

KERATAN AKHBAR

NAMA AKHBAR: THE STAR (VIEWS)

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'Waste not, want not'

READERS may be interested to learn of Hong Kong's Breadline app that connects bakeries with volunteers who collect leftover bread for charity groups to help solve one of the city's biggest problems – food waste. Malaysians, too, need to be more aware of the increasing food waste problem.

SWCorp, our government agency dealing with solid waste management found (in 2017) that Malaysians generate around 15,000 tonnes of food waste; that could have fed up to two million people. Also, it is quite disappointing to learn that 55% of solid waste disposed of at landfills comprise food and post-harvest loss from farms and plantations.

Food banks such as MySafeFood, Grub Cycle and nutrition experts have always stressed that the "Best Before" label is there just as a guide; even after that date, the food can still be safely consumed although its quality and freshness may be reduced.

Also, lots of vegetables and fruits are thrown away by traders just because they don't "look nice". Consumers should always remember that the defects are just minimal and don't affect the taste and nutritional value.

Perhaps Malaysia should follow France, where supermarkets are encouraged to hand over unsold fresh and processed food products, to food banks. The tit for tat being that such food donations are given tax exemption. So, as we are soon to celebrate World Food Day on Oct 16, Malaysians should realise and appreciate the value of food so we do not end up unnecessarily wasting it.

Please note there are already many people out there living in places devastated by drought or war and who do not have enough to eat and suffer starvation. Remember the mantra "waste not, want not" when it comes sensibly dealing with food waste.

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