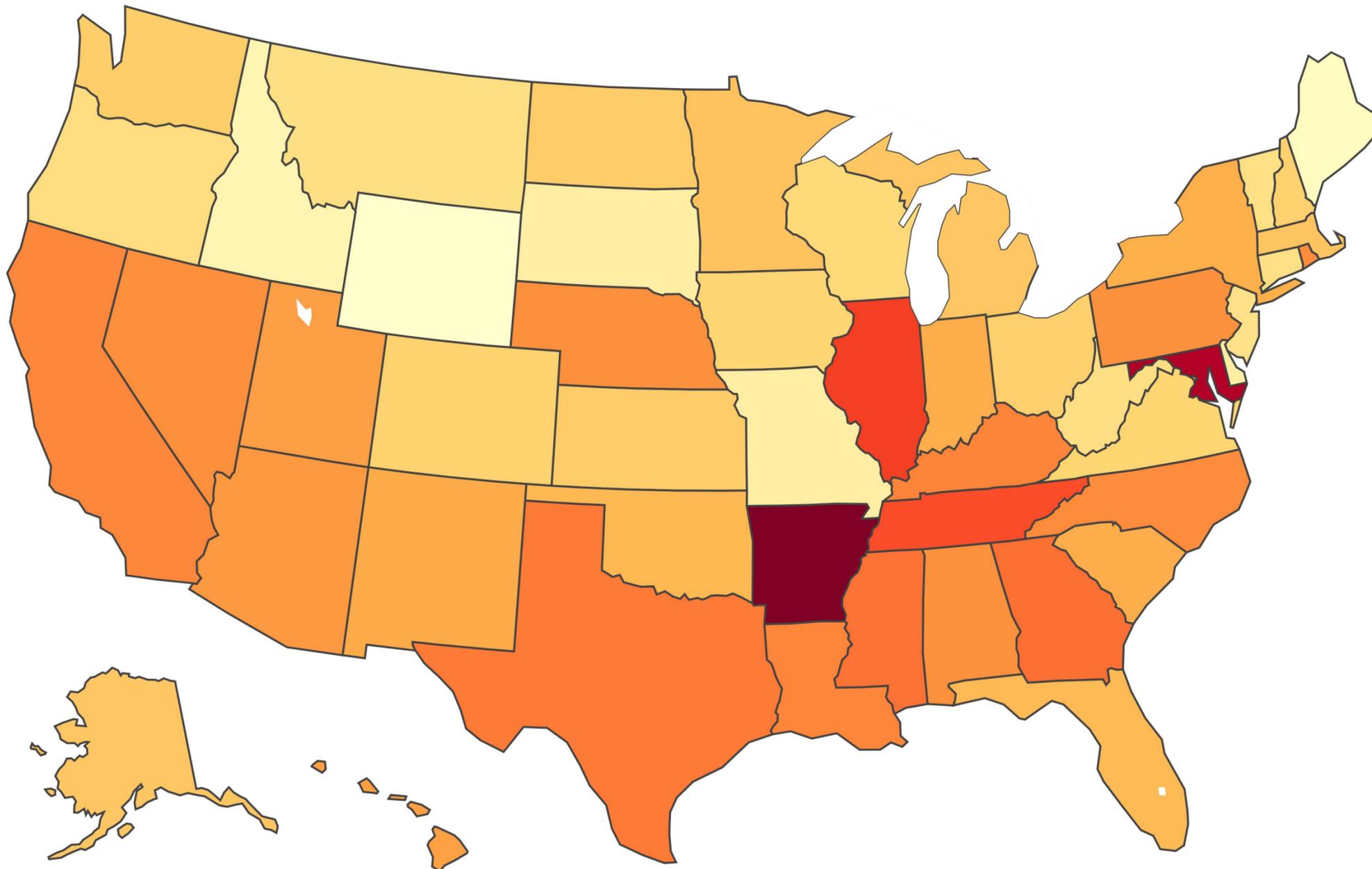
**Cups Wasted**

Maryland:	13.5
Arkansas:	13.4
California:	11.9
...	
Delaware:	9.4
Wyoming:	9.3
Maine:	9.2

# Cups of Food Waste: All (not incl. Scraps)

Cups

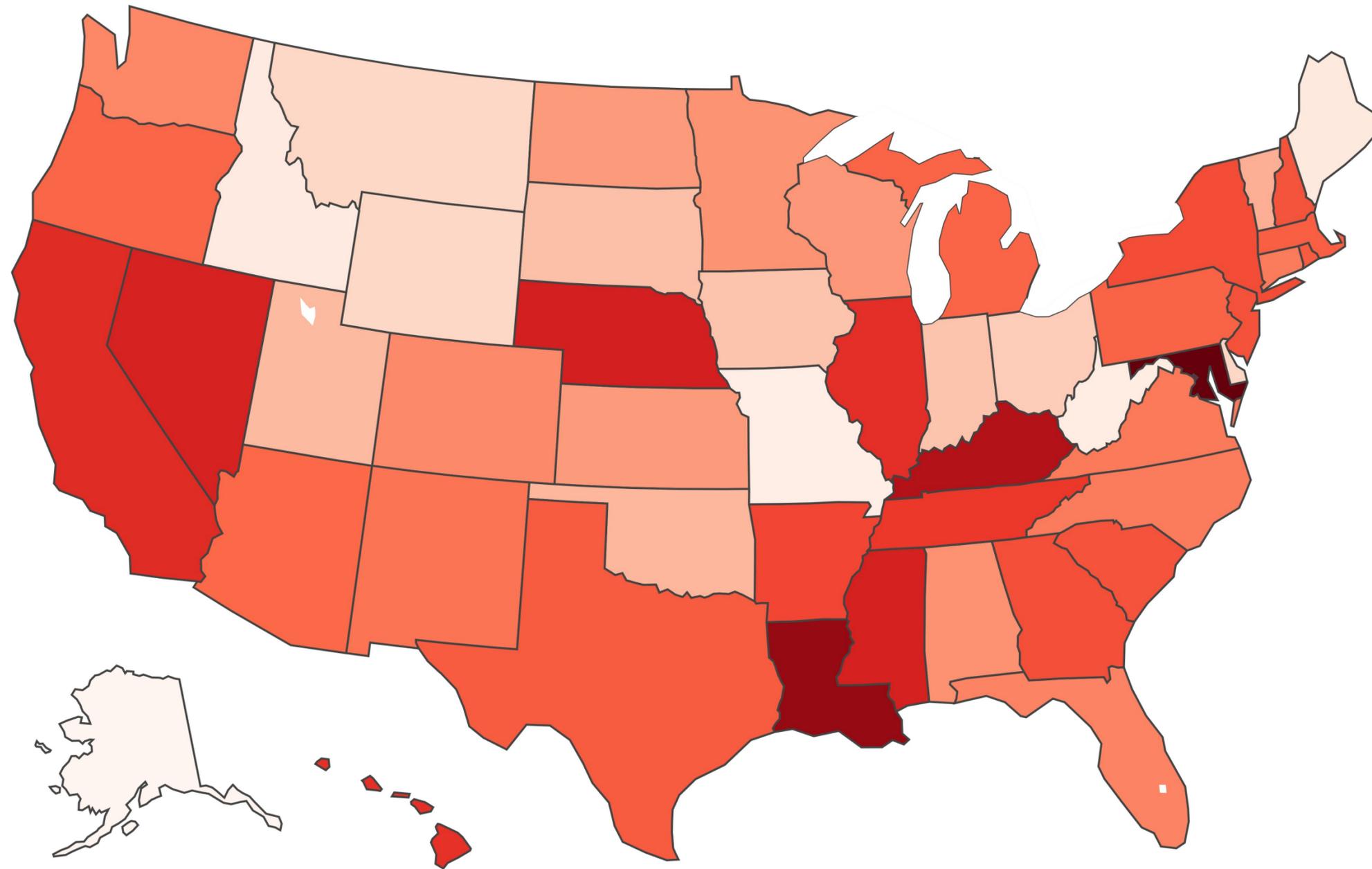
10  
9.5  
9  
8.5  
8  
7.5  
7  
6.5



**Cups Wasted**  
Arkansas: 10.2  
Maryland: 9.8  
Illinois: 8.8  
...  
Idaho: 6.4  
Maine: 6.3  
Wyoming: 6.1

# Cups of Food Waste: Fruit

Cups



## Cups Wasted

Maryland: 1.8

Louisiana: 1.7

D.C.: 1.6

...

West Virginia: 1.0

Missouri: 1.0

Alaska: 0.9

# Cups of Food Waste: Scraps

Cups



3.6

3.4

3.2

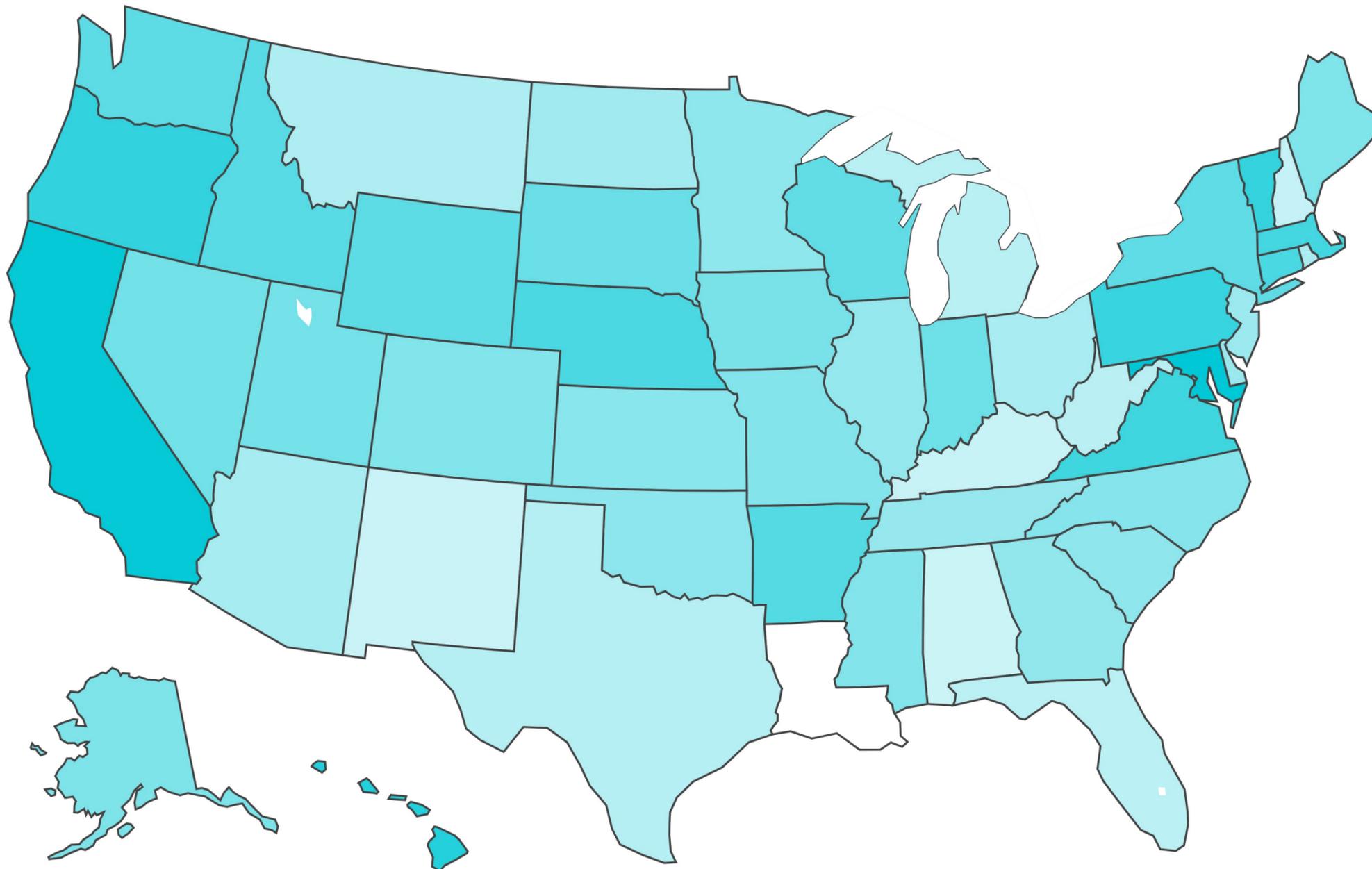
3

2.8

2.6

2.4

2.2



## Cups Wasted

Maryland: 3.7

California: 3.7

Hawaii: 3.5

...

New Mexico: 2.5

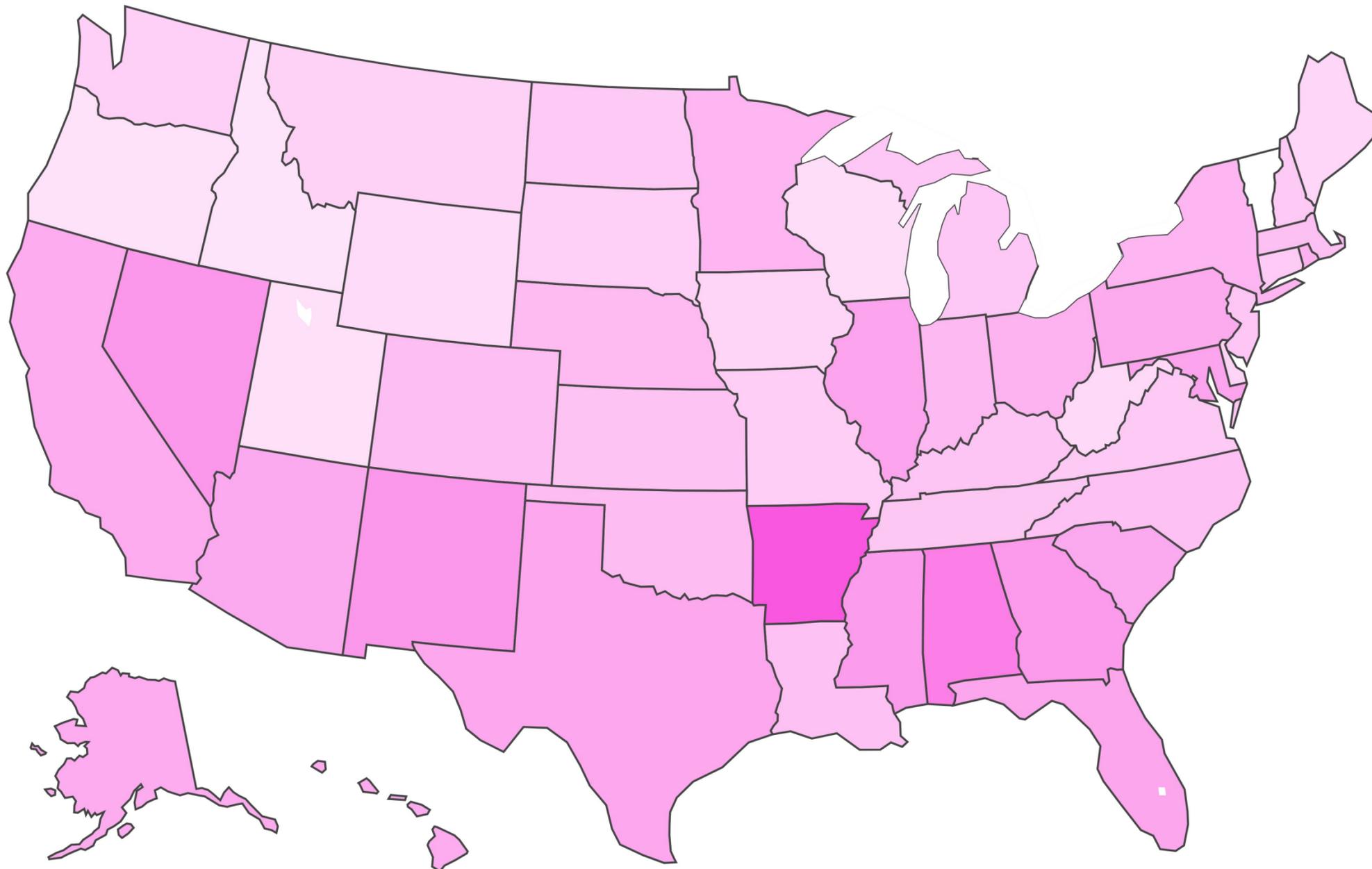
Alabama: 2.5

Louisiana: 2.1

# Cups of Food Waste: Oils, Fats, and Sugars

Cups

1.3  
1.2  
1.1  
1  
0.9  
0.8  
0.7  
0.6  
0.5

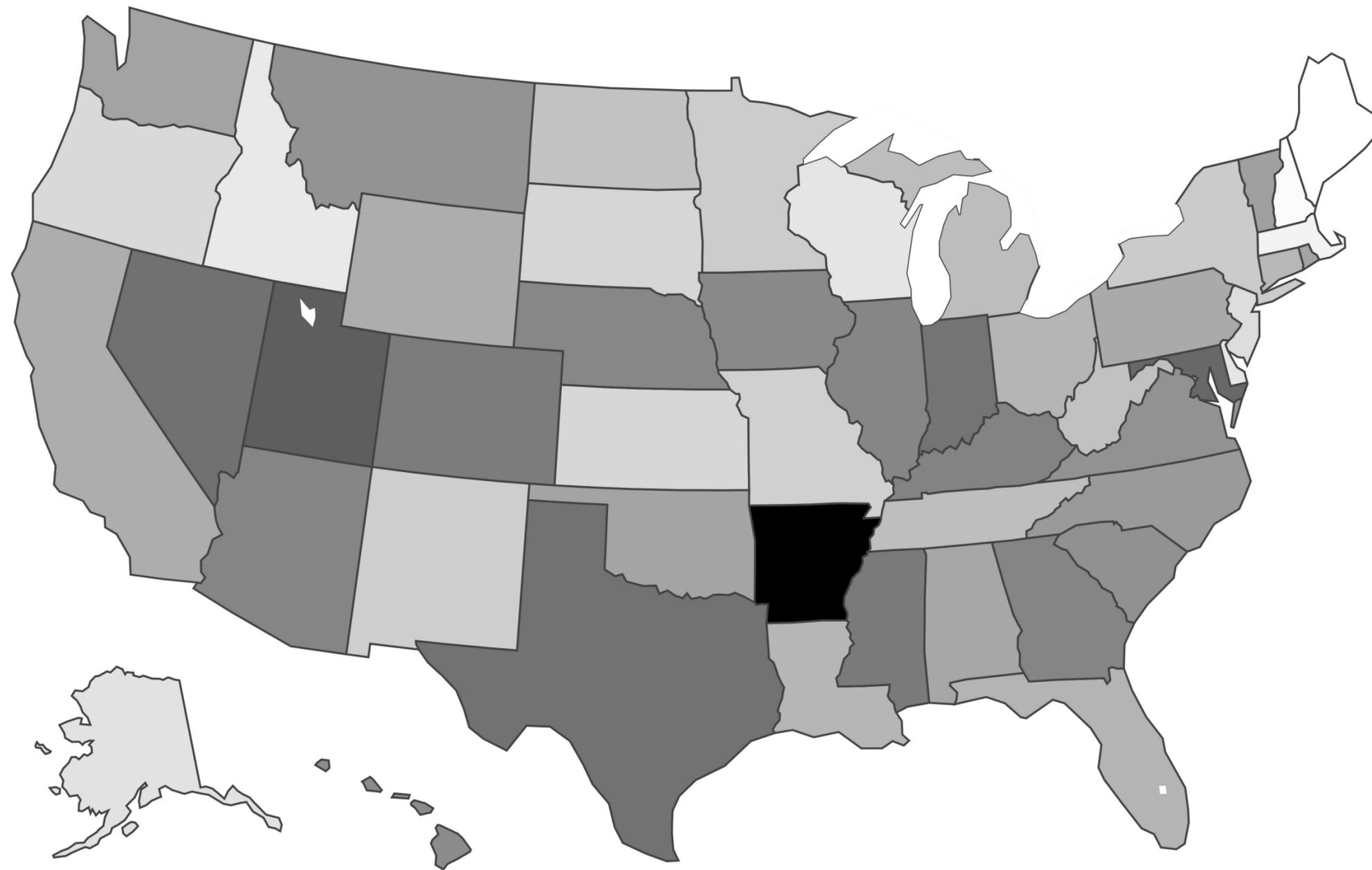


## Cups Wasted

Arkansas: 1.4  
Alabama: 1.1  
New Mexico: 1.0  
...  
Oregon: 0.6  
Idaho: 0.6  
Vermont: 0.4

# Cups of Food Waste: Mixed

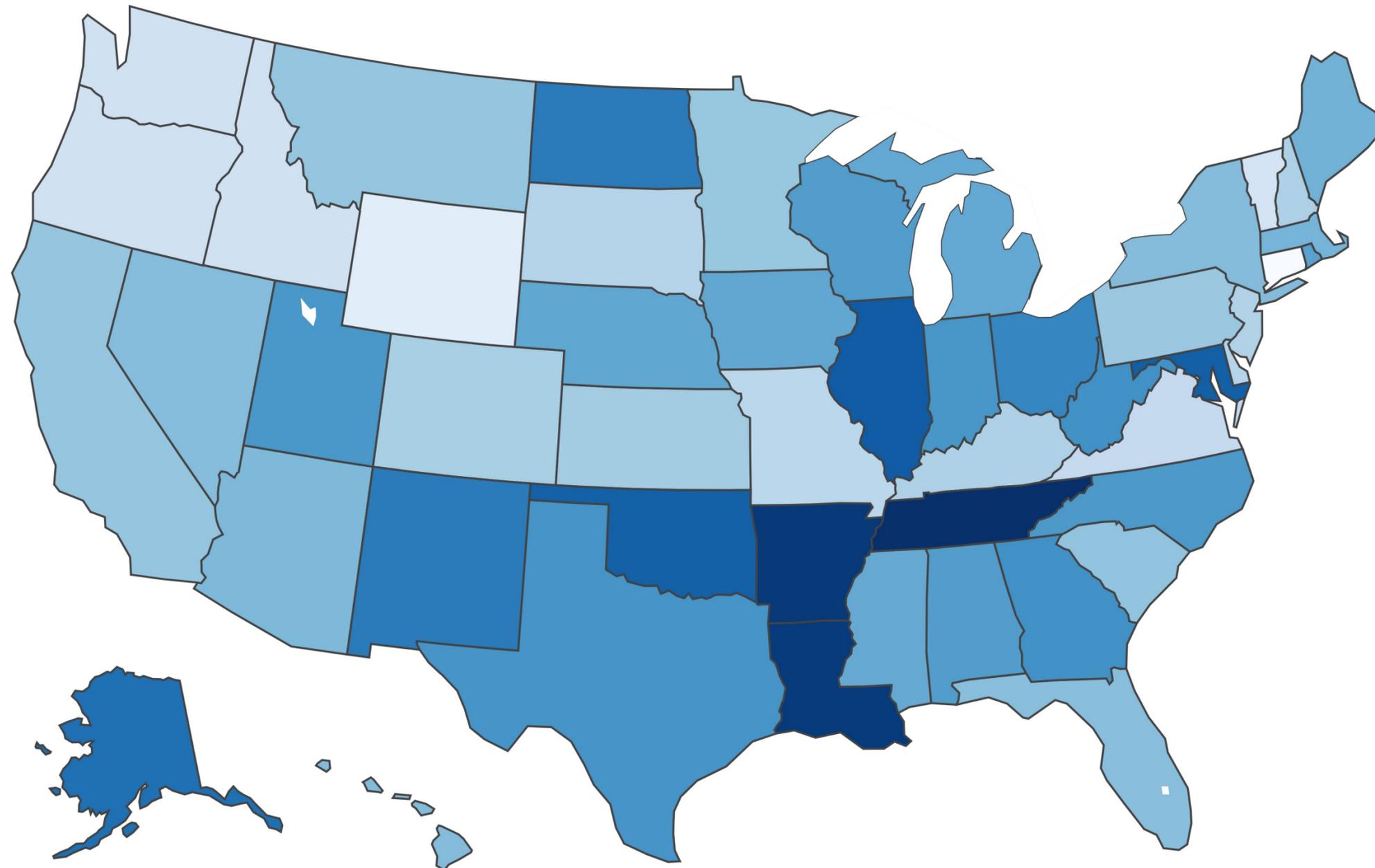
Cups



**Cups Wasted**  
Arkansas: 1.7  
Utah: 1.5  
Maryland: 1.4  
...  
Massachusetts: 0.9  
New Hampshire: 0.8  
Maine: 0.8

# Cups of Food Waste: Dairy

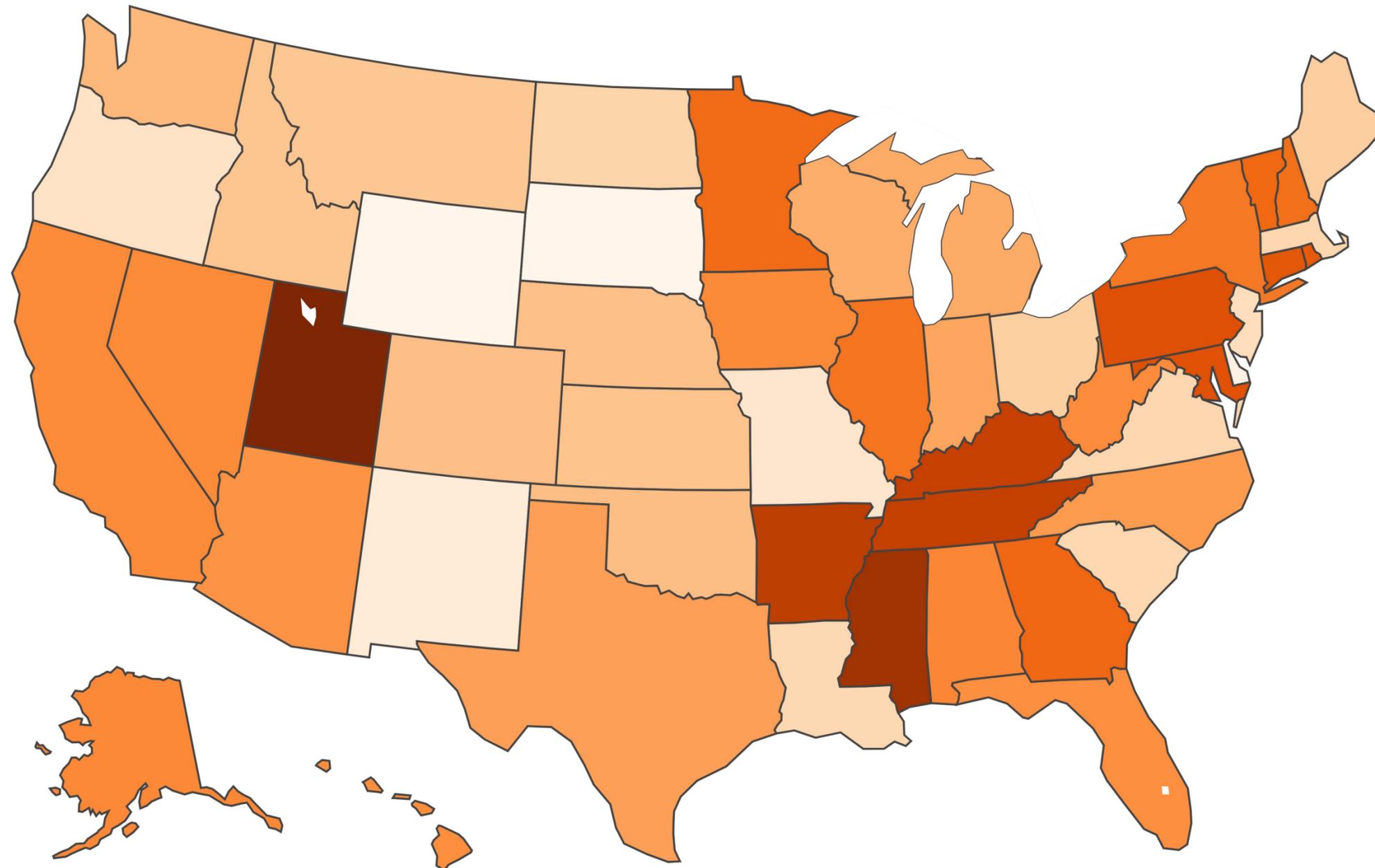
Cups



**Cups Wasted**  
Tennessee: 1.7  
Arkansas: 1.6  
Louisiana: 1.6  
...  
Vermont: 0.8  
Wyoming: 0.8  
Connecticut: 0.7

# Cups of Food Waste: Grain

Cups

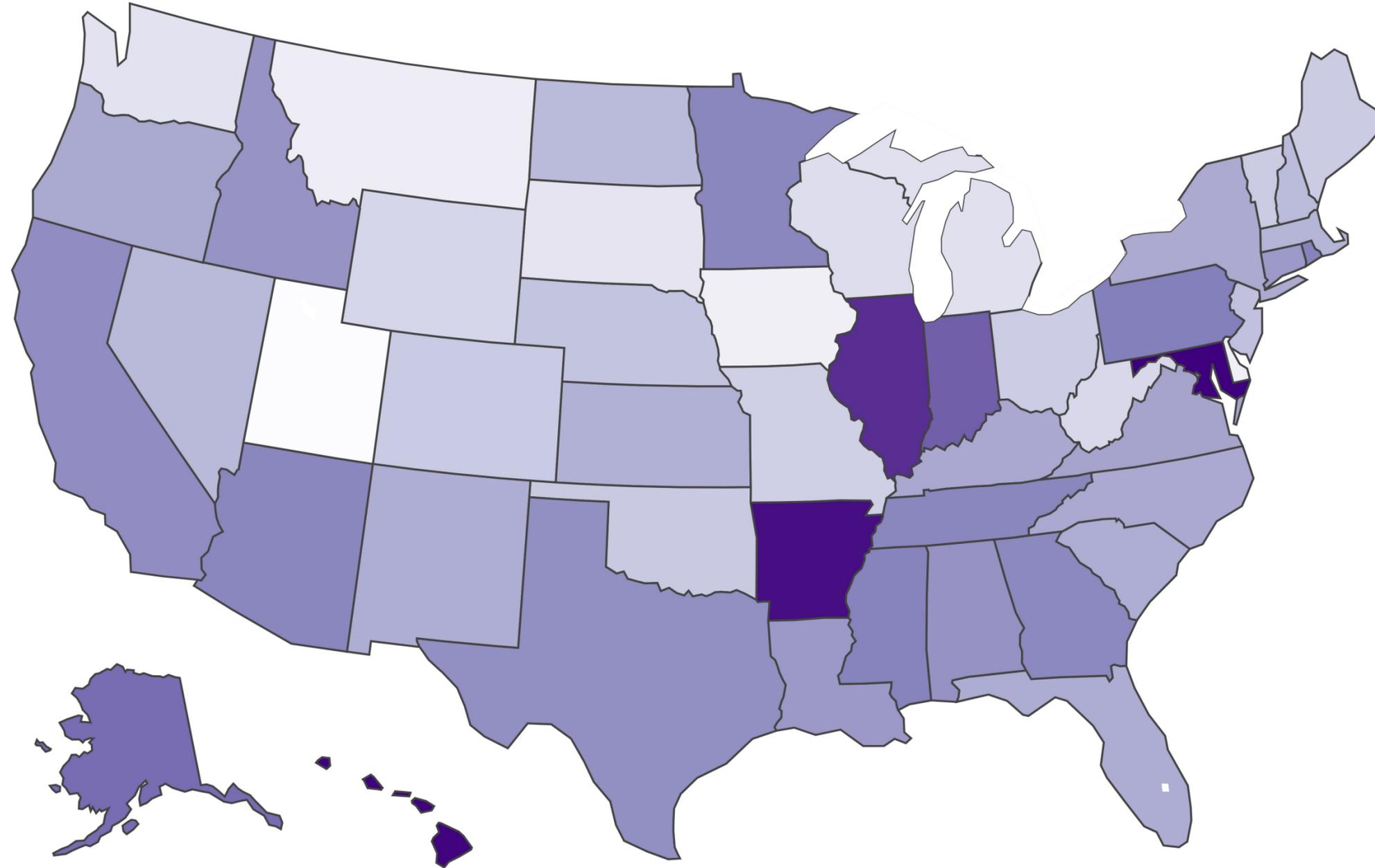
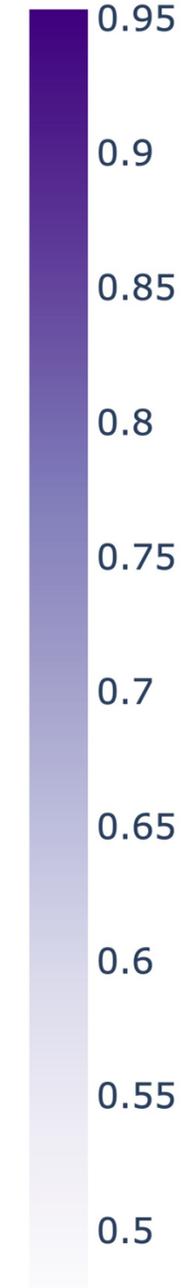


## Cups Wasted

- Utah: 1.4
- Mississippi: 1.3
- Arkansas: 1.3
- ...
- Delaware: 0.9
- South Dakota: 0.9
- Wyoming: 0.9

# Cups of Food Waste: Protein

Cups



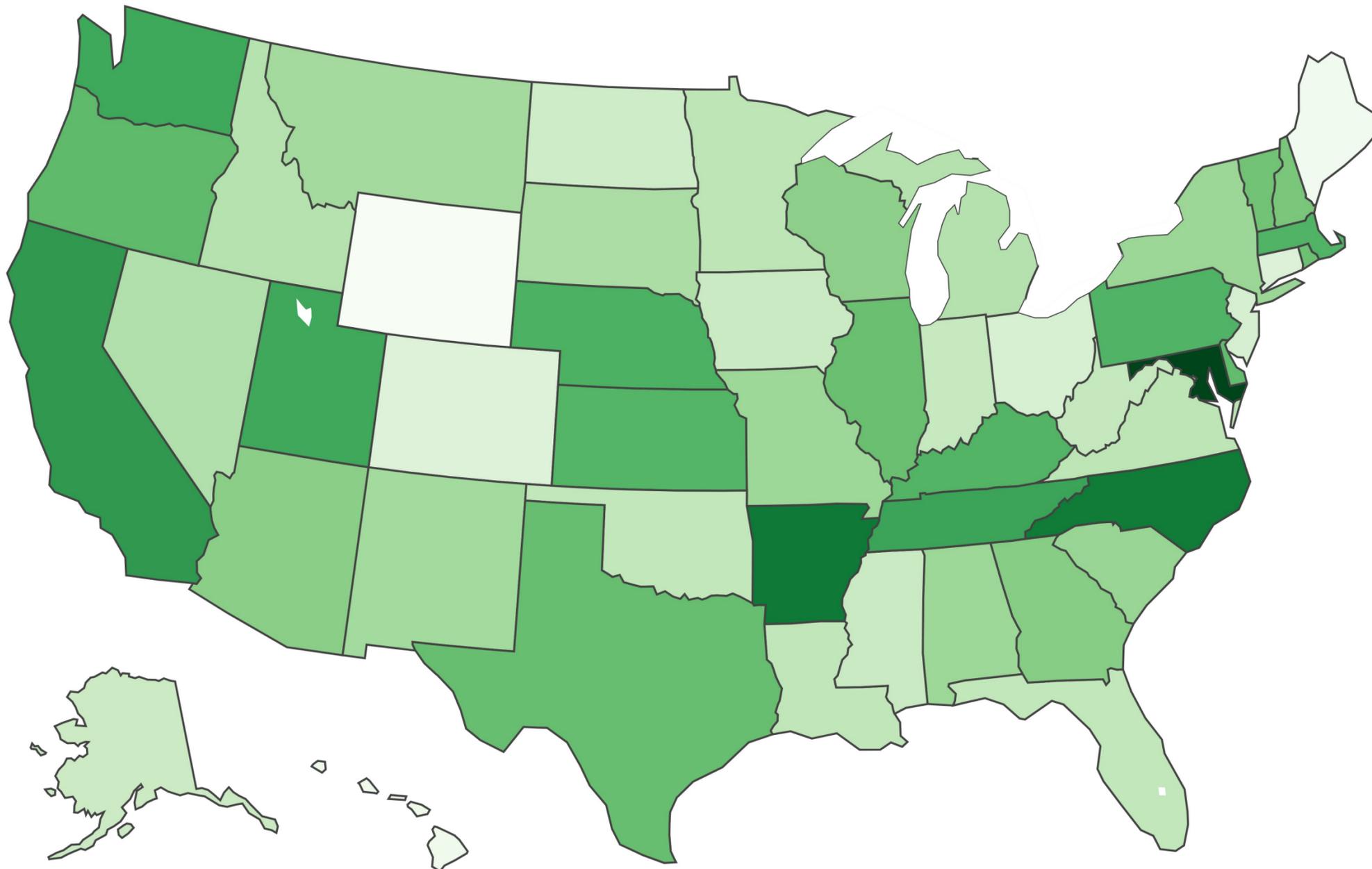
## Cups Wasted

- Maryland: 1.0
- Hawaii: 0.9
- Arkansas: 0.9
- ...
- Iowa: 0.5
- Delaware: 0.5
- Utah: 0.5

# Cups of Food Waste: Vegetables

Cups

2  
1.9  
1.8  
1.7  
1.6  
1.5  
1.4  
1.3  
1.2  
1.1



## Cups Wasted

Maryland: 2.0  
Arkansas: 1.8  
North Carolina: 1.8  
...  
Hawaii: 1.1  
Maine: 1.1  
Wyoming: 1.0

# State Rankings: Reported Edible Food Waste

LOWEST

HIGHEST

1 Wyoming	18 Ohio	35 Arizona
2 Maine	19 Washington	36 Pennsylvania
3 Idaho	20 North Dakota	37 Alabama
4 Delaware	21 Kansas	38 Nebraska
5 Missouri	22 Michigan	39 Nevada
6 South Dakota	23 Alaska	40 Rhode Island
7 New Jersey	24 Massachusetts	41 North Carolina
8 Connecticut	25 Minnesota	42 California
9 Vermont	26 District of Columbia	43 Louisiana
10 Montana	27 Florida	44 Kentucky
11 West Virginia	28 Oklahoma	45 Texas
12 Oregon	29 New York	46 Mississippi
13 Wisconsin	30 South Carolina	47 Georgia
14 Iowa	31 Indiana	48 Tennessee
15 Virginia	32 New Mexico	49 Illinois
16 Colorado	33 Hawaii	50 Maryland
17 New Hampshire	34 Utah	51 Arkansas

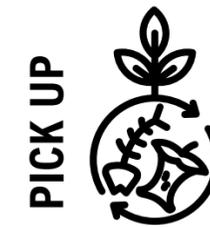
# Preferred Policies



surplus **donation** requirement



liability **protection** for donations



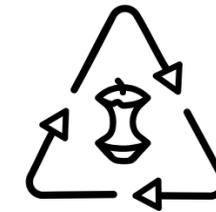
pick-up for **organic waste**



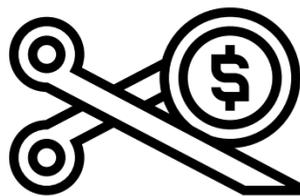
in-school food waste **education**



food waste reduction **targets**



**mandatory** food composting



**tax incentives** for food donation



drop-off for **organic waste**



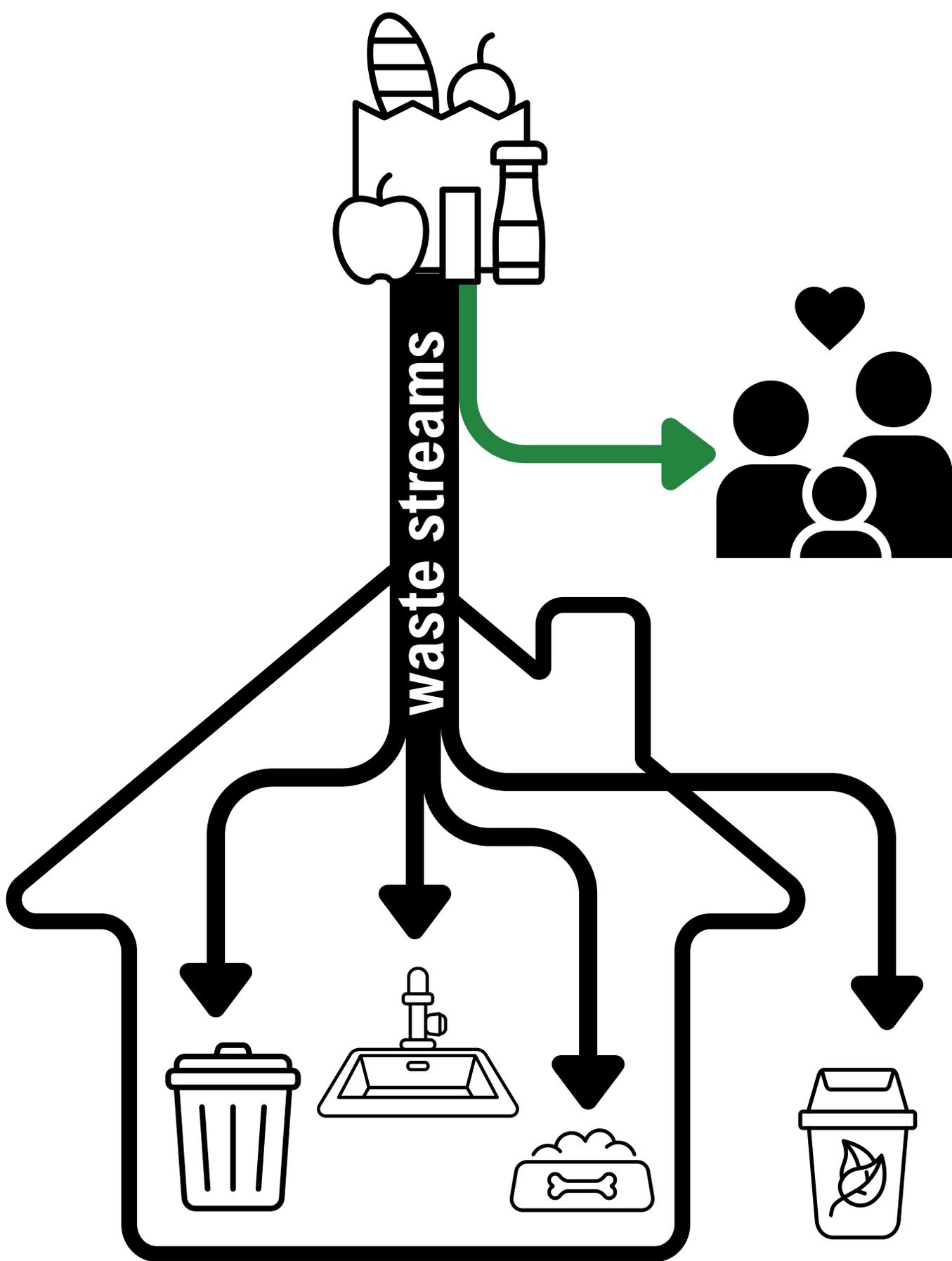
ban food waste from **landfills**



public food waste **outreach**



**pay-as-you-throw** food waste pricing



**Household Food Waste**

# **NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY**

**9,259 respondents**

measure household food waste behaviors,  
knowledge, amount, and demographics

## **FOOD WASTE TRACKER APP**

**257 participants**

measure objective waste over one week

### **VOLUME ESTIMATION**

**114 participants**

track waste using  
volume estimations  
only, as measured in  
cups and tablespoons

### **BLUETOOTH SCALE**

**143 participants**

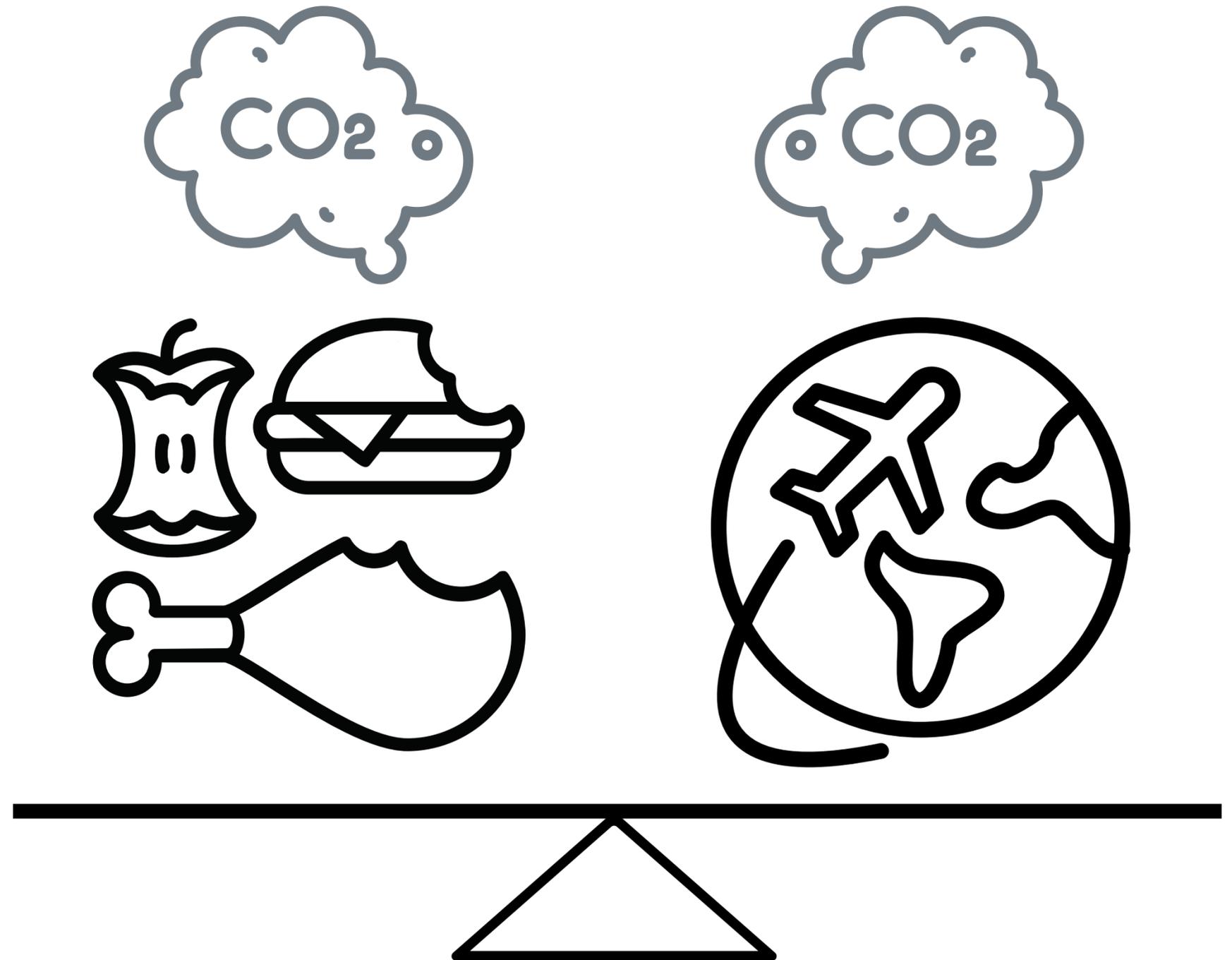
track waste using  
volume estimations  
AND scale weights  
measured in grams

# Food Footprint

=

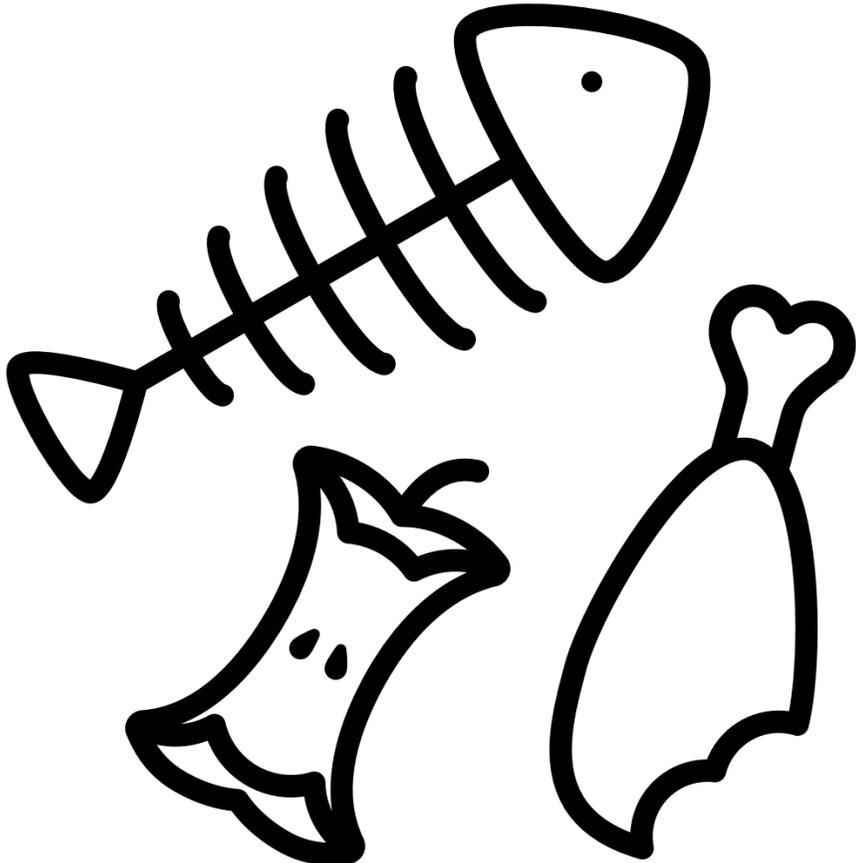
# Flight Footprint

The climate footprint of American food waste is equivalent to that of the United States aviation industry—passenger, commercial, and military combined.



One **year of food waste** costs the United States an estimated

**\$310 billion**

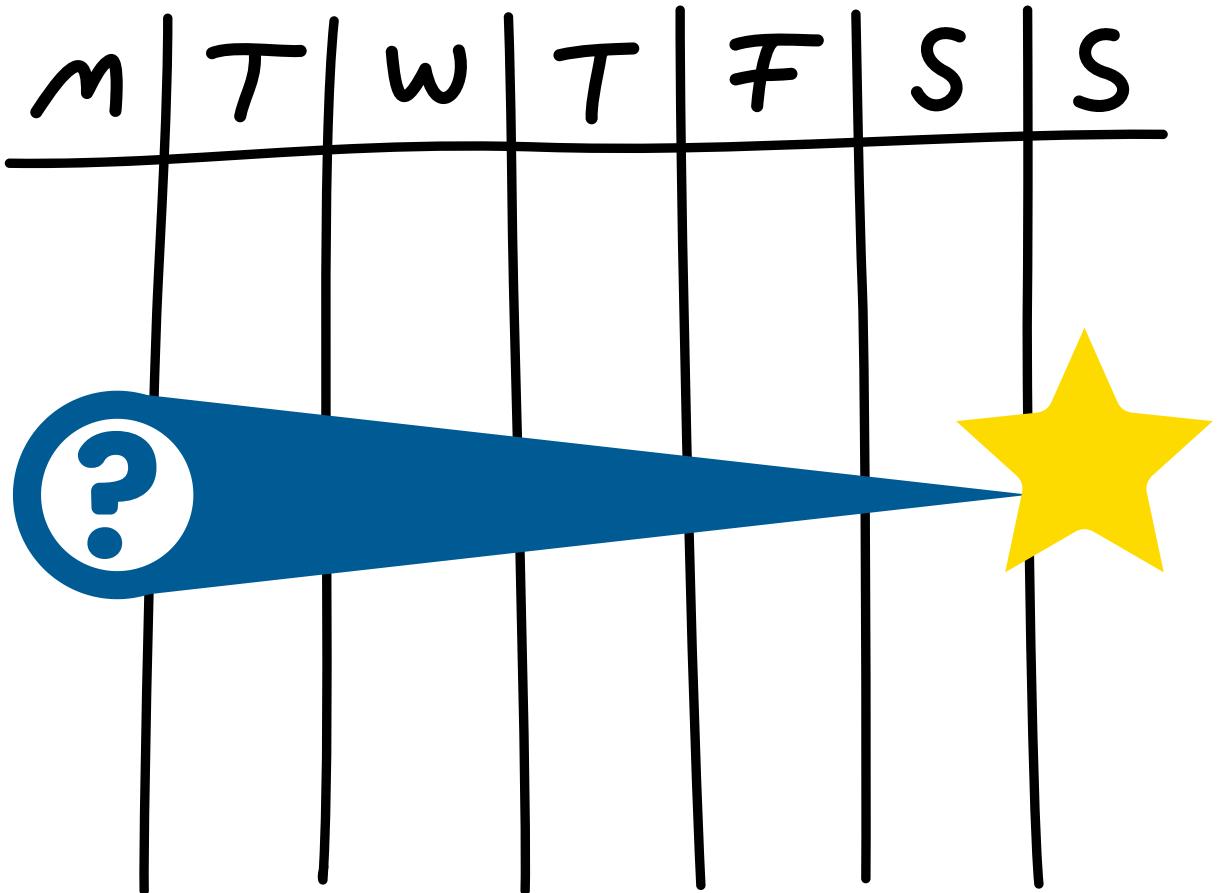


That's equivalent to nearly **6 million years** of tuition at Harvard



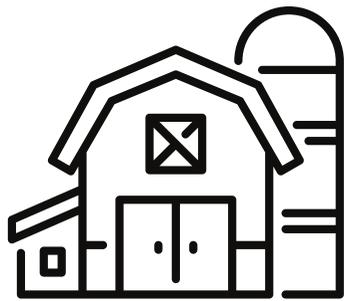
# Why One Week?

Memories of specific details, like waste amount, reduce in accuracy over time



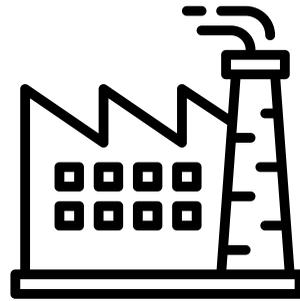
# Where's the Waste?

Food is lost at all levels of the food supply chain, from going unharvested on farms, being rejected by grocery stores for imperfections, spoiling on buffet lines, and shriveling in the fridge. Nearly half of waste occurs in the home, making household waste a crucial facet to better understand and reduce.



Farms

17%



Manufacturing

15%



Consumer-facing  
businesses

20%



Homes

48%





## FRUITS



Berries



Melons



Fruit Juice



Other Fruits



## DAIRY



Milk



Non-Dairy



Yogurt



Cheese



## VEGETABLES



Dark Green Vegetables



Red and Orange Vegetables



Beans, Peas & Lentils



Starchy Vegetables



Other Vegetables



## SCRAPS



## MIXED DISH



## OILS, FATS & SUGARS



## PROTEIN



Meats



Poultry



Seafood



Eggs



Nuts and Seeds



Soy Products



## GRAINS



Whole Grains



Refined Grains