



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to Editor

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Let us not waste food

In a couple of weeks Malaysians will be celebrating Hari Raya Puasa. A couple of months later it will be Deepavali, then Christmas, New Year and we start all over again with Chinese New Year. In the true spirit of Malaysian hospitality we cook, we serve and we often cook more than is required. Better more than less as we do not want the embarrassment of food running short and thereby being perceived as 'stingy' or 'not hospitable'. As result a lot of food often goes waste.

According to SWCorp, Malaysians waste 15,000 tonnes of food every day. During festivals there is a 15-20% increase in food waste. When food is wasted a lot of other resources are wasted along with it such as water, energy and labour. It takes just 2 seconds to dump a plate of rice into a bin. But it takes 100 days and 1000 litres of water to produce 1 kilo of rice.

Much of the wasted food ends up in landfills, where it generates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is many times more powerful than carbon dioxide. Consumers also do not realise that by wasting food they are in fact contributing to an increase in price of food. Food is wasted because we purchase too much creating an increase in demand which in turn leads to increased prices.

Every month a family of five in Malaysia spends an average of RM900 on food. The shocking fact is that a quarter of the food is wasted during preparation, cooking and usage. In other words RM225 goes into the bin every month in the form of food waste. Taking the 2010 census data of approximately 6.34 million households in Malaysia, this translates to an outrageous amount of approximately RM1.4 billion ringgit that goes into the dustbin every month in the form of food waste.

Wasting food is sinful and there is no religion that condones the wasting of food. As an old oriental adage goes 'not a single grain of rice must be wasted.' So as we approach the festive season let us not waste food. Buy sensibly, cook lovingly and eat mindfully.

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Consumers Association of Penang