

New Zealand to conduct national food waste audit

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In response to the Environment's Select Committee investigation into food waste in 2020, the Government has called on University of Otago researchers to help determine how much food isn't making it to the table in New Zealand.

Food Waste Innovation Otago has been awarded a contract by the Ministry for the Environment to estimate food waste in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Research lead Professor Sheila Skeaff, of the Department of Human Nutrition, says the group will be measuring food loss and waste across the food supply chain.

The scope of the measurement is intended to be broad and aims to capture all imported or domestically produced food and drink throughout the food supply chain. Foods produced in New Zealand includes plants, animals, aquaculture, and fisheries, which will be measured from ready for harvest. The group is also interested in finding out where food waste ends up.

To obtain this information, researchers will be approaching farmers, producers, food distribution, retail, industry, food service, and hospitality businesses, to obtain data many already produce.

The UN estimates that 13.3 per cent of the world's food is lost after harvesting and before reaching retail markets. Furthermore, food that is lost and wasted accounts for 38 per cent of the total energy used in the global food system.

The Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor is also currently undertaking a major project on food rescue, food loss and food waste.