

Sainsbury's to remove 'use by' dates from own-brand yoghurts to cut waste

Sainsbury's is to remove 'use by' dates from 46 own-brand yoghurts and instead switch to 'best before' dates to let customers make their own decisions on whether the products remain good to eat.

Some 54,000 tonnes of yoghurt is wasted a year – around half of it in unopened tubs – with consumers citing the date label for 70% of it, research by the Waste & Resources Action Programme (Wrap) found.

Sainsbury's reassured customers that although 'use by' dates advise as to when food remains safe to eat, its own "stringent testing" confirmed that its yoghurt was safe to consume past its expiration date.

With yoghurts, applying a 'best before' date rather than a 'use by' date means that people can use their judgment to eat beyond that date.

Moving to 'best before' dates for the products would allow consumers to make their own decisions on whether the products remained good to eat, it said.

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In January, [Morrisons](#) announced plans to remove 'use by' dates on milk and encourage consumers to use a "sniff test" instead to determine if it is OK to consume.

The grocer also announced it is to remove 'best before' dates from another 100 fresh produce lines, including pears, onions, tomatoes and citrus fruits from the end of this month, with a further 130 products including potatoes to follow.

It has already removed 'best before' dates from more than 1,500 lines including bananas, apples and indoor plants,

Last week [Asda](#) announced it is to remove 'best before' dates from almost 250 fresh fruit and vegetable products from September 1, following [Waitrose](#) and Marks & Spencer removing the dates from hundreds of fresh products and [Tesco](#) leading the way when it got rid of them from more than 100 items in 2018.

It follows the Waste & Resources Action Programme (Wrap) saying that 'best before' dates on fruit and vegetables are unnecessary and contribute to climate change.

Wrap figures suggest that the average family throws away £60 worth of food and drink each month.

Kate Stein, director of technical at Sainsbury's, said: "We know that around a third of all food produced for human consumption is either lost or wasted and food waste is one of the leading contributors of carbon emissions, accounting for a staggering 8% to 10% of greenhouse gas emissions globally, which is why we're committed to helping customers reduce waste at home.

“We also know that by avoiding unnecessary waste, we can help our customers save money by making their food shop last longer.

“The changes that we’re announcing today will do just that, giving customers more autonomy to make their own decisions on whether their food is good to eat, and preventing them from disposing of food too early.

“With changes like these, together, we can all play our part in tackling the climate crisis and protecting the planet for generations to come.”

Catherine David, director of collaboration and change at Wrap, said: “The right date label, or no date label, has a big influence on what we use and what we throw away.

“For fruit and veg, date labels are unnecessary and our research has shown that removing them can save the equivalent of seven million shopping baskets’ worth from our household bins a year.

“With yoghurts, applying a ‘best before’ date rather than a ‘use by’ date means that people can use their judgment to eat beyond that date.

“Storing most fruit and veg and all yoghurt products in the fridge, below 5 degrees, will keep them fresher longer.”