

Introducing Food Banks Canada Greenhouse Gas Calculator

Quick Start Guide

For more detailed information, please review [User Guide](#)

What are greenhouse gases?

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases (GHG). Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the primary GHG emitted through human activities, which when released into the atmosphere causes warming. This heating of the earth's surface can lead to shifts in the climate, which affects various aspects of human health, agriculture, water, forests, weather patterns, and wildlife.

Food waste is the inefficient use of natural resources, negatively impacting the environment. The financial and economic impact of food waste is considerable, accounting for up to [half of total food system emissions](#). One of the most impactful ways to reduce GHGs is to recover surplus food and distribute it to vulnerable populations.

What is the Food Banks Canada Greenhouse Gas Calculator?

Food Banks Canada has developed this tool so you can create a report for your donors that will demonstrate the environmental impact and the number of meals their donation represents.

Why was it developed?

With the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), **corporations are facing pressure to report GHG emissions**; therefore, the ability to quantify a reduction in GHG emissions by donating food is crucial.

The calculator was created to be a value-added tool for the food banking network to attract new and steward existing donors. It will enable food banks to report the volume of GHG emissions that have been prevented from entering the environment by means of donated food. It can also be used for marketing on social media, annual reports, blogs, etc.

What kind of data was used and what are the limitations?

Data:

- 1) There are seven food categories and sub-categories to select from in the calculator.
- 2) In certain cases, proxy data was used.

Limitations:

- 1) The availability, integrity, and granularity of life cycle analysis data for specific foods.
- 2) Non-food items and food packaging related GHGs are beyond the calculator's scope.

Where can I find the calculator?

The calculator will be available on the Food Banks Canada's Network Portal; click [here](#) to access it. Bookmark the calculator on your web browser for quick access.

How do I use the calculator?

- 1) Access the calculator via the Food Banks Canada Network Portal.
- 2) Click on the calculator button in the top right-hand corner.
- 3) Select "Start Calculation."
- 4) Enter donation description, such as "ACME Donation" (**required**).
- 5) Click the *magnifying glass* to choose the province your organization is in, hit "select" (**required**).
 - a. Note: you may have to scroll to the second page to find yours
- 6) If you'd like your organization's name to appear on the report, enter it in the field.
- 7) Click the *magnifying glass* to select where the donation came from: producer, processor/manufacturer or retail/food service and hit "select" (**required**).
- 8) If you'd like the donor's name on the report, enter it under "Donor" field.
- 9) Select the *magnifying glass*, click your preferred unit of measurement, lbs or kgs. (**required**).
 - a. Note: the calculator will report in kgs.
- 10) Press "submit."
- 11) Select the *magnifying glass* to pick a category and hit "select."
 - a. Note: you can choose "assorted food mix" for mixed food donations or pick the specific category. The more detail entered, the more accurate the calculation will be.
- 12) Select the *magnifying glass* to pick a food "type" (**required**).
 - a. Note: if you want to enter a variety of items at once, select the "assorted option." Otherwise pick the type that best matches your item.
- 13) Enter a description for the item (optional), such as "Shredded Cheese."
- 14) Enter the weight of the donation.
- 15) Press "Add Item."
- 16) To add another item, repeat the process above.
- 17) Press "Get Report" to finalize and view calculation.

Questions?

Please email us at ghg@foodbankscanada.ca