The Myth of Best-Before dates
-Possible Countermeasures to reduce FLW-

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Example 1:
Everyone takes from the back
Out of 1,900 people, 89% said “I have taken from the back of the shelf before”
“If the price is the same either way, I’m better off by choosing the newer one!”
272 unsold sushi rolls
5 minutes before closing
Food garbage generated by retailers (convenience stores · supermarkets · department stores · restaurants · hotels · lodges · buffets)

→ incinerated with household garbage
→ taxes 57 yen/kg (in Setagaya ward)
Two trillion yen is being thrown into the garbage!
Example 2: Throwing away goods as soon as they reach the best before date
Water distributed to those affected by natural disaster was expired.

Citizen response: Complain
City Gov response: public apology
Dates on bottled water only exist to monitor evaporation and change in volume.
29% of the global population, 2.2 billion people, does not have access to regulated safe drinking water.
Example 3: “best-before” and use-by” dates are commonly confused
26/50 people “wont buy” items past their best-before date

Would you buy goods that are past their best before date?

Would buy

Wouldn’t buy

Elderly people were more likely to respond “yes”

April 15th 2019 Asahi Television special program "Good! Morning"
Items past the “best-by” date will “make you sick”

What reasons did the “not buy” people give?

- Likely tastes bad
- I think it would make me sick
- I would need to use it right away
- If I spend money it should be new
Visualization of “best-before” and “expiry” Dates

Chart from MAFF homepage
Example 4: best-before dates that are set too short

In winter, how many days does a raw egg stay good for?
Eggs can stay good for...  

57 days
"Best Before" dates for eggs are based on summer temps.
Gov recommends a safety rating of at least 0.8 or higher

April 15th 2019 Asahi Television special program "Good! Morning"
Example 5: People (consumers) throwing away food at work due to “sell–by” date

Ask 987 people: “Did you throw away food at your restaurant job?”

Source: respon
Rule of One Thirds (1/3rds)

Production

Delivery

Sell by date

Best before date

83.9bil yen + 39.6bil yen

Italy, France, Belgium

Data source: Economic Research Center estimates and DSRI report by the Japanese Ministry of Trade
The average convenience store throws away 600,000 JPY worth of food away every month.
“convenience calculation” is set up so that its more profitable for the main company to throw food away than it is to sell it at a discount.

According to Kotaro Tatsumi, member of the house of councilors.
High quality Jelly cakes
Estimated price: 5250 yen
Good food is being thrown away even sooner than the best-before date due to “sell-by” dates

Photo by anonymous convenience store owner
Source: 2016 Japan Ministry of Agriculture: "Food Supply and Demand Chart"
Japan Ministry of Health: "Census on Citizen Health and Nutrition"
Japan Ministry of Internal Affairs: "Annual Household Census"
Not just things, life.
Photo by: Rumi Ide
“What you handle (in this business) is life.”

- Meat Master Dario Cecchini, owner of famous Italian butcher shop with over 250 years of history
Food is life. Cherish life.
10 Ways to Reduce Food Waste

1. Keep your refrigerator tidy!
2. Write down and measure food waste
3. Utilize irregular products
4. Buy goods which display year/month
5. Consider "Best Before" as an estimation!
10 Ways to Reduce Food Waste

6. Buy new / seasonal products sparingly

7. It's OK if it is out of stock!

8. At restaurants, clean your plate!

9. Share with others.

10. Recycle