

Appendix G

Informational List of Interview Questions and Topics

Exploratory Semi-structured Interviews on Retail Food Loss

Agency: Economic Research Service

Contractor: RTI International

Appendix G: Informational List of Interview Questions and Topics

This document provides (1) a list of the questions we will ask in the interview, (2) an overview of a potential data request for a national study that we will refer to during the interview, and (3) a summary of our data confidentiality and security procedures.

Interview Questions

Listed below are the questions we will ask in the interview. We provide this information for informational purposes; you do NOT need to complete the questions before the interview.

Retail food loss refers to the weight of food that is received at the store but not sold or donated for human consumption.

General Information

1. Please describe your company, such as number and format of stores, number of distribution centers, geographic coverage, and banners under which you operate (if applicable).

Approaches to Tracking Food Loss and Donations

2. Do your stores track and measure unsold food products that are removed from the shelf? If yes, how is this information recorded for products with a barcode versus random-weight products?
3. If your stores donate food to charitable organizations, how do your stores track and measure the amount donated?
4. If RTI requested raw data to calculate retail-level food loss as described in the Overview of Possible Data Request for a National Study (provided at end of document), do you think this approach would be feasible? What suggestions would you have for designing and implementing this type of approach?

Shipments

5. Describe the process for receiving product shipments at the stores owned by your company (for example, from distribution centers, wholesalers, direct shipments).
6. Do your company's stores keep electronic records of shipment data on all products received? If yes, what specific data are collected?

Sales

7. Do your stores maintain data on product sales electronically, that is, scanner data? If yes, what specific data are collected?

Random-Weight Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Shipments and Packaging [if company has stores that sell random-weight products]

8. [For companies with stores that cut, grind, or repackage meat, poultry, or seafood products in the store and sell them as random-weight products] Do your stores maintain electronic shipment data for the meat, poultry, or seafood products (e.g., whole carcass or fish) to be cut and repackaged and then sold as random weight items? If yes, what specific data are collected?
9. Do your stores collect and maintain electronic data on the amount of random-weight product cut and packaged in the store for retail sale? If yes, what specific data are collected?

Intra-store Transfers [if company has stores that do intra-store transfers]

By intra-store transfer we mean when products received for sale to consumers are instead used to make prepared foods within the store, for example, cooking chicken from the meat department to make chicken salad in the deli.

10. What specific data are maintained electronically on intra-store transfers?

General Data Collection Questions

11. What types of software systems are used to store and maintain data on shipment and sales?
12. If we proceed with a national study, we plan to provide participating companies with a benchmarking report that compares their estimates of product-specific food loss shares with national averages as a benefit for participation. Would such a report motivate your company to participate in the study?
13. If we proceed with a national study, would your company be able to provide the types of data we discussed for a 1-year period?
 1. What would be the process for your company to get the necessary approvals to share the data?
 2. Who at your company would be involved and what information would they need to be able to share the data?
 3. Would your company be willing to provide data for all stores under a particular banner or would providing data for a sample of stores be more feasible?
14. About how many hours of staff time and calendar time do you estimate would be required to provide the requested data for one store? How would this estimate change if you were asked to provide data for multiple stores?
15. The document we sent with the disclaimer and informed consent provides information on our data confidentiality and security procedures. Do you have any feedback on these procedures? Are there other safeguards you would like to see in place?
16. For a national study, we plan to collect data from several hundred stores. What is the best approach for identifying who (e.g., job title) to initially contact to get buy-in for the study and then identifying who collects and maintain the data we need? Will this vary by size and type of company?

Overview of Potential Data Request for a National Study

Our proposed formula to calculate a retail-level food loss estimate by product category is the percentage difference between product sales and product shipments into the store, with adjustments for products packaged in the store, transferred within the store, and food donations. To calculate retail-level food loss from raw data, we would need the following data for a 1-year period:

1. Product shipments into the store for UPC and random-weight products
2. Product sales (scanner data) for UPC and random-weight products
3. Products packaged in the store (for example, raw meat and poultry, if applicable)
4. Products transferred to other departments in the store (for example, ingredients for prepared foods, if applicable)
5. Food donations, if applicable

For each type of data, we would need data fields like those shown below for the calculations:

Data Field	Description
Store ID	Unique identification for the store
Department	Section of store in which product is located (e.g., dairy, frozen foods)
Category	Food product category used by the store, if applicable
Barcode	UPC, GTIN, or other product code
Description	Text description of the barcode or product code
Date	Year (calendar or fiscal year) for annual data or week for weekly data
Units	Number of units received, transferred, sold, or donated
Weight	Weight per unit or volume per unit
Unit of Measure	Measurement standard for product (e.g., pounds, kilograms, liters)
Value	Total wholesale value of units received (cost of goods sold), or retail value of product sold or donated

Data Confidentiality and Security Procedures

The information provided in the interview will be protected under the **Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA)**. CIPSEA provides protection for information collected for statistical purposes under a pledge of confidentiality.

- CIPSEA-protected information is not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.
- USDA, Economic Research Service will never have access to your individual interview responses and will not know the identity of companies that participate.
- The interview responses will be stored on RTI's Enhanced Security Network (ESN) which is designated FIPS Moderate. Access will be limited to a small number of study staff and will require double authentication.
- RTI will only share aggregated information with USDA, Economic Research Service in the form of a summary report.