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## Iowa Waste Reduction Center Newsletter, August 2020

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August 2020



## The Longest Spring Break Ever!

School administrators and teachers across Iowa have been preparing all summer for this moment. Parents and children have spent the last several weeks simply wondering what school might look like in the fall.

Well, guess what? It's here!

Across Iowa, students from Kindergarten through college are starting to adapt to this "new normal." While face masks, sneeze guards and social distancing have been debated and enacted to varying degrees across school districts, one area that we at the IWRC are particularly interested in...is lunch. How are school meals going to be handled during the pandemic?

In our fight against food waste, we have spent the last five years working with schools and districts across Iowa. From conducting waste sorts to helping schools get started with on-site composting, the IWRC has worked with over 40 schools across the state in our fight to reduce food waste from their cafeterias. In fact, we have just released a new whitepaper, Food Waste in Rural Schools, which takes a deep look into the current state of food waste at K-12 schools in rural Iowa. Please check it out below.

However, now is not the time to look at what we have done, but rather how can we continue to help schools fight against food waste during these challenging times? School breakfasts and lunches are going to look different, there is no question about that. Exactly how different is still yet to be determined as schools adapt and develop their lunch programs accordingly. Are we going to see significantly more prepackaged food in cafeterias? Are we going to see the elimination of share tables for excess food? There aren't too many scenarios that we can imagine that don't involve a fairly substantial increase in potential food waste. That's where we need YOUR help.

Please talk to your kids and find out what breakfasts and lunches look like in your school districts and let us know. You can call us, email us, or simply drop us a note on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Ultimately, we can't provide the type of assistance schools need if we don't know how meals are being handled, so any help you can provide us will be greatly appreciated.

Stay safe, stay healthy and let's hope this school year goes great for all students, teachers and parents!



Joe Bolick - Director  
Iowa Waste Reduction Center  
University of Northern Iowa

## **IWRC Releases Food Waste Whitepaper**

The Iowa Waste Reduction Center has released a new whitepaper detailing food waste at K-12 schools in rural Iowa. The whitepaper analyzes data collected by the IWRC over the last five years of providing direct assistance to K-12 schools across the state in the fight against food waste.

According to the data, the IWRC estimates K-12 students in Iowa tossed over 150,000 pounds of food and beverage waste every school day during breakfast and lunch in the 2018-2019 school year. Moreover, Iowa's K-12 students tossed nearly 30 million pounds of food and beverage waste in 2018-2019 (based on 180 day school year) with the majority of this ending up in the landfill.

The whitepaper details methodology, student impact, outcomes of assistance, and food and beverage waste data collected over the last five years. With the current situation created by the novel coronavirus pandemic, this whitepaper can be used as a guide for K-12 schools to calculate food and beverage waste rather than conducting actual waste sorts; which would be nearly impossible to conduct with social distancing and public health protocols.

To view the whitepaper, please visit <https://iwrc.uni.edu/food-waste>.

## IWRC Welcomes New Student Intern

### Meet Samantha Lensing

Sam is a University of Northern Iowa junior, majoring in Computer Science and Economics. Sam works as the IWRC's Brewers Association Sustainability Intern, where she is responsible for assisting with the Iowa Green Brewery Certification program. A fun fact about Sam is that both of her parents are UNI graduates. During her free time, Sam enjoys traveling to new cities, cooking, and hiking.



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## IWRC NEWS

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### IWRC Energy Reduction Webinar

The Iowa Waste Reduction Center will be hosting a series of free webinars to assist Iowa businesses reduce energy consumption and save money. These webinars will provide relevant information on the latest energy-saving technologies and case studies of companies that have successfully implemented energy-saving practices. They will also give an overview of potential financing options for energy projects and cover applicable regulatory information. The IWRC has created these webinars to be Iowa specific, addressing information that is relevant to Iowa businesses and the issues that they face in reducing their energy consumption.

During these challenging times, the IWRC is finding new ways to assist Iowa businesses, with the energy efficiency webinar series being an example of these efforts. These webinars are funded through a grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Energy Program and have been developed as a no-cost, efficient assistance effort. Each webinar will be approximately two hours in length and speakers will include both industry and government experts in the energy reduction field.

The first webinar in this series will be held on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Speakers will include industry and government experts from Ideal Energy, The Energy Group and the USDA, who will be discussing how businesses can implement energy-saving projects and multiple mechanisms to successfully finance them. More information regarding speakers and topics for this webinar can be found at <https://iwrc.uni.edu/iowa-energy-efficiency/webinar>.

Follow the link below to register for this free webinar:

[https://uni.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UGUzBlp6TbmBI\\_UnMtc12A](https://uni.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UGUzBlp6TbmBI_UnMtc12A)

We look forward to you joining us for this free webinar series! More information on future webinars in the IWRC's Energy Efficiency series will be coming soon.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### | Energy |

[Could trash-to-energy technology feed hydrogen demand?](#) (GreenBiz)

### | Food Waste |

[Iowa Waste Reduction Center awarded \\$99,000 grant to reduce food waste in rural Iowa](#) (Inside UNI)

### | Food Waste |

[Vermont Bans Food Scraps in Trash to Eliminate Waste, Combat Climate Change](#) (The Weather Channel)

### | Recycling |

[How to Recycle Cardboard - and Why it's Important in the Era of COVID-19](#) (Waste 360)



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