



MOUNT PROSPECT SUSTAINABILITY news

Winter 2024

WELCOME TO SUSTAINABILITY NEWS!

Sustainability News is the Village of Mount Prospect's newest tool aimed at informing people about all things sustainability. Stay tuned for quarterly updates about what the Village is doing for sustainability, what you can do for sustainability, and other important

updates. Creation of this Newsletter comes from a Village Board lead initiative to create a "Sustainability Guide." Creation of a Newsletter will improve on the guide and help keep you informed on time sensitive information and recent developments in sustainability efforts!

What is Sustainability?

1. "The ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level"
2. "Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance"

These are two of the Oxford Dictionary definitions of sustainability. But this can mean many things to many people, so defining it can be challenging. The Village of Mount Prospect defines sustainability as "...meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Try taking time to talk to others about what sustainability means to them!

Understanding sustainability is important for everyone, but it can be especially impactful for people around Lake Michigan. As temperatures rise and climate change impacts the world, Lake Michigan and its waterways may see direct negative consequences. Increased precipitation and major flooding are projected to become more frequent. As a result, sewer overflows into Lake Michigan are expected to happen 50 percent to 120 percent more often by the end of the century. These incidents impact the drinking water that residents of the Great Lakes region rely on!

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GARBAGE/RECYCLING

Holiday Light Recycling

It's that time of the year again- Mount Prospect residents begin to pack up the pumpkins and hang up their lights. Along with this fantastic time of year comes the age old worry, "will all of my lights work this year?". While residents wrestle with figuring that out, the Village will step in and help get rid of any duds!

The Village is accepting unused and non-working holiday string lights and extension cords. The materials in the string lights and extension cords will be reclaimed and reprocessed into new products. Most importantly they will be kept out of the landfill!

Residents can drop off their unwanted holiday string lights and extension cords at the west end of the Public Works Department parking lot (1700 West Central Road). Call 847. 870.5640 for more information.

As a reminder for both of these programs, every town and Village handles the disposal of holiday lights and old Christmas trees differently. If any non Mount Prospect residents, friends, or family are looking to dispose of lights or Christmas trees, have them reach out to their municipal government and ask how they handle it!

Christmas Tree Disposal

The Village of Mount Prospect will begin its annual winter collection of live Christmas trees beginning in January. When setting your tree out for collection, all decorative items must be removed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Lights
- Tinsel
- Ornaments
- Strings
- Wires

Do not trim or cut the trees for collection. Trees can be left whole when they are placed curbside. Christmas wreaths are not a part of this program and must be disposed with regular collection. Wreaths often contain metal framing that prevent them from being part of this program.

Collection will be completed by the Village's refuse and recycling hauler, Republic Services, on your regular collection day between January 2 and January 12.



Holiday Wrapping Paper

A common term brought up when talking about recycling is “wish-cycling.” This term refers to the well intentioned recycling of items that people want to recycle, or believe can be recycled, but actually belong with standard garbage. Whereas efforts to recycle items is always appreciated, this can often have negative consequences on recycling efforts.

One item that commonly gets thrown into recycling as part of wish-cycling, is paper products and wrapping paper in particular. Wrapping paper shares many similarities to other recyclable items and has situations where it can and cannot be recycled.

The easiest way to know if wrapping paper should be recycled or not happens well before it's ripped open. When buying paper, look for specific wrapping paper that is clearly marked as recyclable. Doing this can take out the guessing game of knowing if it should be recycled. If you have already purchased wrapping paper and don't know if it's recyclable or not, take a peek at the material of the paper. The Village's refuse and recycling handler states that all sparkly and shiny paper cannot be recycled.

The EPA recommends using gift wrapping alternatives such as reusable gift bags, boxes, and even newspaper!

Styrofoam Recycling

Recycling is one of the gifts that keeps on giving this holiday season. To help promote recycling of hard to recycle items (items that cannot be recycled curbside), the Village is accepting clean and dry Styrofoam and will recycle it at the Village's Public Works main facility at 1700 W Central Road. Styrofoam can be dropped off on Tuesdays between 10 am and 12 pm, as well as on Thursdays between 1 pm and 3 pm. Please do not drop off Styrofoam outside of the hours listed above.

How does the Village recycle Styrofoam? Styrofoam recycling machines, also known as foam densifiers, use a high volume extrusion technology. The machine crushes and shreds Styrofoam into small bits. The foam bits are then dropped into an auger/screw where the material is heated by thermochemical reaction. The melted waste is then extruded and ready for collection. The final product is reusable and 1/90th the size of the original Styrofoam added!

Food Waste, What Are We Really Wasting?

With everyone coming together over the holidays for celebrations, food can play a key role in many families' traditions. PBS SoCal sites 11 traditional holiday foods served around the world, here are a few:

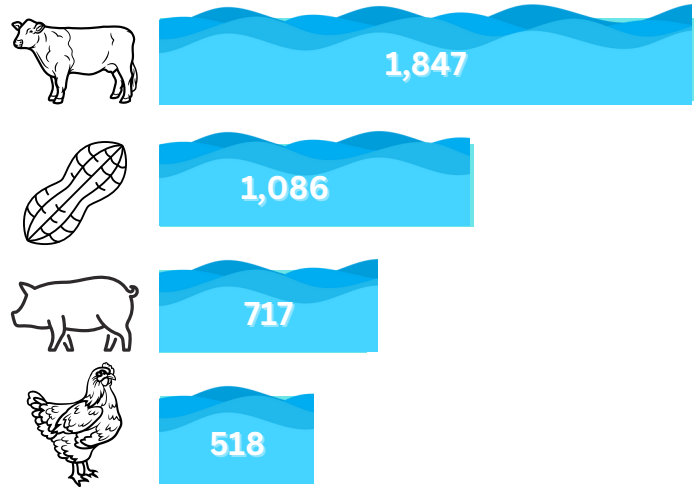
- **Verivorst** - Estonia
- **Tamales** - South and Central America
- **Kentucky Fried Chicken** - Japan
- **Oysters** - France
- **Bunuelo** - Colombia

All of these items have very different origins, history, and delicious flavors that make them unique. But these food items and the food you serve at home over the holidays have one guaranteed thing in common; it needed resources from nature to be grown, raised, and produced. This section will focus on the impacts and the resources that are being used in agricultural production.

Water

The chart to the upper-right shows the gallons of water needed to produce a pound of beef, nuts, pork, and poultry. Water use may not seem like a big deal for communities near the Great Lakes, we have lakes that are pretty “great” in size! But these impacts can have greater and

Gallons of Water per Pound



grander consequences. Current water consumption nationwide is using up underground aquifers quicker than they can be replenished. Depleted aquifers can have dangerous outcomes and lead to drops in regional water tables, worsening water quality, and damage to plants and wildlife.

Decreasing the demand for water by making more water conscious decisions give aquifers and above ground bodies of water more time to restore.

Land

Meat, dairy, vegetables, fruit, and all other items we consume during the holidays require land to grow, be raised or created, and this has an impact on the
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Find the Full PBS article “11 Traditional Holiday Foods From Around the World” by clicking [here](#)



environment. Currently, just under half of all habitable land (land people can live on) is used for agriculture. 80% of that land is then used for livestock production. Livestock related production uses a disproportional portion of all habitable land. To make this situation even worse, the land that is used for livestock only produces 17% of all calories consumed worldwide and 38% of all protein consumed worldwide.

Beef production is one of the major drivers of land loss for food production, and the impacts are extensive. Between 2005 and 2013, the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, in addition to Brazil, contributed an average of 2.1 Million hectares of tropical deforestation per year for beef production. These numbers just include the number of acres used for grazing land. In addition to grazing land, over 75% of global soy bean production and land is used to feed livestock, including cows!

Carbon Dioxide/Greenhouse Gases

We've all heard the jokes before, cow farts are leading to global warming. While there is truth to this, there's

actually a lot more to the story! in 2022 food production accounted for 26% of all greenhouse gas emissions. That's an equivalent of 13.6 Billion tons of greenhouse gases. Four major variables lead to this production: the supply chain of moving agriculture (18%), livestock management (31%), crop production (27%), and general land use (24%).

"Eating local" is a common trend for people looking to reduce the impact they have on the environment. Reducing the transportation related environmental damages may be good, but it doesn't get at the heart of the issue. Changing where we get our foods from will not address the larger issue of the process we use to produce these foods.

To make matters worse for greenhouse gas emissions, increases in greenhouse gas emissions only continue to increase the strain we put on water and land resources. Changes in climate and temperature continue to decrease the amount of land that can be used for agriculture. Regions facing these changes are also putting increased stress on water resources to mitigate changes!

Source for this section: [Our World Data.org](https://data.worldbank.org/)

FOOD WASTE

How to prevent food waste

As was discussed in the previous section on agriculture, lots of resources go into creating the food we eat, and these resources all have varying strains on the environment. With that in mind, it's important to make sure food does not go to waste this holiday season! The EPA estimates that between 30% and 40% of the food supply ends up becoming food waste. This food waste had an estimated value of \$161 Billion dollars in 2010.

Use the following tips from the EPA to help reduce the amount of food waste you generate this holiday season and all year round:

- Preplan and write your shopping list before going to the grocery store. As you write your list, think about what meals you will be preparing the following week, and check your fridge to see what items you already have.
- When at the store, buy only what you need and stick to your shopping list. Be careful when buying in bulk, especially with items that have a limited shelf life.
- If available, purchase “imperfect” fruits or vegetables that often get left behind at the grocery store but are safe to

eat. Imperfect produce has physical imperfections but is not damaged or rotten. Imperfect fruits and vegetables are safe and nutritious and can sometimes be found at discounted prices.

- When eating out, ask for smaller portions to prevent plate waste and keep you from overeating. You can also request a take-away box to take leftovers home instead of leaving food on your plate.
- Check the temperature setting of your fridge. Keep the temperature at 40° F or below to keep foods safe. The temperature of your freezer should be 0° F.
- Refrigerate peeled or cut veggies for freshness and to keep them from going bad.
- Create a designated space in your fridge for foods that you think will be going bad within a few days.
- Learn about food product dating – Many consumers misunderstand the purpose and meaning of the date labels that often appear on packaged foods. Confusion over date labeling accounts for an estimated 20 percent of consumer food waste.

What does “Best If Used By” mean?

FDA supports efforts by the food industry to make “Best if Used By” the standard phrase to indicate the date when a product will be at its best flavor and quality. Consumers should examine foods for signs of spoilage that are past their “Best If Used By” date. If the products have changed noticeably in color, consistency, or texture, consumers may want to avoid eating them. If you have questions or concerns about the quality, safety, and labeling of the packaged foods you buy, you are encouraged to reach out to the company that produced the

product. Many packaged foods provide the company’s contact information on the package. Manufacturers apply date labels at their own discretion and for a variety of reasons. The most common is to inform consumers and retailers of the date to which they can expect the food to retain its desired quality and flavor. Industry is moving toward more uniform practices for date labeling of packaged foods. But, for now, consumers may see different phrases used for product dating, such as Sell By, Best By, Expires on, etc.

Cook County Update: Pollution Reduction Program

The County has allocated approximately \$2.3 million for free, on-site pollution reduction assessments and grant administration support. These assessments help identify ways businesses can reduce pollution and create a healthier environment for employees, customers, and the community. Assessments specifically look for opportunities to reduce energy and water usage, increase waste diversion from landfills, reduce use of toxic chemicals in operations, and help determine if the location is suitable for on-site renewable energy. The Illinois

Department of Employment Services partnered with the Chicago Urban League on grant administration, including disbursing funds and identifying eligible local businesses for the BRITE program.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced \$1.4 million in grant awards on November 4, 2024, for six recipients of the Businesses Reducing Impact on the Environment (BRITE) program.

Click [here](#) to read the full Cook County press release