

Food Waste Management Evaluation Results

2025 Solid Waste Interested Parties (SWIP) Meeting
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



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Project Background



- Statewide evaluations of how food waste is currently generated and managed
- Funded by the EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grants (SWIFR)
- Data collection, surveying, identifying barriers, recommendations for next steps

Food Waste Evaluation



Project Overview

- Data collection and evaluation using *2020-2021 Wisconsin Statewide Waste Characterization Study*, ReFED's Food Waste Monitor and the EPA Excess Food Opportunities Map
- Survey efforts to various sectors
- Review of other policies and programs nationally



Food Waste Generation

- Over 4.5 million tons of MSW disposed of in Wisconsin's landfills in 2024
 - Approx. 652,000 tons wasted food (previously edible)
 - Approx. 270,000 tons of food scraps
- ReFED estimates:
 - Largest food waste generating sectors are residents, food service, and retail (sending waste to landfill)
 - Manufacturing sector mainly land applies food waste, and farming sector mostly leaves food unharvested

Survey Efforts

- Robust survey to gather insight about current practices generating, managing or diverting food waste
- Survey distributed to composters, wastewater treatment, food rescue (donation) outlets, local government, waste haulers, food to animals, and industry groups (restaurants, manufacturing, etc.)
- Over 200 responses received

Guiding goal is to reduce food waste disposed of in landfills on a per-capita basis by half by 2030, based on 2020 levels



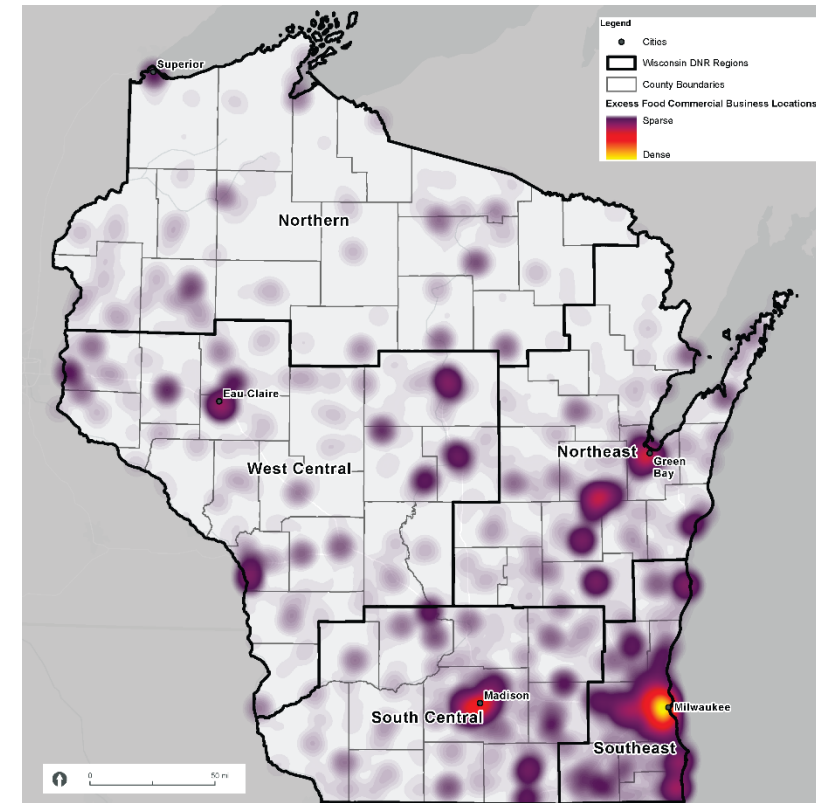
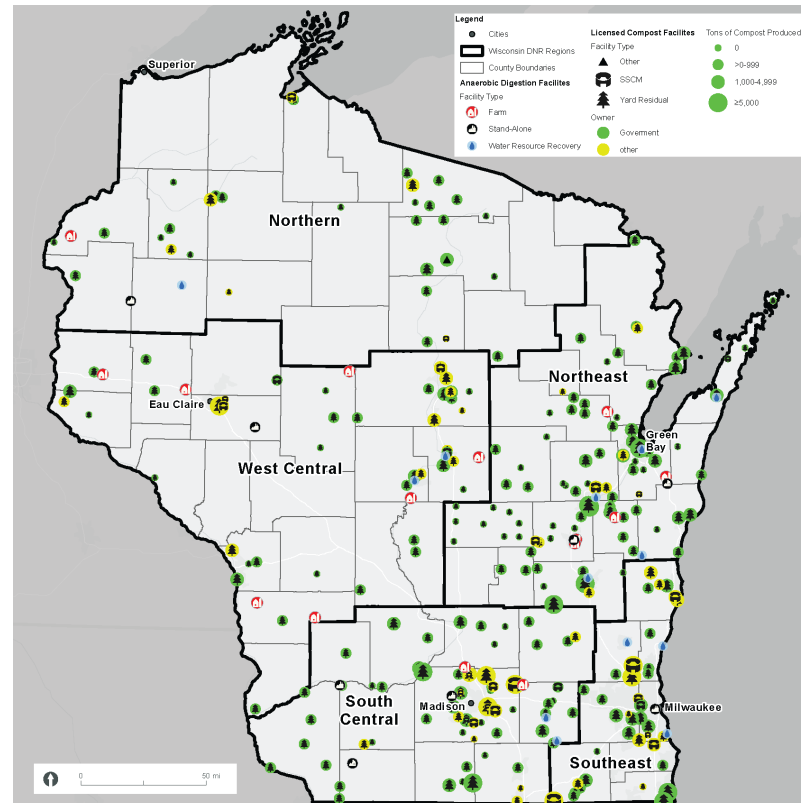
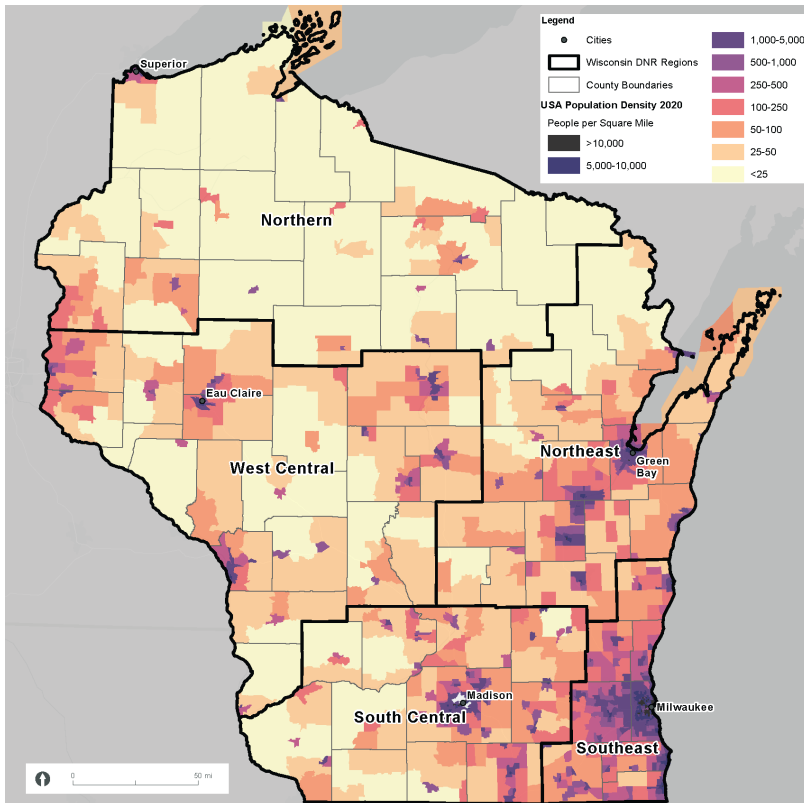
Existing Infrastructure

- Data and analysis on capacity of existing food rescue and processing facilities
- Currently not enough existing capacity of food recovery and recycling infrastructure to manage all food waste generated
- Consider future policies, programs, and partnerships to increase capacity of rescue and recycling, promote end markets, and reduce food waste generation



Regional Evaluation

Utilize WDNR regions to identify food waste generation, existing facilities, and opportunities for new/expanded facilities based on anticipated food waste generation



Key Findings and Recommendations

- Data analysis and recommendations still in development, to be included in final report
- Unique factors to WI include agriculture industry and dairy production
- All interested parties – generators, haulers, processing facilities, food rescue organizations, local government – can increase collaboration and partnerships to reduce food waste and divert food waste from landfills

