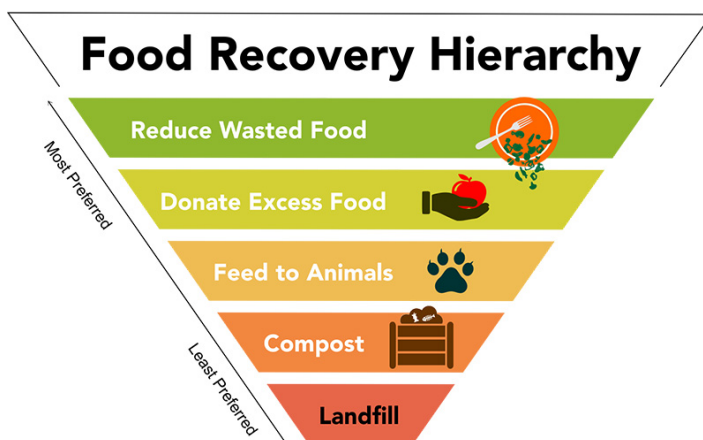


Charity Warder

2-22-2020

Pocahontas County High School is found somewhere near the middle of nowhere. This is a downfall when it comes to our technology but an asset when it comes to fewer distractions and being more farm oriented. I live on a little farm and I am a part of the PCHS FFA chapter. Having pigs and keeping leftover food to give them has forced me to realize the large amount of food we waste daily. From the table, it goes to the trash bag and the trash goes to a landfill or occasionally ends up in a river. Therefore, the more food we waste, the more trash we have and the more pollution we cause.

“In the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply. This estimate, based on estimates from USDA’s Economic Research Service of 31 percent food loss at the retail and consumer levels, corresponded to approximately 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food in 2010.” (“Food Waste FAQs.”) This is outrageous! The USDA recommends using the “Food Recovery Hierarchy”, which is this:



To be able to donate all the excess food you would need at least 33,250,000,000 people. This is because the average stomach can hold up to four pounds of food. Yes, you can stretch your stomach to hold more food but if these people

had previously been starving their stomach is not going to be prepared to hold four pounds of food. Leaving the leftover food to be fed to animals or turned into compost.

This is something that bothers my entire family, so my father asked a local donut shop what they do with all the deformed donuts, and they stated, “we just throw them away.” Thinking about this makes me wonder how much food our school waste. I know that there are kids that say they are eating lunch and then don’t or only get like half of what is offered during lunch. This for sure creates a lot of waste. What bothers me the most about it is there are people and in the third world countries starving and we are throwing several pounds of food away daily. Of course, there are several ways of approaching this issue, but I have found one that is basically like recycling.

My idea is that we have the FFA students of Pocahontas County High School find the school some pigs. We would feed the pigs the leftover food from the cafeteria because at PCHS we have a salad bar every day and the vegetables on it aren’t always eaten and cannot be put back out because people have already touched them. The leftover foods from lunch that day could be saved and put out as extras the next day but if it wasn’t eaten within those two days the hog or hogs would get it. The salad bar combined with leftover food from breakfast and lunch would be enough to feed at least one hog and probably more. The FFA and Ag classes would be responsible for making sure the hog had water and was feed over the weekend. To do this the teacher could either pay a student to come up over the weekend and feed the hogs or he could offer the student extra credit. On days students couldn’t do the teacher would have to. For PCHS this isn’t a major problem because the teacher doesn’t live far from the school and could easily feed them on the weekends if he was not busy. It would be a good way for the students to get an

agricultural experience, while at school and by themselves when they would come to feed it on weekends.

The kids that have the agriculture class after lunch could go up and gather the leftovers from the cooks and take it to the pigs. It would also be a good way to put all the leftover food to use. Then, when the hogs were ready to be butchered the FFA teacher and kids in the class could help lead the pigs to our meat slab. Of course, the FFA teacher would have the students leave until the hog was killed, but when it was ready to be cut up it would be beneficial for our meats class. After it was cut up the FFA could either sell it, use it at the annual teacher's breakfast that they serve, or use it in the school for breakfast. The problem with having it for breakfast at school is the state may not approve of it, and in this case, the FFA could use it to sell as a fundraiser. They could sell it in the concession stand at games, put it in the newspaper, or they could even donate it to the local food pantry. This could help people in our local community that are struggling to afford food or people who are homeless. If the FFA would be able to donate the meat to the local food pantry it would also be a way of feeding the hungry. Then not only would we be slowing the food waste rate, but we would be helping feed the hungry.

This wouldn't directly help the people in the third world countries but if every school did this it would cut down majorly on the amount of food we throw away. Then places that are close to areas where people are starving, they could freeze the meat from the hog, and have it shipped to these places. Or they could freeze it, then personally deliver it using something like an ice cream truck so that it would not spoil on the way.

It would be amazing if this could happen with fast-food restaurants. At the end of the day, they could put all the precooked food that wasn't sold or eaten into containers and take it to local farmers to feed to their hogs. Then eventually, maybe fast-food restaurants could have their own

farms, and after the hogs were butchered, they could sell the fresh meat during breakfast instead of processed meat. This would take a vast amount of hard work to get the nation's approval and to start the process but in the end, it would be beneficial for everyone's health and would lower the amount of food waste majorly. Plus, it wouldn't cost the food markets anything, it would help cut down on the money they waste.

Therefore, by allowing more people to have farms with pigs, the food amount of food waste would be cut tragically. Which would mean less money wasted due to the food not being eaten. Then, by feeding Americans the fresh meat it would improve our health. By feeding the hogs the leftover food the amount of trash bags used would also be cut down, which would amount to less pollution in the rivers and landscaping areas.

Works Cited

"Food Waste FAQs." *USDA*, www.usda.gov/foodwaste/faqs. Accessed 26 Feb. 2020.