

Wren Notes



Certified Dietary Managers - Certified Food Protection Professionals

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(Official Site has a cover photo of Myrtle Beach)

Food Waste: Is it Killing Your Bottom Line?

Rick Schmitt, CDM, CFPP



The USDA estimates that 30-40 percent of all food in the United States is wasted at the retail and consumer levels. On average, households could save about \$370 per person annually by reducing food waste. That is a considerable amount of money that could be used elsewhere within the household. With this being the case in households, what does this look like in your food service operation, and how can you control waste better to benefit your bottom line?

There are a few key areas to look at when determining where your waste is coming from - over ordering, over production, portion sizes, storage issues/rotation, and plate waste.

Your menu is the basis for ordering, but you also need to know your clientele as to their preferences, diet needs, and eating habits. Menus must be created on your clientele's interests and not your own or other staffs' eating preferences.

When you start a new menu cycle, pay particular attention and track what the "hot" items are for predicting future ordering patterns. Look for what is coming back to the kitchen as uneaten waste, what is left on the serving line after meals have been served, and question your residents as to what they liked on the menu, or why they did not like certain items. The first run of a menu cycle is always tricky even if your residents have limited choices, but by taking the time to investigate waste during this time you can head off over-ordering in the future and reallocate that money for products that are accepted or increase the quality of products purchased.

Train your staff to produce food based on need.

Over-production can seriously increase your waste as well. You can be creative with re-use, but that is not always feasible and causes additional planning. Producing the correct quantity is always a best practice.

Portion sizes are also very important to curbing waste. Not only are they governed by your Registered Dietitian's approval on your spreadsheets, but they also play a key role in financial management of your budget. Make sure you have the proper serving utensils; your staff is trained on how to properly use them; and, audit your service lines frequently to ensure the standards are being followed. Staff forget that residents do not eat portions that they would eat and tend to want to give them more. Discourage this behavior and insist that they follow guidelines set forth in the diet spreadsheets.

Another area to pay close attention to is your storage abilities and equipment issues. Ordering more than you can store properly will lead to waste or theft. Monitor your refrigeration constantly for proper temperatures; make sure your products are stored in the proper areas in the refrigerators/freezers; and, above all, make sure that FIFO is being followed from receiving to production.

We touched on plate waste earlier, but be extremely cognoscente of this issue. Change items that are not wanted on your menu for foods that are requested. If your residents do not like Three Bean Salad, change it. Save the money.

South Carolina ANFP Board 2026-2027



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The SCANFP chapter needs your talents!

Volunteers are needed for multiple roles throughout the year from the committee level to the executive board. Get involved! This is your chapter - you make a difference!

Contact any of your board members to learn more about what you can do to better your chapter.



Registration information coming soon!

6 CE's for \$75.00

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Food Safety Resources

Stay up to date on Food Safety concerns and outbreaks with these helpful resources:

FoodSafety.gov

USDA.gov

FDA.gov

CDC.gov

Add these sites to your "Favorites" for easy access. Subscribe to their newsletters when possible.





SCANFP By Law Update

The SCANFP Board was asked to review a new set of By Laws from ANFP and to vote on ratification. The board unanimously voted to accept the By Laws as presented by ANFP. For the change to take place the membership from South Carolina must also vote on these changes. This information will be coming to you soon. Here is a summary of the changes to the governing document:

The 2026 document represents a comprehensive governance modernization rather than a routine update. It standardizes state chapter governance under ANFP, removes many South Carolina-specific operational details from the bylaws, strengthens ANFP oversight and legal consistency, simplifies officer roles and terms, and shifts operational procedures (such as conference planning, reimbursements, and recordkeeping) out of the bylaws and into policies and procedures. This approach makes the bylaws more consistent across all affiliated state associations while leaving flexibility for each state to manage day-to-day operations through separate governance documents.



**SC and NC ANFP
have joined forces for the
2026 Fall Conferences in
Myrtle Beach, SC.**

Save the Date!

October 7-9, 2026

**Quality Industry Education
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***More information will be available in
August for Registration***

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