Asda joins supermarket dash to ditch ‘best before’ dates on fresh produce

Asda has become the latest supermarket to announce it will scrap “best before” dates on almost 250 fresh fruit and vegetable items in a push to cut food waste, amid the current cost of living crisis.

The grocery giant said it would remove the labels from produce including citrus fruits, potatoes, cauliflowers and carrots across all its UK stores from September.

The dates will be replaced by a new code which will be used by store staff to ensure quality and freshness, the company said.

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Asda is also providing guidance online and on packaging to help customers store and prepare fresh food as well as tips on how to **reduce waste**.

It comes after the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) said “best before” dates on fruit and vegetables were unnecessary and contributed to climate change.

Figures published by the charity suggest the average family throws away £60 worth of food and drink each month.

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Increased food costs were the biggest driver of the **latest inflation hike**, which surged to a fresh 40-year high of 10.1% in the 12 months to July, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Asda's Andy Cockshaw said: "Reducing food waste in our business and in customers' homes is a priority and we are always looking at different ways to achieve this.

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"We know for customers this has become more important than ever in the current climate as many families are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and are looking to make savings wherever they can."

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Catherine David, director of collaboration and change at Wrap, said: "We are delighted by this development from Asda to help tackle food waste in our homes.

"Our research has shown that date labels on fruit and veg are unnecessary – getting rid of them can prevent the equivalent of seven million shopping baskets' worth from our household bins.

"The influence of no date label or the right date label on what we use and what we throw away is huge.

"More supermarkets need to get ahead on food waste by axing date labels from fresh produce, allowing people to use their own judgement."

Waitrose and **Marks & Spencer** announced earlier this month they were removing "best before" dates from hundreds of fresh products, while **Tesco** led the way when it got rid of them from

more than 100 items in 2018.

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 was suitable to use.