

1<sup>st</sup> February 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about food waste.

The Food Waste (Reduction) Bill was not debated as scheduled on 29<sup>th</sup> January owing to a lack of parliamentary time. However, preventing food waste at all stages in the supply chain is an important objective for the Government, which it is working on with the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and the food industry.

Over 90 per cent of the food manufacturing and retailer sector have signed up to the Courtauld Commitment, a voluntary agreement to limit waste. As a result, domestic household food waste has already been reduced by 15 per cent since 2007 and food waste in the supply chain has reduced by 8 per cent. A separate voluntary agreement within the hospitality and food services industry was launched in 2012, which saw over 170 signatories and supporters sign up to an ambitious set of targets to reduce their waste and manage it better.

Ministers and charities have also been considering how best to prevent waste on farms. One option is to encourage retailers to agree in advance to purchase the whole crop from a specific farm or field and then decide whether each vegetable should be sold loose, processed or used in soups and sauces, based on its size and appearance. This would help ensure vegetables are not wasted just because they look unusual, preventing waste and giving farmers greater certainty.

The Government also continues to work closely with industry to help forge closer links with redistribution charities across the whole supply chain. It is wrong that anyone should go hungry at the same time as surplus food is going to waste.

As an example of one of these voluntary food redistribution initiatives, a national supermarket chain which I recently contacted about these and related issues, explained that it operates a partnership with FareShare, which ensures surplus food from the supermarket's depots is redistributed to over 1,700 charities, helping more than 82,100 people every day. Through the distribution of this supermarket's surplus food, I understand that FareShare is able to reach many different charities and provide thousands of meals.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**