

UT Dallas Comet Composting and Food Recovery Initiative

Abstract



Fig. 1 – Environmental Protection Agency’s Food Recovery Hierarchy

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United Nations (UN) have adopted goals to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. The University of Texas at Dallas set the goal to become a national leader in addressing food waste to meet and exceed these goals through the combined efforts from Facilities Management, the Sustainability Office, Dining Services, Student Affairs, Student Government, and the Sustainability Club. Due to this collaborative effort, UT Dallas is effectively addressing every preferred method for handling food waste according to the EPA’s Food Recovery Hierarchy (Fig 1).

Through the collaborative and holistic approach, UT Dallas currently diverts 66% of food waste.*

- **Source Reduction** – Dining Services educates about food waste and sustainability with signage throughout the facility and trayless dining helps control portions.
- **Feed Hungry People** – Students from the Sustainability Club founded a chapter of the Food Recovery Network, which services leftover food to the needy. 3,587 pounds have been donated since the program began in 2016.*
- **Feed Animals/Industrial/Uses/Composting** – All food waste from the dining hall, pre-consumer food waste from Union dining chains, and student apartment food waste goes to Organix Composting which uses food waste for animal feed, anaerobic digestion and composting.

*Methodology and data given in Benchmarking and analysis section