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## **USDA LAUNCHES ACE THE WASTE! FOOD WASTE CONTEST FOR STUDENTS**

Food waste is a problem everyone can tackle, including our nation's youth. As part of Winning on Reducing Food Waste Month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is launching Ace the Waste! A student competition for food waste reduction ideas. This first-ever competition calls on students to come up with creative solutions to reduce food loss and waste in the United States.

The problem of food waste affects everyone. More than one third of food in the U.S. is lost or wasted. This amounts to 133 billion pounds, or \$161 billion worth of food each year. Food is the single largest type of waste in landfills. Students age 11 to 18 are encouraged to submit proposals on reducing food loss and waste anywhere along the supply chain, from the farm to the dinner table and beyond. Topic ideas for the proposal include:

- ***Preventing food waste*** - such as ideas to prolong the storage life of food; improve efficiencies in the processing of food and its distribution; and create new products from unharvested or unsold crops (like so-called "ugly fruit and vegetables") or from food processing by-products.
- ***Recovering wholesome, excess food to feed people*** – such as innovative approaches for getting excess food to people who need it and measuring the value of food donations.
- ***Recycling food scraps to keep them out of landfills*** – such as ideas to connect food waste generators with recyclers and to create animal feed, compost, and energy.
- ***Raising awareness*** – such as ideas about how to make students more aware about the amount of food being wasted and let them know how to reduce it.

Students may submit 1-2 page proposals or 1-2 minute videos. Proposals will be judged on impact potential; originality and creativity; clarity of expression; and adherence/appropriateness to theme. Judges will include representatives from USDA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). One winner will be selected from each of two categories – ages 11-14 and ages 15-18. The winner of the challenge will be honored with recognition on USDA's social media accounts and website, receive a certificate of appreciation, and will have the opportunity to discuss their proposals with USDA leadership.

The deadline for proposals is 5:00 p.m. EDT, Friday, May 24, 2019. Submit your ideas to the Ace the Waste!

During Winning on Reducing Food Waste Month and beyond, join the conversation on social media with the #NoWastedFood hashtag. Learn more about resources to reduce food waste at <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/Challenge/index.htm>

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