

HOUSEHOLD FOOD WASTE IN MOROCCO: AN EXPLORATORY SURVEY

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Abstract

Food losses and waste is generated in important amounts across the food chain, from production to consumption, imposing serious environmental, social and economic costs. More attention is paid in Morocco to food losses while food waste (FW) is generally overlooked. There are few research activities on this problem in the kingdom. This exploratory study aims to evaluate household FW in Morocco. An online survey with 122 Moroccan households was conducted in February-May 2015 to assess the knowledge and relative importance of FW; attitudes towards FW; impacts of behaviors regarding food and food management; quantity and value; as well as barriers and willingness to behavioral change. Sample is gender-balanced (52% female and 48% male) and rather young (80% are less than 44 years old) while most of respondents have high education level. Results show that household's planning and shopping activities are important predictors of FW. On the other hand, attitudes may change according to periods especially in Ramadan (87% declare that FW is higher during this month) and also to the category of food (most wasted product groups are cereals and bakery products, fruits and vegetables). Most of the respondents have a good understanding of food labels. It seems that FW is widespread in Morocco as only 3.3% of respondents declare that they do not waste any food. About two-fifths (39%) declare that their households throw away at least 250 g of still consumable food each week. The economic value of FW generated each month is more than 60 Moroccan Dirham (\approx 6 US\$) for 54% of respondents' households. In order to change consumers and household's FW behavior, efforts should be directed towards providing consumers with skills and tools to deal with their food-related activities and to consider environmental and economic impacts of food waste.

Keywords: *Food waste, Online survey, Household behavior, Morocco.*