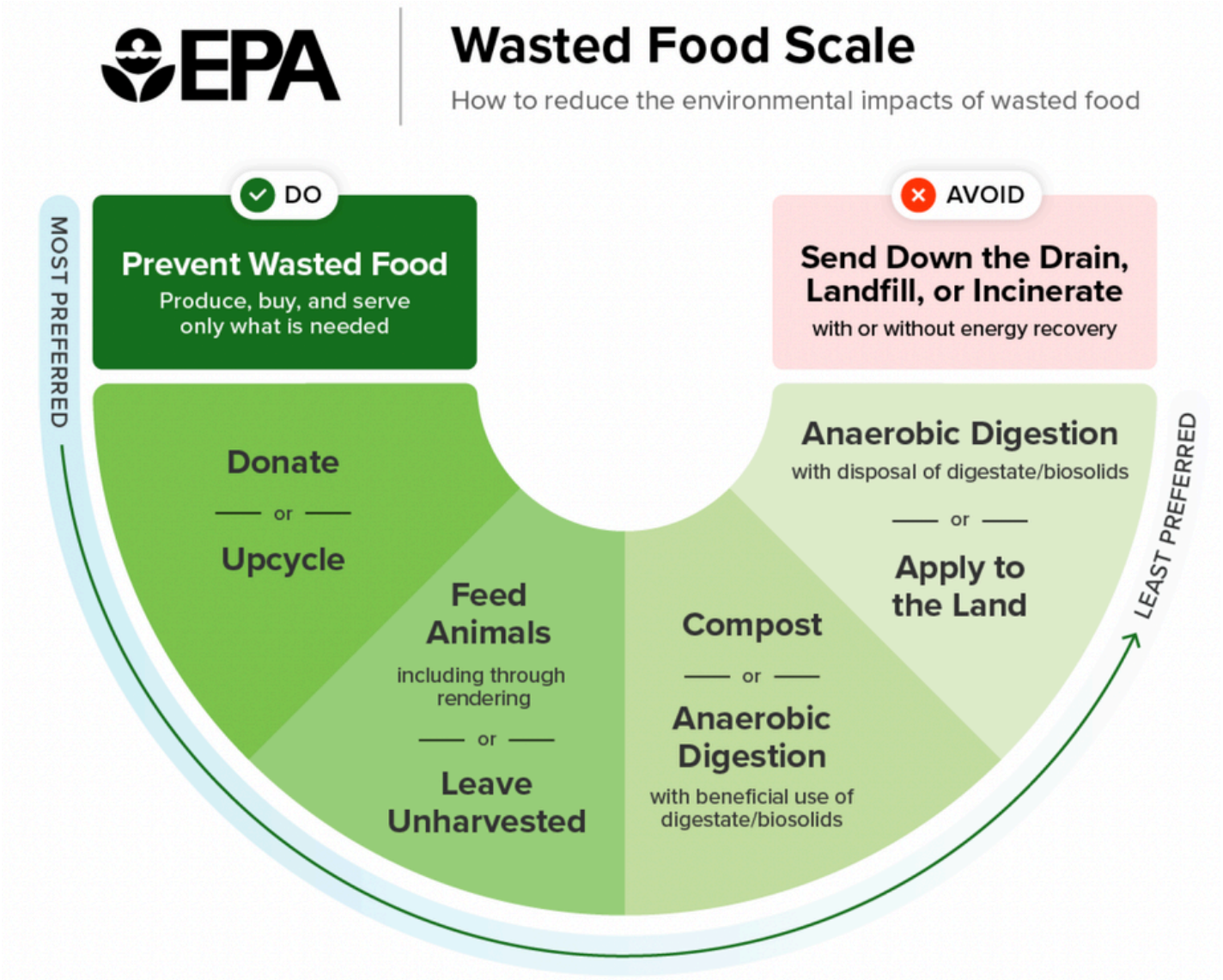
EPA Wasted Food Scale

The Race for Less Food Waste

Use this scale to compare the environmental impacts and circularity of different pathways for preventing or managing wasted food. Read from the most preferred pathways at the upper left toward the least preferred pathways at the upper right.



MOST PREFERRED Prevent wasted food | Donate | Upcycle
LEAST PREFERRED Send down the drain | Landfill | Incinerate

Remember: The scale ranks management pathways. It does not determine whether food is safe to eat or whether an option is legal, feasible, affordable, or locally available. Use the Food Waste Decision Lens alongside the scale.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Wasted Food Scale | Official graphic updated December 2025