Your partner
in progress

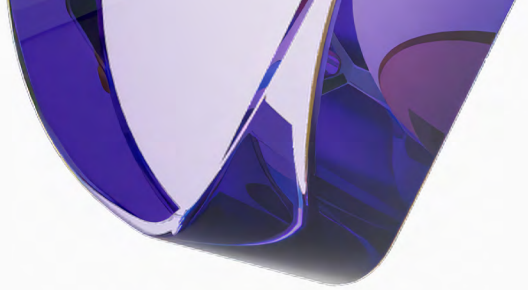
Setting the standard

BS ISO 20001:2026

The next step in managing food loss and waste



© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Contents

Foreword 3

Driving progress from farm to plate

The new global framework for reducing food loss and waste 4

The new Food Loss and Waste Management System standard: BS ISO 20001:2026

A global challenge 5

Critical sustainability, economic, and moral questions.

The environmental and economic cost 5

A trillion-dollar drain on resources and climate.

The UK landscape and regulatory horizon 6

An increasingly important operational, commercial and sustainability priority.

Roads to food loss and waste reduction 7

Different stages of understanding, measuring and reducing food waste

The operational reality: Stories from eight companies across the UK food supply chain 8

Strengthening operational practice 9

HG Walter

Wealmoor

Developing measurement and insight 13

PrepWorld

Embedding a systematic approach 15

Whitbread PLC

Compleat Food Group

Driving continuous improvement and influence 19

Lidl GB

FareShare Midlands

Arla Foods

A shared operational language for the global food supply chain 25

Transforming food waste from an unmanaged operating cost into a verified and auditable asset.

Conclusion: From passion projects to permanent systems 27

Turning unwritten routines into embedded practices.

About this research, BSI and ISO 28

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Foreword

Having worked on food loss and waste (FLW) for more than 20 years, I know the frustration at the slow rate of progress in reducing FLW and in reaping the economic, social and environmental benefits.

That is why I was so pleased to write the foreword to this report that offers a picture of how things might be different, and how standards can help drive more consistent and effective action.

It tells the stories of eight very different organizations, of differing maturity, each facing different issues in terms of their management of FLW and approaches to handle it.

Together, they provide some great examples of action on FLW, while demonstrating how a standard like BS ISO 20001:2026 can potentially help organizations accelerate progress, manage change, drive cost efficiency and embed best practice across their operations.

I was struck by some of the common themes which emerged, in particular the clear business case for action. We have known for many years that there is a strong economic business case for driving down FLW and these case studies clearly demonstrate that.

I strongly believe that this report will provide something for all businesses to learn from and it should inspire and motivate others to act.

I am also excited by the potential for BS ISO 20001 to make a real difference to the organizations in this report and to many others.

A great deal of thought and work went into the development of BS ISO 20001 by many experts in FLW and experts in standards drawn from a wide range of countries. That combined effort will all have been worth it if we can help businesses be more productive and more competitive.

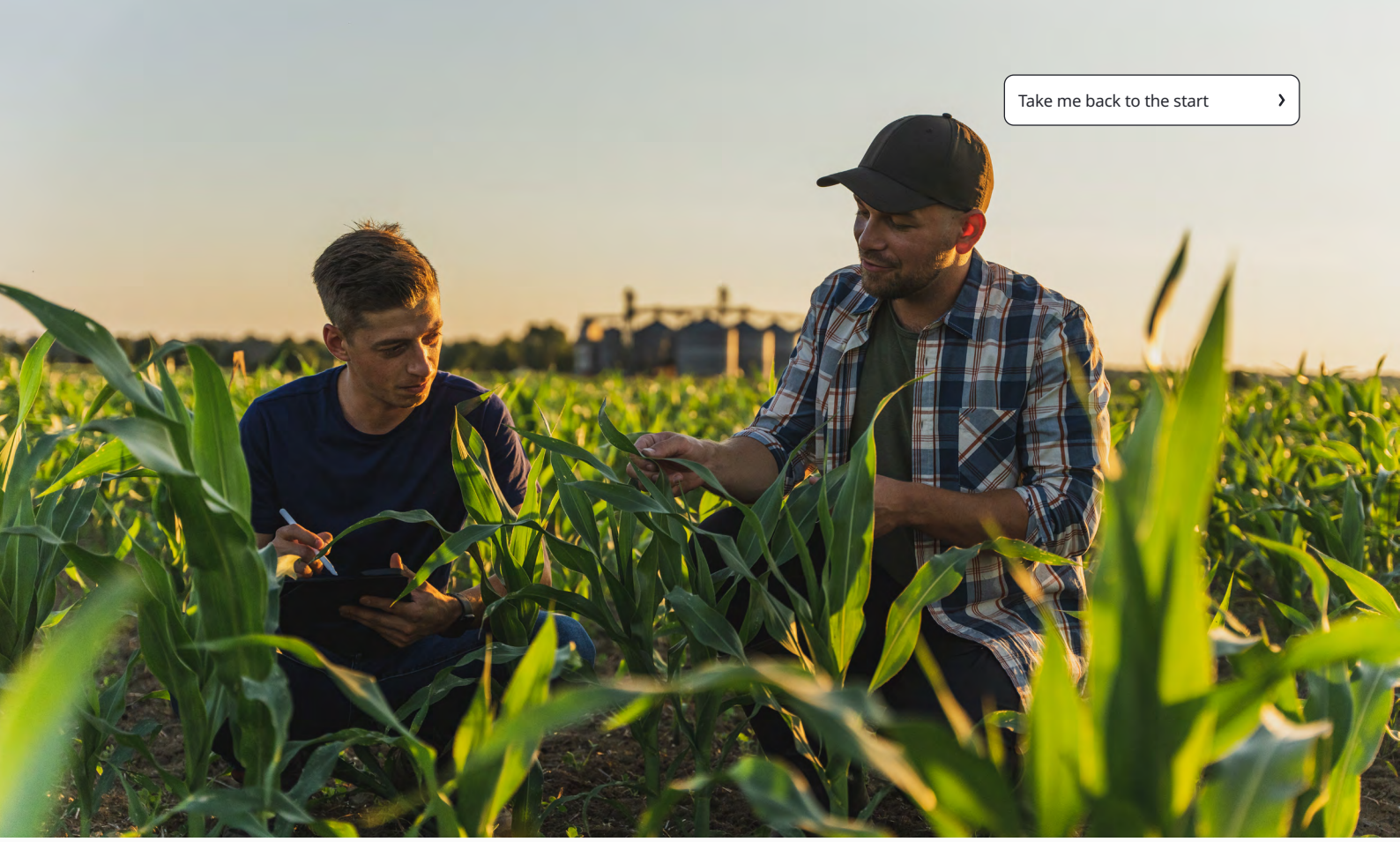
And in the longer term, we hope that it will help drive FLW reductions across the entire food system, from farm to plate, so we can really make progress towards a sustainable food system.



Dr Liz Goodwin OBE,
Senior Fellow and Director Food Loss and Waste at World Resources Institute

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›



The new global framework for reducing food loss and waste

The new Food Loss and Waste Management System standard (BS ISO 20001) marks a major milestone in the fight against food loss and waste (FLW). For the first time, there is an internationally agreed management system framework to systematically prevent and minimize the problem across the entire supply chain.

For all parts of that supply chain, this is an important shift.

Historically, the supply chain has lacked a common language and framework when it comes to tackling FLW. Too often, this has led to companies tackling FLW in isolation, or shifting the burden upstream to suppliers.

BS ISO 20001 is designed to change this dynamic. It establishes a unified basis that allows all actors in the food chain to align on definitions, share accountability, and collaborate on end-to-end food waste reduction. In doing so, food waste prevention can become a direct driver of operational efficiency, cost savings, and long-term organizational resilience.

The standard is designed as a universal framework applicable to any organization regardless of size or complexity. An organization's starting point is shaped by its current internal resources and data infrastructure.

For a business with less developed FLW management processes, it acts as a practical way to establish basic measurement and control. For a highly mature business, it serves as a rigorous verification tool to prove reduction claims to the Board, external buyers and other stakeholders.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›

A global challenge

FLW is one of the world's most critical sustainability, economic, and moral challenges. The scale of the systemic inefficiency is vast. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), approximately 13% to 14% of all food produced globally is lost before the retail stage. And the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that 19% of food available to consumers is wasted at the retail, food service, and household levels.

This represents a profound misallocation of resources within our global food system in which hundreds of millions of people experience chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. A solution is both a business and a moral imperative.



> "Food loss and waste cannot be ignored and is hard to accept when we invest so much land, water, energy and human effort into producing food, only to lose it, all while people struggle to eat. We must measure where food is lost, work together to prevent it, and make that commitment part of everyday decisions across the supply chain, creating value for businesses, people and the planet alike.
>
> **Todd Redwood**
> Global Managing Director, Consumer, Retail & Food, BSI

The environmental and economic cost

According to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), total FLW is estimated to cost the global economy US$1 trillion every year in direct costs. This represents substantial loss of capital and operational productivity.

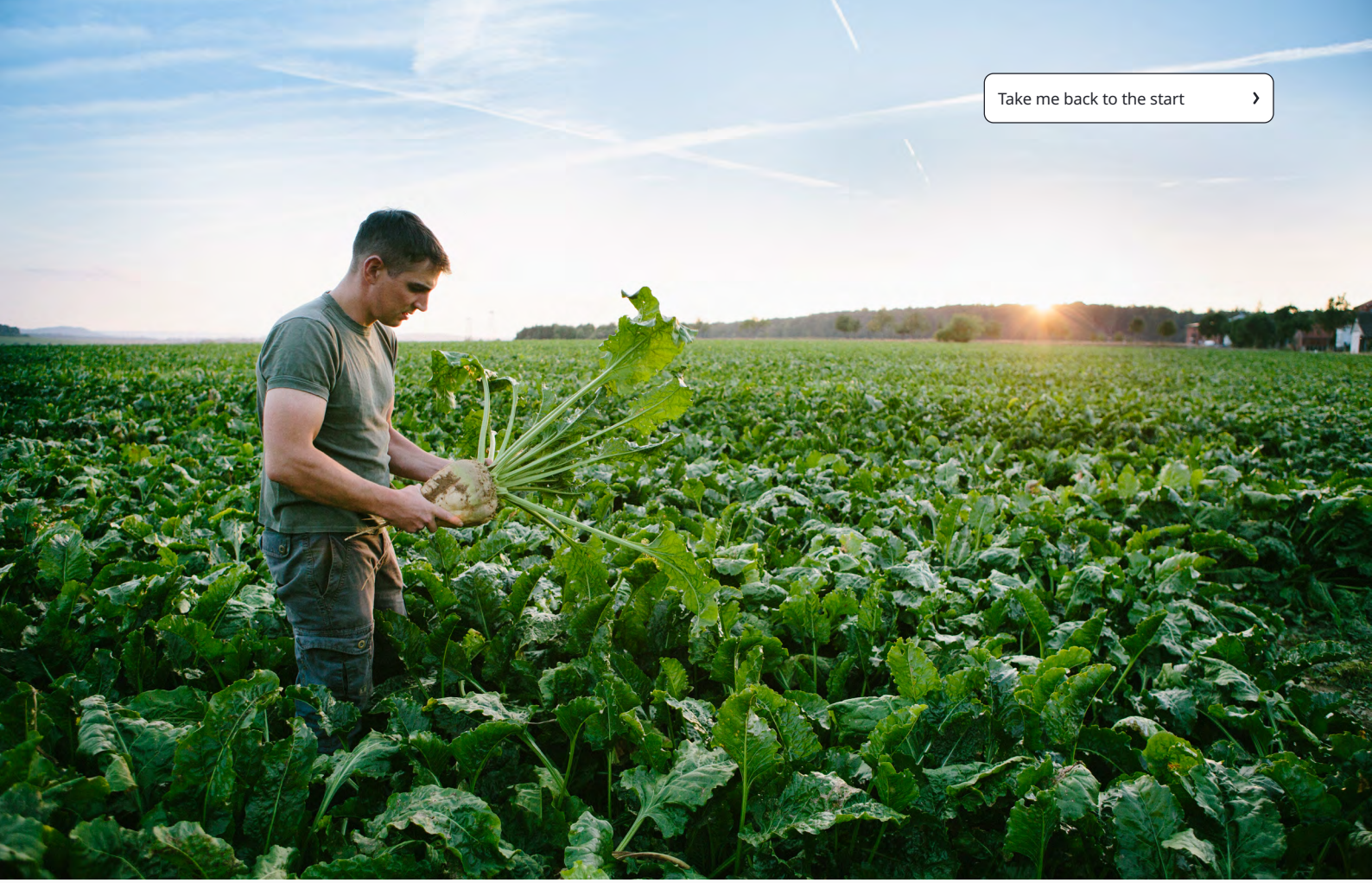
FLW also represents a colossal waste of finite natural resources. It involves the fruitless consumption of vast tracts of agricultural land and billions of cubic metres of fresh water. This is before accounting for the chemical fertilizers, synthetic pesticides, human labour, transport fuel, and processing energy required. All of this to produce food that is ultimately discarded.

Food production also generates major greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, compounded by the methane released when organic waste decays in landfills. In total, FLW contributes approximately 8%–10% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions according to UNFCCC figures.

A 2024 WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) report showed that if food loss and waste were a country, it would be the third-largest carbon emitter in the world, trailing only the United States and China.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›



The UK landscape and regulatory horizon

In the UK, reducing FLW has become an increasingly important operational, commercial and sustainability priority.

Historically, progress has been driven primarily through voluntary industry initiatives coordinated by WRAP. The Food Waste Reduction Roadmap advocates a “Target, Measure, Act” methodology. The UK Food and Drink Pact (formerly the Courtauld Commitment 2030) aligns businesses with the UN Sustainable Development Goal to halve food waste by 2030 (SDG 12.3).

Increasingly, however, voluntary action is being reinforced by regulation. Scotland introduced mandatory food waste separation for food businesses in 2014, followed by Northern Ireland in 2015. Wales introduced similar rules in 2024 for workplaces producing over 5 kg per week. Meanwhile, England’s Simpler Recycling reforms are introducing mandatory food waste segregation for all businesses.

Simultaneously, the financial case for better food waste management is strengthening. Rising food waste disposal costs, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) packaging fees, and the planned inclusion of waste incineration within the UK Emissions Trading Scheme are increasing the cost of mixed residual waste. This is particularly significant for hospitality and catering businesses, where food waste is one of the largest components of general waste.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Roads to food loss and waste reduction

Whilst FLW is a challenge shared across the food supply chain, no organization's reduction journey is identical. From producers and manufacturers to retailers and hospitality businesses, organizations are at different stages of understanding, measuring and reducing food waste.

To coincide with the launch of BS ISO 20001, BSI collaborated with Harper Adams University to shed some light on those journeys. Through the experiences of eight very different organizations, this report moves beyond the theory of FLW management and looks at the operational reality by examining some important questions.

What are the common challenges, practical lessons and opportunities? And, importantly, exactly how might BS ISO 20001 help accelerate their progress, whatever their starting point or how far they've come already?

These eight journeys show that good progress on reducing FLW is already happening. With the support of a shared, standardized framework, it can go even further.

There are some common threads to the eight case studies.

- Progress is, more often than not, driven by financial realities: cost savings are a clear motivator.
- Businesses remain constrained by opaque food waste data.
- Prevention of FLW is the change that makes the biggest difference.
- And there is not much appetite for mandatory regulation of FLW reporting.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

The operational reality: Stories from eight companies across the UK food supply chain

The businesses interviewed are of very different sizes, operate at different stages of the supply chain, and hold varying approaches to operational food loss and waste management.

Every organization starts from a different position. Some are building awareness and measurement capabilities; others are embedding structured processes. Elsewhere, organizations are integrating food loss and waste prevention into wider business strategy and supply chain collaboration.

So, rather than representing levels of performance, the profiles in this report (explained alongside) demonstrate how businesses can evolve from initial awareness and measurement towards fully embedded, strategic and collaborative approaches to food loss and waste prevention and reduction.

Importantly, every part of the journey represents valuable action. Early on, organizations are often laying the foundations for future progress through measurement, engagement and learning.

Later, they might be building on these foundations to embed FLW prevention within business strategy and supply chain relationships. The objective is not to place organizations into predefined categories, but to highlight different approaches and lessons that can help others progress their own FLW reduction efforts.

On the FLW journey: four profiles of progress

Strengthening operational practice: Turning established ways of working into repeatable systems.

Developing measurement and insight: Creating the data needed to target action and track progress.

Embedding a systematic approach: Making food loss and waste reduction part of everyday business management.

Driving continuous improvement and influence: Using established systems and evidence to drive ongoing improvement within the organization and beyond.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Strengthening operational practice

HG Walter: Scaling a 50-year-old whole-carcass ethos through a fivefold facility expansion

HG Walter is a 50-year-old family-run wholesale and retail butcher serving over 1,500 trade customers across London, primarily restaurants, but also top gastropubs, hotels, and stadiums.

As a whole-carcass butchery, food waste prevention is built into the founding philosophy of the firm. With the commitment of all staff to look at new ways to use trimmings, the business keeps total food waste under 5%, utilizing fat and trim for sausages and burgers, bones for broth, and hard-to-sell cuts for curing. To increase the shelf life of prepacked sausages and burgers, they use the thickest vacuum bags, prioritizing product shelf life over packaging tax optimizations.

> "We chose to use thicker vacuum bags to reduce the risk of packs blowing and causing meat to spoil. Preventing unnecessary waste is incredibly important to us, and we believe it is our responsibility to make every effort to ensure that the meat we produce is not wasted.
>
> Project Manager, HG Walter

For decades, food waste management was highly personal, driven by the founder's moral belief that livestock should not be wasted. This ethos relied heavily on the owner's daily presence on the floor, inspecting the trim bins. This attitude has spread across all departments.

Following a recent fivefold facility expansion and move to a 100,000-square-foot processing plant, running costs have increased dramatically. This provided the ideal break point to become more focused on food waste management and the associated financial costs. The increase in processing capacity introduced a speed-versus-efficiency challenge. "When we were smaller, the bones would be cleaner, but as you get bigger, speed becomes much more of a consideration. All our bones are sold, so this meat is not wasted."

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

What's more, because bins are shared across the butchery, the composition of the food waste from different sources could not be determined. Food waste amounts relied entirely on retrospective contractor invoices. Food waste "gets picked up by (the contractor) and the weight is recorded in the invoices", making the identification of waste hotspots very challenging. The waste goes to Anaerobic Digestion (AD) or animal feed.



To scale their carcass-balance model without diluting margins as running costs rise, the company is looking to transition from relying on waste contractor invoices to active daily FLW measurement.

While HG Walter do possess excellent farm-to-batch traceability, they are at the early stages of linking that food waste back to specific ingredient and carcass inputs.

The team plans to weigh bins daily on existing pallet scales and utilize their configurable software system to digitize yield reports. By establishing clear definitions between food waste and commercial side-streams (e.g. selling bones to restaurants), HG Walter can carry the founder's values into a high-volume facility. This structured control will also provide the audited performance data needed to satisfy larger wholesale clients and optimize their surplus donations to partners like the Felix Project.

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **A documentation framework and guidance:** a structured management system to map out processes, identify FLW hot spots, and establish consistent measurement and reporting.
- ✓ **A common language for food waste:** Clear, standard definitions of edible food, inedible food, food waste and by-product, "so everyone's on the same path." The standard would function as a route into formal practice.
- ✓ **A system that survives growth:** Converting good practice held by individuals into documented checks and processes that can scale with future growth.
- ✓ **Audited data for customers:** Documented policy and performance ready for larger customers' sustainability demands.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Wealmoor: Protecting tight agricultural margins against unpredictable food waste shocks

Established over 50 years ago, Wealmoor is a vertically integrated grower-packer. It manages fresh produce from fields around the world to UK retail depots, operating across three domestic sites.

Operating on tight agricultural margins, the company maintains an overall FLW level in the UK of 2.5–3%. A significant proportion of this loss (31–40%) occurs during supply chain management.

To achieve this and manage differing retailer specifications for quality, size and appearance, Wealmoor operates a multi-buyer model, routing different grades of produce to a diverse pool of retail buyers. This ensures produce that may not meet one retailer's particular requirements can still be sold through another channel, maximizing the use of every harvest.

Wealmoor manages food waste through a split governance structure between commercial, technical, procurement and operations, with no dedicated food waste management roles. While they track food waste via an ERP-based mass-balance model, their data has a current measurement limitation.

Wealmoor relies on supplier pack weights being correct, as gate-level verification is currently "economically unviable."

The highly competitive nature of fresh produce places continual pressure on costs, which can make investment in enhanced waste-reducing packaging challenging where the additional cost cannot be recovered through the supply chain.

"We've tried different packaging and freight containers, but there is inevitably a balance between the additional cost of intervention and the measurable reduction in food waste it delivers. Greater collaboration across the supply chain can help unlock solutions which are both economically and environmentally sustainable."



Wealmoor also manages the inherent challenge of aligning agricultural production with rapidly changing consumer demand. Most retailers work on the basis of seasonal joint business plans, while programmes become increasingly defined closer to delivery and final orders are typically received 12–24 hours before despatch for depot delivery. For highly perishable products, this requires sophisticated forecasting and demand planning from planting through to final customer orders. Equally, carrying excessive buffer stock can itself increase food waste if demand does not materialize.

> "Final orders are typically received 12–24 hours before despatch, while agricultural decisions have necessarily been made considerably earlier. This requires significant demand planning and forecasting across highly perishable products, where both availability and consumer demand can change quickly.
>
> Group Technical and Sustainability Manager, Wealmoor

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

This challenge can be compounded when natural, weather-driven crop flushes do not align with demand generated through automated replenishment systems. Retail specifications are understandably designed to provide consistency for consumers, but natural agricultural variation can sometimes result in otherwise edible produce falling outside agreed parameters for characteristics such as size, length or appearance.

While Wealmoor is a leading surplus donor, collaborating extensively with Felix (formerly FareShare and the Felix Project) to redirect edible produce, structural tensions between agricultural variability, consumer demand, product specifications and commercial economics remain across the supply chain. Verified, audit-grade data would support constructive, evidence-based discussions across the supply chain to identify the practices and interventions that can further reduce FLW upstream.



What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **A documented policy and system:** A short policy, scope statement, documented roles, and reduction plan would codify 50 years of implicit practice and ensure that progress was not lost to personnel changes and single disruptive events.
- ✓ **Robust, customer-focused objectives:** Targets exist by crop and season, and the standard's objective setting and planning requirements could provide the structure to include the customer in that process too.
- ✓ **Verified measurement:** The standard would provide a robust, practical framework for validating supplier weight data, establishing an accurate baseline of incoming product volumes, and enabling Wealmoor to credibly demonstrate its food waste reduction.
- ✓ **Structured analysis and planning for change:** From analysing the root causes of food waste to preparing for disruptions and non-conformities, the standard adds a systematic layer to activities that are currently managed through experience and weekly routines.
- ✓ **Evidence for the retailer conversation:** A recognized FLW management system would provide trusted data and a common language across the supply chain. This would help identify where requirements and practices across the supply chain contribute to food waste, distinguish between controllable and externally driven factors, and provide a stronger evidence base for collaborative action.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Developing measurement and insight

PrepWorld: Leveraging telemetry and circular upcycling to reclassify “production residues” as valuable feedstocks

To produce the flawless, convenient pots of sliced fruit found on supermarket shelves, the fruit needs to be peeled, trimmed and prepared, all resulting in loss and production residue.

PrepWorld, a single-site manufacturer specializing in these ready-to-eat fruit packs, admit they were “poor at understanding the food waste implications of their processes at the very start of the business.” However, as the company grew rapidly, the rising cost of this discarded fruit became a key driver for change.

The company has followed BRCGS (Brand Reputation through Compliance Global Standards) standards from day one. Although this compliance-driven quality management system actively routes safe, misshapen fruit to retail value brands, managing process-level food waste remains a challenge.

For PrepWorld, this challenge is built into the very nature of preparing fresh fruit for sale. The vast majority of their organic waste output consists of unavoidable production residue: fruit skins, cores, and crowns. However, their food waste contractor only reported collection weights on an aggregated monthly invoice. This meant PrepWorld had no way to separate unavoidable food waste from avoidable mistakes like product dropped on the floor or quality failures.

As the team highlighted: “The key is in the word defining ‘waste’... naturally the higher the volume, the higher the waste of non-edible parts of the fruit.” Historically, these leftovers were sent to local anaerobic digestion (AD) plants, which even generated a minor revenue stream. However, this reliance recently became a commercial vulnerability.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›

Following the introduction of UK Simpler Recycling rules, and government mandates on local authorities, AD waste management firms began shifting focus to municipal household food waste to ensure consistency of supply. Alternative avenues have been explored. Black soldier fly (BSF) larva production and animal feed were trialled, but are currently not a viable alternative as the sheer volume of wet fruit waste was simply too much for feed and BSF companies to process.

To protect their margins, PrepWorld recognized they needed to move beyond coarse, retrospective monthly invoices. Their immediate ambition is to deploy a live, real-time process-line telemetry system to map peaks and troughs in production, giving them the data to isolate process inefficiencies. This granular data will also be vital to their long-term circular ambitions.

> "
>
> If we are able to find, outside of AD processing, additional options such as black soldier fly farming going mainstream, then there is a real possibility of reclassification of our food waste as a by-product (such as fruit peels) that can still be reused/ repurposed elsewhere.
>
> Non-fruit Procurement Manager, PrepWorld

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **A complementary approach:** The standard provides a framework that could build on BRCGS standards currently adopted.
- ✓ **A defined scope, policy and targets:** The standard would enable a formal FLW policy, a defined management system scope across the site and packhouse network, and documented objectives that translate the established cost reduction driver into robust plans and reporting.
- ✓ **Verified, audit-ready food waste data:** The standard would provide measurement and reporting guidance. This would support credible reporting to customers, and strengthen the internal case for installing a live telemetry system.
- ✓ **Consistency across the business:** Defined roles, competence requirements and FLW -specific corrective action routines would spread ownership and deepen engagement beyond the sustainability team.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Embedding a systematic approach

Whitbread PLC: Embedding food waste reduction across a 1,000-site hospitality estate

Whitbread is the UK's dominant hospitality operator, managing roughly 850 hotels and 200 branded restaurants at the time of interview (around 1,000 food-serving sites in total). In July 2026, Whitbread PLC announced it would be selling its branded restaurants to concentrate on its Premier Inn chain.

Its food waste target was set in 2020, and the real breakthrough on waste reduction came once the financial business case was made clear. By analysing point-of-sale data, the sustainability lead placed a significant annual cost on kitchen wastage.

A dedicated operational-change project manager was assigned. Food waste reduction was written into relevant colleagues' personal objectives. A cross-functional working group of several key functions met regularly, championed by the General Counsel. The group reported quarterly to the Sustainability Steering Committee, comprising execs and senior leaders across most functions.

Data remains a hurdle. Kitchen waste tracking relies on bin-truck weighing capability and on bin audits. The food waste contractor's truck weighing capability allowed the central sustainability team to access food waste data regularly. If a collection was refused because of mixed waste contamination, the team could quickly identify the site involved and investigate the cause.

Independent site-level food waste audits and the Welsh and English workplace waste rules also drive focus on food waste and segregation. However, some food-waste data continues to rely on estimated figures.

Further operational practices are being implemented. Winnow bins have been used in a small number of sites to help identify specific food waste items; uniformity across sites means that insights from Winnow bins can be used to infer trends across the estate and address any issues.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Food waste metrics are producing insights that are helping to make progress in driving menu design and discussions about procurement frameworks.

There is still some opportunity for alignment between procurement minimum order quantities and sales. In response, the company is rolling out new forecasting and stock management tools to simplify ordering and improve waste records.

The company's buffet breakfast is an important part of the guest proposition, but it can contribute to food waste volumes. This is trickier to solve, but the company is actively reviewing preparation rules. It's also working to encourage diners to start small and come back for more.

Downstream redistribution remains economically challenging, although Too Good To Go has been successfully deployed in 90 sites to date.

Real progress is coming from transforming buying habits. The sustainability lead is clear that prevention, rather than managing food waste after it has been created, is the key to meaningful change. For example, by replacing high-waste, single-serve items with bulk options, right-sizing pack sizes, and rolling out smarter forecasting tools. This is stopping food waste before it reaches the kitchens. Crucially, because the company is a highly uniform, vertically integrated business, any centrally approved change can be rolled out very quickly.

To embed food waste prevention permanently, Whitbread would require standardized, audit-grade data. This would enable root-cause analysis to optimize menu designs and improve procurement processes.

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **Verified, comparable data:** The standard's verification requirements would support the weighing, assurance and estimation model to be robust enough to place FLW on performance scorecards.
- ✓ **Accountability that outlasts individuals:** Documenting policies, scope, roles and change control provides a robust framework that preserves company knowledge and ensures consistency despite staff turnover and variability in site commitment.
- ✓ **Root cause analysis:** Systematic root cause analysis provides a structured approach to assess procurement, menu design and ordering practices against their brand standard proposition.
- ✓ **A credible external signal:** Consistent benchmarking and verified figures for the investors, corporate booking platforms and customers beginning to request sustainability data as part of their Scope 3 management.
- ✓ **Supplier requirements:** Formalized requirements could help procurement negotiate pack sizes and minimum order quantities that match demand and reduce food waste.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

The Compleat Food Group: Unifying multi-site networks under one operational language

The Compleat Food Group, now just over six years old, is a major UK food manufacturer, operating 20 sites and employing more than 6,800 people.

They are home to some of the UK's most exciting and loved food brands, including Wall's Pastry, Pork Farms, Wrights, The Real Yorkshire Pudding Co., unearthed, Vadasz, Squeaky Bean, Palace Culture, Julienne Bruno and Harvey & Brockless. Alongside its branded portfolio, they are a leading supplier of own-label pastry, sweet bakery, party food, olives and antipasti, added-value egg products, continental meats, dips and sauces and plant-based food to the UK's major retailers, as well as across foodservice.

Their food waste profile is dominated by process loss, with pastry trims being the largest source.

When the ESG Director joined just over four years ago, he found that most of Compleat's customers and competitors had signed up to the Courtauld Commitment (now the Food and Drink Pact) instigated by WRAP.

Compleat signed up too. As they put it, "It's important to our retailers, therefore it is important to us." Compleat is committed to a 50% reduction in FLW by 2030.

The ESG Director is actively involved with, and follows, WRAP guidance, and has established strong internal structures. This includes dedicated Site Operational Excellence (OPEX) leaders who are specifically targeted on FLW, as well as targeted action plans, monthly site-level food waste league tables, and quarterly board-level updates.

The business has grown through acquisition and therefore operates in an environment of continual change. As the ESG Director explains, "creating consistent processes across multiple sites presents both opportunities and challenges. Anything that comes in is joining a business that's already in flux." As a result, individual sites currently calculate food waste intensity in slightly different ways and do not yet operate with a fully unified reporting language.

Some sites measure food solids lost in liquid effluent, others don't include them. This creates an uneven group baseline and reporting.

Across the Group, food waste data relies on waste contractor invoices.

"We have in some of our big sites, five or six 28-ton bulkers leaving every week with food waste in. We know how much food waste reaches the AD plant, but gaining greater visibility into the specific composition of that waste is the next step."

Despite making significant progress, the business recognizes the opportunity to further formalize and standardize its food waste management approach across the Group. Historically, much of

> "Data's my biggest challenge. Whether it's greenhouse gases or food waste, we're continually looking at how we can improve visibility and granularity to support better decision-making. By using data from our waste contractors, we've established a consistent approach to gathering and reporting food waste data across the Group. The next phase is to improve the granularity of that data so we can identify and target further reduction opportunities.
>
> ESG Director, The Compleat Food Group

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

this activity has been coordinated centrally by the ESG Director, acting as a catalyst for change and helping to connect initiatives across the business.

The introduction of dedicated OPEX teams has further strengthened this approach, with site-level diagnostics now informing targets, improvement plans and performance management activities across the Group.

One very positive driver of shop-floor discipline and a transition to permanent systems has been moving past aggregated food waste contractor invoices toward line-level diagnostics. The OPEX team began framing food waste in the vocabulary of operational managers. “As soon as you start to paint the picture in their language, the language of efficiency and cost, it becomes quite apparent that there is a big opportunity.”

Putting a financial value on specific raw material streams has shifted focus away from low-value pastry trim (flour and water) toward high-value ingredients like pork, bacon, chicken, and egg. “You can suddenly then start to put a different lens on it and go, ‘Well, actually, if I focus on that, there’s a huge amount of savings there’.”

Looking at FLW through this financial lens has also sparked potential product redesigns, like square pies to eliminate pastry trim entirely.

Establishing a standardized group-wide calculation and reporting protocol will also enable the company to efficiently integrate future acquisitions into its systems and processes.

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **Completion of the management cycle with a documented FLW system:** The business is already used to setting targets, monitoring performance and maintaining documented systems through its quality and safety standards. So, BS ISO 20001 Food loss and waste management system would extend this familiar framework to FLW, bringing existing activities into one structured system.
- ✓ **Global recognition at a low cost of adoption:** With BS EN ISO 45001, BS EN ISO 14001 and BS EN ISO 50001 systems to attach to, many building blocks for the adoption of the standard are already in place, reducing the cost of adoption.
- ✓ **Prevention that pays:** A structured route from diagnostics to root cause to reduction plan, enabling targeting of high-value food waste streams.
- ✓ **Consistency across acquisitions:** One documented scope and definition set would standardize food waste measurement and reporting to give every future acquisition a standard FLW onboarding best practice.
- ✓ **Accountability that outlasts individuals:** A documented and standardized system makes the transfer of ownership to operational expenditure permanent rather than personal. It remains embedded within the organization, rather than being dependent on individual personnel.
- ✓ **Root cause analysis:** The standard supports a more systematic approach to identifying where food waste occurs, using data checks, internal audits and corrective actions. It builds on the audit and continuous improvement practices the business already uses for food safety.
- ✓ **A credible external signal:** Verified figures would meet the demands of the retailers and customers who request food waste data, as well as other external reference demands.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

Driving continuous improvement and influence

Lidl GB: Granular item-level data and board-level accountability meet a lean discount model

Lidl GB, a major discount grocery retailer, represents a well-embedded type of FLW management. Food waste reduction is part of their broader Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Those initiatives are backed by direct, top-down governance. CSR goals (including food waste reduction) have been fully integrated into the core business strategy, providing a direct route to the executive board. The Board reviews performance metrics quarterly.

With food waste reduction initiatives aligned with business objectives in this way, it helps sustainability teams secure board approval, investment and organizational buy-in: “We see much stronger alignment now that we have an integrated strategy.”

This embedded governance is fuelled by data granularity. For its store-level food waste tracking, Lidl doesn’t rely on estimates or broad contractor calculations. Instead, store colleagues use handheld scanning devices to log every write-off at the point of removal. This item-level tracking automatically records the precise product weights and specific reason codes. “Everything’s accounted for. There’s no gaps there now. There are no assumptions. We have the actual data [at store level].”

> “
>
> The fundamentals are all around the data validation and data collection. It’s worth investing the time and resources in getting that right.
>
> Sustainable Operations Lead, Lidl GB

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

However, Lidl GB's lean discount model can create barriers to operational change to further prevent and reduce FLW. In a high-volume, low-margin business, any change to food waste processes means immediate time pressure for store staff: "time is money for a colleague in a very lean discount world like ours."

Store floor managers must also constantly balance food waste prevention against strict corporate standards. For instance, leaving ripe fruit on shelves to prevent waste can trigger poor quality scores from internal auditors. It's an ongoing challenge to find the right balance.

Lidl has addressed fruit and veg waste with their popular, heavily-discounted, "Too Good to Waste" boxes containing items that are no longer considered at their perfect best, but are still perfectly good to consume. It's their single biggest in-store food waste reduction measure. Their second key lever is the nationwide Feed It Back network in partnership with Neighbourly, which redistributes surplus food to charity partners.

Current food waste management also utilizes AD. Following exploration, animal feed diversion remains under review, but faces significant regulatory, contamination and in-store logistical challenges, making implementation costly and difficult.

Lidl GB is signed up to WRAPs Food and Drink Pact and despite challenges, their rigorous, data-driven approach is undeniably paying off, with the company already achieving a 40% reduction in food waste intensity against its 2016 baseline and a target of 70% reduction in food waste intensity by 2030.

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **Board level leverage:** A recognized certification target could unlock further investment and leadership support for FLW prevention and reduction projects that might otherwise struggle to demonstrate a clear business case.
- ✓ **A documented FLW policy and management system:** The standard can formalize a long-standing commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 through a documented policy, management review process and recorded actions.
- ✓ **Systematic risk and change planning:** The standard can bring a more structured approach to forecasting and food waste prevention, while helping the business prepare for disruptions such as adverse weather, discussions with perishable goods suppliers, recycling facility closures and the loss of redistribution partners.
- ✓ **Measurement verification and an audit process:** The standard can strengthen existing food waste data through routine audits and independent verification.
- ✓ **Resilience across the whole operation:** The standard could help make FLW management part of the business's day-to-day operations rather than relying on individual staff members, and ensure compliance at store level, while building a management system that includes the earlier stages of operation to prevent and reduce FLW and achieve greater cost savings.
- ✓ **A common language for the supply chain:** The standard could provide a framework that retailers can share with suppliers and smaller partners, helping them improve FLW management across the supply chain.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›



FareShare Midlands: Codifying the “surprise chain” for social impact

FareShare Midlands manages three sites in the Midlands and is a regional partner of Felix, the UK’s leading food redistribution charity. It moves roughly 100 tonnes of surplus food weekly to 500 local charities.

Sourced across the supply chain, from farms to supermarkets, the incoming stock is highly perishable and unpredictable in its make-up. Yet, the organization maintains a total food waste level of just 4% of its intake. This is because their entire purpose is saving food, so preventing waste is a deeply personal mission: “No incentives: it’s in our DNA; we hate wasting food; it hurts us.”

Historically, food waste management was highly subjective. While food waste was measured, any colleague could discard stock they simply “didn’t like the look of.” This lack of control was an operational and financial drain. Bad stock requires as much labour to book in as good stock, consumes scarce refrigerated depot space, and incurs waste collection costs.

To establish control, Felix (formerly FareShare and the Felix Project) introduced a rigorous, centralized approval process for all branches.

Today, no stock can be discarded without central management authorization. Depot teams have to log each case on a centralized tracking system, which initiates a root-cause analysis to ensure every possible redistribution outlet is exhausted first. This “5 whys” interrogation process yielded quantified results within eight months, increasing cost recovery for out-of-control national stock.

> “Waste was always measured but never properly approved or analysed; anyone could waste stock they didn’t like the look of, so it was very subjective and uncontrolled... process means control.
>
> Food Supply Manager, FareShare Midlands

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

FareShare Midlands operates in what they call a "surprise chain", where over 50% of total food waste arises at the point that it arrives. Corporate donors frequently send short-dated chilled stock on Friday afternoons when the recipient charities are closed. "The food world works 24/7; the charity world operates Monday to Friday."

Deliveries sometimes lack basic allergen and ingredient labelling, shelf-life extension notes, or are over the accepted 20% defect threshold, leaving the charity struggling to verify safety before the products spoil. What's more, accepting fixed allocations of national stock, can present a challenge in terms of finding appropriate outlets in time.

Rather than passively absorbing these inefficiencies, the company leverages its granular "5 Whys" root-cause data to actively educate upstream corporate partners. By sharing auditable evidence of how late-Friday, not-as-advertised, short-dated deliveries and missing paperwork directly generate food waste, they educate donors and help prevent repeat issues. This shifts the relationship from passive disposal toward active, supply chain collaboration. The goal is to: "Stop the waste at source: do not add cost to product that has no value."

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **A documented, auditable management system:** The standard would turn the established measure – review – improve routine into a documented system anchored by a formal FLW policy, with defined competence requirements, controlled documentation, and waste responsibility embedded across every role.
- ✓ **Structured analysis, planning and preparedness:** The standard would turn weekly food waste reviews and root cause analysis into a formal food waste reduction plan, with regular updates and clear procedures for managing surges in supply and short shelf-life products.
- ✓ **Verified measurement and independent assurance:** Stronger controls on data collection and measurement would increase confidence in the figures reported to their Board, the National Programme to Redistribute Surplus Food and partners, and help ensure their 4% target is maintained. Regular audits and management reviews would ensure that unavoidable and avoidable food waste is reported accurately, so performance is monitored and improved over time.
- ✓ **Policy leverage and shared learning:** The organization believes more surplus food should be redirected to redistribution organizations and suppliers should be educated to prepare surplus in a form that can be used more easily. The standard could support this through practical guidance, case studies and shared learning from across the sector.
- ✓ **Data collected through the system will enable conversations for upstream adoption:** A common FLW framework could help them work with suppliers and partners to improve redistribution readiness and tackle food waste at its source.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›



Arla Foods: Establishing global dairy benchmarks through harmonized metrics

Arla Foods is a farmer-owned multinational dairy cooperative operating a network of specialized production sites across Europe. Over time, the company has continually strengthened its approach to food waste measurement and reporting through improved data collection, governance and transparency.

Today, Arla tracks food waste by weight and material content and reports food waste in milk equivalents in its integrated annual report. This approach aims to reflect not only the quantity of material lost, but also the nutritional value of the raw milk and the associated environmental impacts throughout the value chain.

Dairy production is characterized by specialized processes and products, including fresh milk, cheese, butter and dairy ingredients. This specialization improves operational efficiency and maximizes the value extracted from milk, while also generating co-products and side streams that can be further utilized. For example, cheese production naturally generates whey, which Arla's ingredients business transforms into high-value nutrition products for human consumption.

However, even dairy streams from which significant value has already been extracted may generate residual materials that are not suitable for human consumption. These need to be directed to alternative utilization pathways. Depending on their composition and location, that might include food production, animal feed, energy recovery or other productive uses.

A key challenge is determining how certain by-product streams should be classified and reported. The same material may be considered either a valuable resource or food waste depending on its intended use and the reporting framework applied.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

The generation of these by-products is shaped by a range of operational and site-specific factors, including product characteristics, process design, installed technologies and cleaning requirements. The volume, composition and destination of material flows can therefore vary significantly across sites and technologies. To address this complexity, Arla has developed methodologies that consider the nutritional value of dairy materials, when assessing food waste performance.

Through industry engagement and benchmarking activities, Arla has observed considerable variation in how food waste is defined, measured and reported across the dairy sector. These differences can affect the classification of side streams and limit comparability between companies. As a signatory of the UK Food and Drink Pact, Arla collaborates with other organizations to improve food waste measurement and reporting practices, share learnings and support greater consistency across the food system.

> "We hope to see greater standardization in food waste reporting, because it's always valuable to have global standards that the industry can align behind.
>
> Food Waste Programme Lead, Arla Foods

To further strengthen transparency and comparability, Arla advocates for standardized measurement and reporting frameworks that provide clear definitions, consistent boundaries and credible methodologies for food waste reporting across the dairy industry.

Establishing audited, industry-wide management systems could provide a common framework for measuring and reporting food waste, supporting more transparent, comparable reporting across the global dairy sector.

What BS ISO 20001 can add:

- ✓ **Additional global recognition at a low cost of adoption:** A BS EN ISO 14001 environmental management system framework, a central platform and monthly cadence already exist, so the standard's data elements are easily integrated.
- ✓ **Formalization matched to the case:** The standard could strengthen existing arrangements through a dedicated FLW policy, shared ownership across the organization, robust data controls, regular verification and FLW audits.
- ✓ **Consistent and comparable data:** The standard could provide guidance for consistent ways of measuring and reporting FLW, establishing best practice that can help to resolve differences between sites.
- ✓ **Fair, comparable claims:** Consistent measurement methodologies and reporting metrics would enable food waste reductions to be assessed consistently across the industry, ensuring comparability.
- ✓ **A platform for circular economy collaboration:** A common framework for measuring and reporting FLW would help organizations work with partners across countries, supporting innovation, circular economy initiatives and the sharing of best practice.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›

A shared operational language for the food supply chain

These eight different stories show that the commercial intent to cut food waste is there. Often, what they lack is a common framework. This is where BS ISO 20001 comes in.

BS ISO 20001: The global blueprint for systemic food waste prevention

BS ISO 20001 is the world's first internationally recognized management system standard dedicated specifically to FLW. By establishing a rigorous, globally consistent framework that's open to independent, third-party certification, it allows businesses to transform food waste from an unmanaged operating cost into a verified and auditable asset.

At the heart of the standard is a six-band hierarchy designed to systematically migrate food and by-product flows upward toward higher-value, "non-waste" destinations, as illustrated below.

Band 1 

Prevent at source (highest priority): Prevent excess food production or supply by better planning, forecasting, demand management and innovation.

Band 2 

Retain value for human consumption: Donate and redistribute for human consumption, repurpose or upcycle into food for direct human consumption, or rework non-conforming products.

Band 3 

Retain value for animal use: Route clean, inedible surpluses into animal feed or animal food.

Band 4 

Retain material, nutrients and energy: Recycle organic matter through non-food industrial use, anaerobic digestion, composting, land applications or other farm applications.

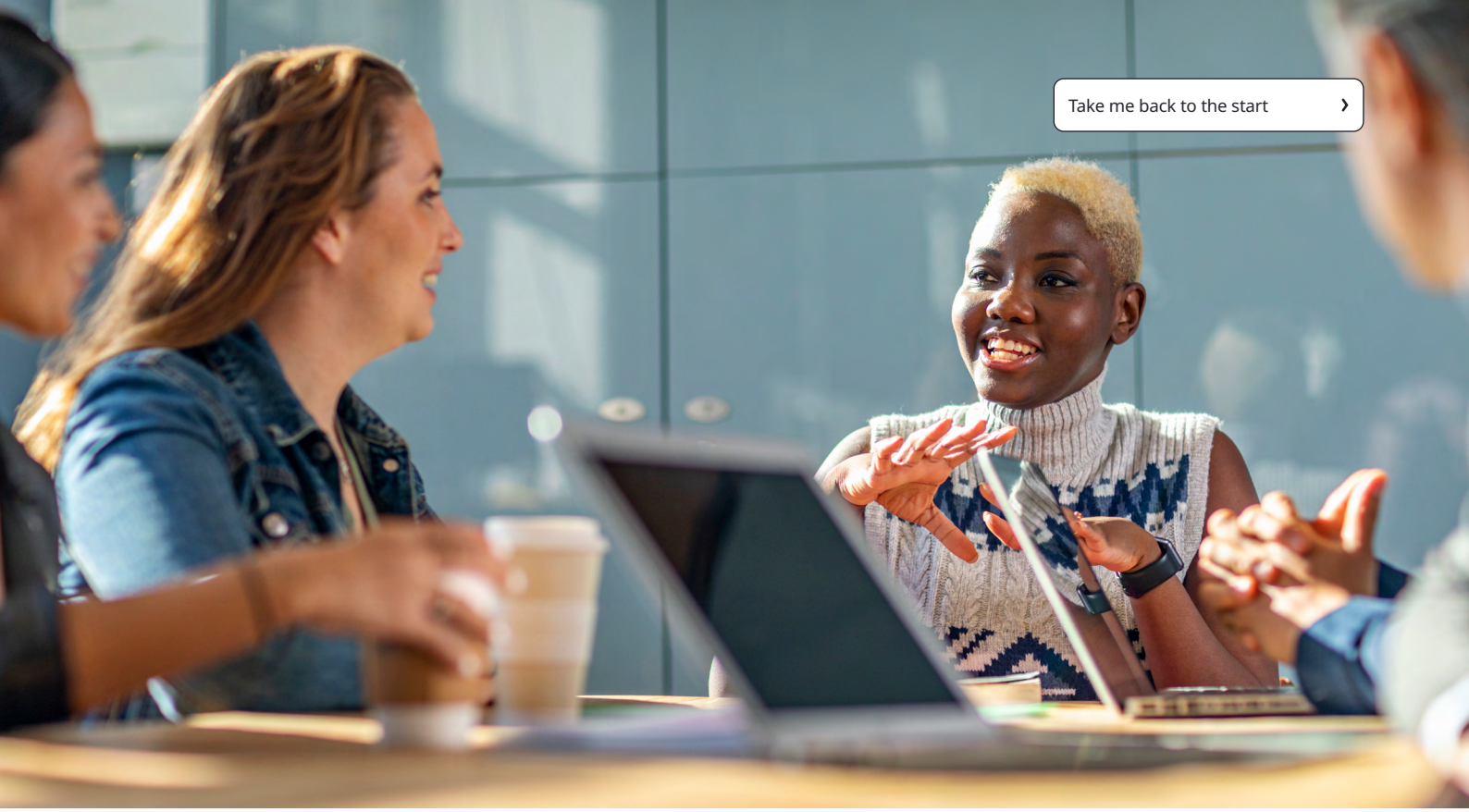
Band 5 

Retain energy only: Extract usable energy through controlled combustion or anaerobic digestion where the nutrient residues are discarded.

Band 6 

Dispose (lowest priority): Dump in landfill, discharge down sewers, or controlled combustion without energy recovery. Uncontrolled FLW (e.g. food refuse, discards, litter).

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



Take me back to the start ›

While the hierarchy provides a framework for prioritizing action, BS ISO 20001 assists organizations to build a structured management system that measures FLW, identifies root causes, drives continuous improvement and embeds prevention throughout the supply chain. These are the key expectations of the standard:

- ✓ Embed FLW into business strategy and governance, with leadership commitment, policies, objectives and defined responsibilities.
- ✓ Measure and quantify FLW, including establishing inventories, identifying hotspots and tracking performance over time.
- ✓ Conduct root-cause analysis, understanding where and why FLW occurs rather than focusing solely on disposal routes.
- ✓ Develop and implement a documented FLW reduction plan, with targets, monitoring, corrective actions and accountability.
- ✓ Work collaboratively across the supply chain, engaging suppliers, customers and other interested parties to address upstream and downstream causes of food waste.
- ✓ Integrate FLW considerations into operational decision-making, including procurement, forecasting, production, packaging, inventory management and distribution.
- ✓ Monitor, audit and continually improve performance through verification, internal audits and management reviews.
- ✓ Demonstrate progress and communicate results, supporting sustainability, ESG and circular economy objectives.

The standard builds on the same management system foundations as BS EN ISO 9001 and BS EN ISO 14001, allowing organizations to use common processes for planning, auditing, risk management and continual improvement while specifically targeting FLW reduction.

Like the other management system standards, it uses a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of continuous improvement. Organizations set objectives (Plan), implement controls (Do), monitor performance (Check), and continually improve (Act).

The result is that FLW reduction is no longer reliant on individual champions or interim initiatives, but is embedded as a permanent, audited business discipline.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›

Conclusion: From passion projects to permanent systems

The global food sector has reached a tipping point in the fight against food waste. As the case studies in this report demonstrate, the desire to cut food waste is strong.

Across retail, manufacturing, and hospitality, early progress has often been fuelled by passionate individuals and informal working groups. This means that unwritten routines can vanish when key staff leave, and crude monthly food waste invoices are less than ideal for driving shop-floor improvements. In addition, debates over what exactly counts as "waste" are slowing circular-economy innovation.

More fundamentally, the supply chain is often speaking different languages. Without a shared, standardized framework, businesses operate in silos, frequently solving their own food waste targets by inadvertently pushing the problem upstream. As our research shows, a retailer's short-notice forecast or strict cosmetic specification can result in unavoidable food waste in a supplier's packhouse or field.

The arrival of BS ISO 20001 offers a structured solution to these problems. Rather than a static compliance checklist, it operates as a dynamic, principle-based framework that embeds food waste prevention into an organization's daily routine.

For the businesses featured in this report, the value of the standard is multi-faceted. For example, by transforming a voluntary sustainability goal into a board-level, certifiable mandate, the standard gives teams the leverage they need to unlock capital budgets for projects with longer payback periods.

> "It's now easier than ever to transform food waste management from a fragmented, frustrating chore into a powerful driver of operational efficiency and commercial resilience.
>
> **Emily Field, Food Sector Lead, BSI**

It also protects organizational knowledge. By documenting FLW policies, scopes, and reduction plans, it ensures that hard-won food waste management routines survive staff turnover and rapid corporate acquisitions.

And it levels the playing field. Standardized performance metrics and verification controls allow genuine, multi-site performers to independently prove their reduction claims. It also gives buyers a fair way to compare claims across the whole operation.

While BS ISO 20001 is a voluntary standard, its benefits to business are clear. Rising food waste disposal costs, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) packaging fees, and impending mandatory segregation rules are making residual waste increasingly expensive to ignore.

Stakeholders, investors, and corporate buyers are increasingly likely to demand the level of data rigour and systemic control that the standard provides. By adopting the standard now, food businesses can get ahead of the regulatory curve.

Find out more about BS ISO 20001 by visting the BSI website, where you can find additional guidance, case studies, practical tools and insights.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.

Take me back to the start ›

About this research

This report is based on research conducted between January and May 2026 by Dr. Iona Huang and Dr. Jane Yardley at Harper Adams University, in collaboration with Professor Valentina Stojceska (Brunel University) and Emily Field, Food Sector Lead, BSI.

To evaluate operational readiness for the upcoming BS ISO 20001 standard across the food sector, eight diverse organizations were selected to participate in extensive semi-structured interviews (typically lasting 90 to 120 minutes). These case studies represent a cross-section of the food value chain.

Interview transcripts were systematically analysed using thematic content analysis (in NVivo 15) to evaluate current food waste prevention practices, operational hurdles, data granularity, and strategic alignment with BS ISO 20001 clauses.

About BSI and ISO

BSI and ISO work closely together to develop internationally recognized standards that reflect real-world industry needs. As the UK's National Standards Body and ISO member, BSI brings together experts from across the industry, academia, government, consumer groups and civil society and represents UK interests in the development of international standards.

This collaborative approach helps ensure that ISO standards are grounded in practical experience and industry best practice that reflects the UK reality. Once an ISO standard is published, BSI adopts it for use in the UK, enabling organizations to work to a globally recognized framework while benefiting from expertise drawn from both UK and international stakeholders.

Acknowledgement: This research was funded by the EPSRC research grant for Park Royal PBIAA Net-Zero Food Supply Chains (Project Reference: EP/Y023846/1) The team sincerely thank the interviewees from the eight participating organizations for generously giving their time and sharing the experiences and insights that underpin the case studies in this report.

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.



BSI Group
Seventh and Eighth Floors,
The Acre, 90 Long Acre,
London, WC2E 9RA
+44 345 080 9000
bsigroup.com

Your partner
in progress

© 2026 BSI. All rights reserved.