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## Lost and found- A preliminary assessment of food waste in Israel

Ofira Ayalon<sup>1,2</sup>, Tzippi Eshet<sup>1,2</sup> and Efrat Elimelech<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Haifa, Israel

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Neaman Institute, Israel

Food loss occurs all along the supply chain from post-harvest, through processing and production stages, at the retail sector and in homes. The world's estimates are between 30-40% losses and the economic, environmental and social outcomes are severe. Not only that resources are invested in producing the food (manpower, energy, water, fertilizers etc.), this lost food will not reach the plate and will contribute to increase pollution if left in the field or discarded in a landfill. The study presented will reveal estimates of food loss in Israel. The study includes analysis of existing data, interviews with experts in the field, and an in depth analysis of food waste produced in households. Our assessments reveal 200,000 tons per year of edible agricultural surpluses, usually destroyed by farmers, or left in the fields for different economic reasons. Only 10,000 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables are saved. In order to minimize the loss of food and production of waste, there is a need to develop clear policies, both in order to reduce agricultural produce surplus and limit produce destruction and optimally utilize the surplus, if formed. Wasted food in households is much more complicated to assess. General waste survey will not reveal the amount of edible food thrown away. A new methodology to assess the avoidable food loss will be introduced in order to better understand and set appropriate policy. Policies should address food security on the one hand and minimizing environmental and economic losses on the other hand.

### Biography

Ofira Ayalon has completed her BSc in Food Engineering and PhD in Waste Management. All her academic titles were given by the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Her current research activity closes the loop of food and waste. She is the Director of the Natural Resource and Environmental Research Center and Head of the Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Management at the University of Haifa. She also heads the Environment Cluster Samuel Neman Institute at the Technion.

[ofira@sni.technion.ac.il](mailto:ofira@sni.technion.ac.il)

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