



EXPIRED?

Food Waste in America

SCREENING TOOLKIT

Step-by-step instructions and resources for screening
EXPIRED in your community

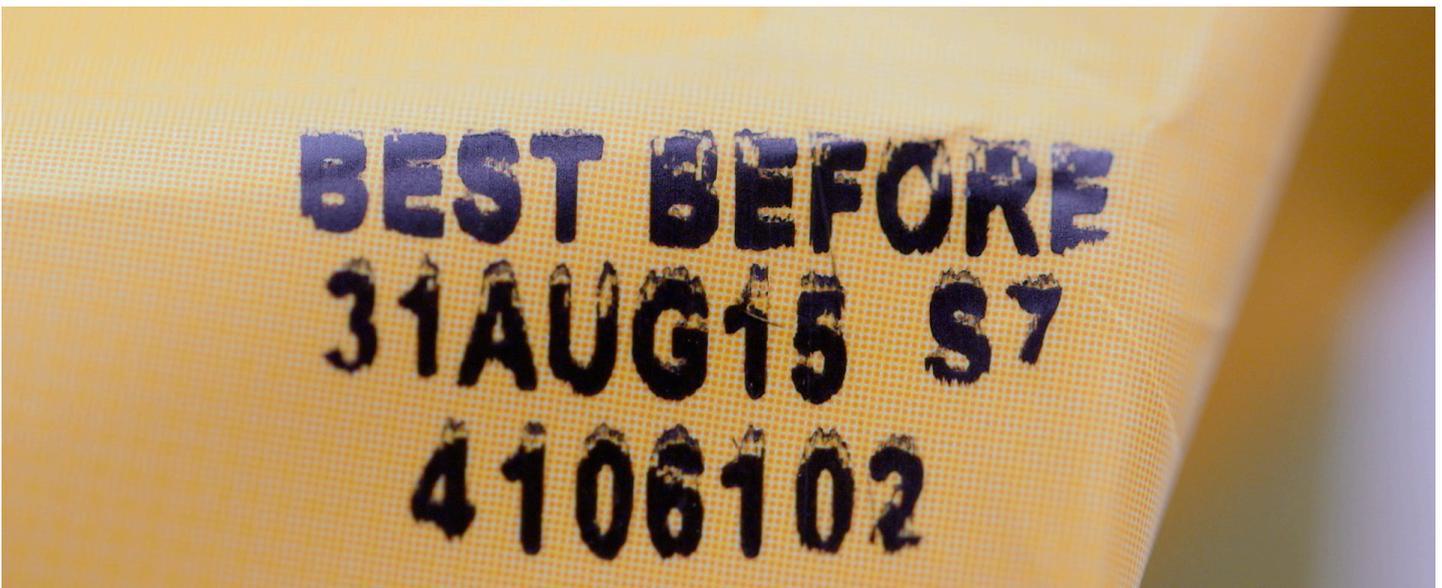
October 2016, Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic

ABOUT THE FILM



EXPIRED is a continuation of the [Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic's](#) (FLPC) previous work on the regulation of date labels. In 2013, FLPC, in partnership with the National Resources Defense Council, published a comprehensive report entitled [The Dating Game: How Confusing Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America](#), that examines the legal and policy regime surrounding expiration dates on food products, and how unclear and unregulated date labeling on food contributes to an alarming amount of unnecessary food waste and consumer confusion.

EXPIRED seeks to present the information contained in The Dating Game in a format that is short and easily accessible for a broader audience. The EXPIRED film uses the example of a date labeling rule that applies in the state of Montana to demonstrate the larger problems with the current patchwork system of date labeling. The vivid image of gallons of milk being poured down the drain and tossed into the dumpster brings to life the consequences of similar date labeling laws across the country. It is the hope of FLPC that this film will raise awareness about what date labels actually mean, and why we need to standardize date labels to reduce consumer confusion and food waste.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS



Harvard
Food Law and Policy Clinic
A Division of the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation

FLPC and [Racing Horse Productions](#) produced EXPIRED as collaborative effort between two programs at Harvard Law School: one that aims to provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn about and improve the laws and policies shaping the food system and one that aims to test and teach media advocacy techniques

in the context of real world practice.

FLPC is an experiential learning program at Harvard Law School devoted to educating students about the laws and policies structuring the food system while offering them opportunities to work hands-on with clients and partners in this field. Racing Horse Productions is a documentary film production company dedicated to illuminating vital stories about law and justice.



FLPC students and faculty worked with Harvard Law School lecturer and professional filmmaker, Rebecca Richman Cohen and Emmy nominated producer, Nathaniel Hansen, to plan, produce, edit, and distribute the video. FLPC students involved in this project worked on this film as a media advocacy component of their greater project of conducting legal and policy research, educating consumers and policymakers, and pushing for policy change to reduce the waste of healthy, wholesome foods in the United States.



PREPARING FOR YOUR SCREENING



SCREENING OBJECTIVES

A screening event can be used to create interest in food date label reform, educate your community about local or national food waste issues, and inspire action to reduce food waste and reform the expiration date labeling system.

When we created EXPIRED, we wanted to:

- ▶ **Raise awareness around date labeling so people can make better-informed choices about their food**
- ▶ **Reduce consumer confusion over the meaning of date labels**
- ▶ **Educate consumers about the patchwork of state regulations that govern date labeling**
- ▶ **Motivate action and policy changes centered around food date labeling and other food waste reform on the federal, state, and local level**

We strongly recommend a pre-screening brainstorming session to set realistic goals for what the screening is meant to accomplish. Clearly articulating your objectives will make it much easier to plan the event, strategize for useful outcomes, target publicity, and evaluate your results.

SCREENING RIGHTS

You do not need to secure public performance rights in order to screen the film publicly. You can access the film on our website, www.notreallyexpired.com. If you need a HD version of the film, please contact us directly at flpc@law.harvard.edu to request an electronic HD version of the film.

SCREENING LOGISTICS

Once you've nailed down your screening objectives, as well as details like the date, time, and venue for the screening, it's time to start preparing for your event. Use this checklist to get started:

- ❑ **Be knowledgeable about Food Waste.** You don't need to be an expert on all topics related to food waste, but knowing the basics can help guide the discussion and gently correct misstatements of fact. Before the screening, take time to review the film, review the film's talking points and other resources on the notreallyexpired.com site, look up your state's date labeling rules in the appendix to [The Dating Game](#), and research proposed federal legislation and any current state and local activity on date labeling reform.
- ❑ **Know who Might be Present.** It isn't always possible to know exactly who will attend a screening, but if you know the groups that make up your community, you have a better chance of predicting who may come to your event. Take care not to assume that all members of a particular group share the same point of view.
- ❑ **Partnering with other Organizations.** Consider whether you want to approach other organizations and/or stakeholders to co-sponsor and co-plan your event. Also, since EXPIRED is a short film, consider whether you want to show other films related to food waste. Brainstorm who will lead the post-screening discussion and what topics will be covered. Will there be a panel discussion? Will you invite experts? Food activists? Environmental agencies? State legislators? Food policy councils? Food banks? Health departments? Nutritionists? Scientists? Will you lead the conversation, or will you let the audience steer the course of the discussion?



- ❑ **Spread the word.** Spread the word to the wider community by creating a Facebook event, sending updates via your Twitter feed, and including links to the EXPIRED website on your website or blog. Include the hashtag #notreallyexpired or @HarvardFLPC so that FLPC can help you spread the word. Issue a press release to let local newspapers, bloggers, and radio stations know about your event.
- ❑ **Check your Audio Visual Equipment.** Make sure that you find time to test-run your laptop cables, Wi-Fi connection, etc. before the day of your event. You'll want to be sure that your projector and audio cables fit, that your sound is audible (even in the back of the room), and that the picture that gets projected on your screen or wall is the right shape and size. Good sound and screen visibility are probably the most important factors for a successful screening.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR SCREENING

- ▶ Check out the [Resources](#) section of the EXPIRED website to see if there are any major developments worth addressing in the post-screening discussion.
- ▶ Bring a sign-in sheet to collect email addresses from the audience if you want to follow up or add them to your mailing list
- ▶ Provide literature about your organization.
- ▶ Bring print outs of the [Not Really Expired: Date Labels should say what they mean and mean what they say](#) fact sheet.
- ▶ Consider bringing food products with date labels as props.
- ▶ If you plan on serving food, think about serving food that would otherwise go to waste or food that is 'expired' or made from 'expired' ingredients.
- ▶ Use the discussion questions in this guide to engage your guests before and after the film.
- ▶ Encourage your guests to act on what they've learned by sending them home with simple ideas for taking action in your community.
- ▶ Take photos to post on social media sites. Make sure to tag #notreallyexpired.

After the Screening

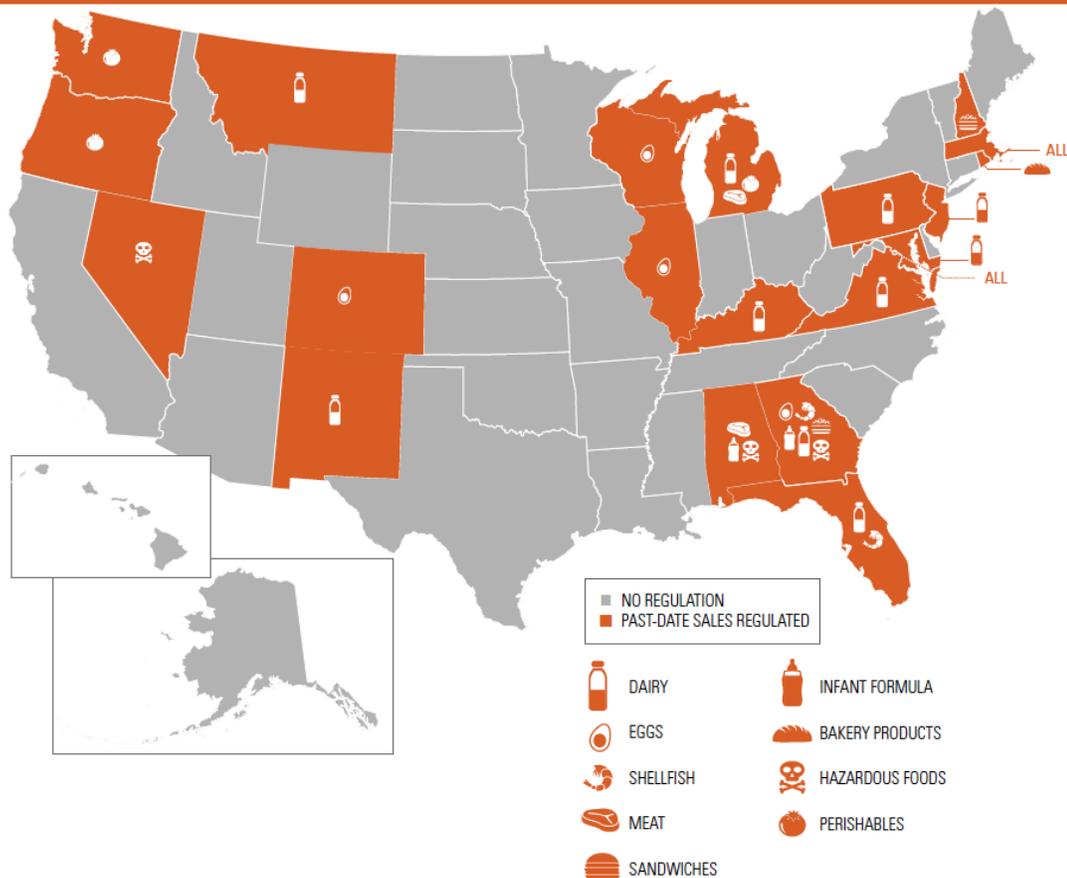
Follow up with your guests to thank them for coming and to encourage them to take action after watching the film. Email us at flpc@law.harvard.edu and let us know how the screening went. Also, post photos and feedback from your event on [FLPC's facebook page](#).



report) and then ask the audience what they think about all of these different laws. What is good or bad about the various laws?

5. Why do you think all these different state labels emerged? Why do you think consumers are so confused?
6. What do you think the impact of standardized date labels would be in practice?
7. What steps can we take as community members to achieve standardized date labels?
8. How can we educate consumers about the meaning of expiration date labels?
9. Is changing date labeling language enough to change ingrained habits around wasting food? If not, what else is needed to help consumers stop wasting wholesome food?
10. In addition to changing date labels, how else can we reduce wasted food? What foods do you think are commonly wasted?
11. How else can you reduce food waste in your community? Household? The restaurants or stores that you frequent?

States Regulating Food Sales Past Some Label Dates



TALKING POINTS FOR COMMUNITY LED DISCUSSIONS

Food Waste Overview

- ▶ Each year, 40% of food produced in the United States goes uneaten.
- ▶ The U.S. spends \$218 billion each year growing, processing, transporting and disposing of food that is never eaten.
- ▶ Food waste costs the average American family of four between \$1,560-\$2,275 a year.
- ▶ If 30% of the wasted food in America was saved, we could feed every food insecure American (14% of the population) their total diet.
- ▶ Every group that has looked at the rising rates of waste, from the U.N. to the NRDC to industry groups, has found confusion over date labels to be a leading cause of food waste.

Expiration Dates Overview

- ▶ Nearly 90% of consumers have reported at least occasionally throwing food close to or past the expiration date.
- ▶ The standardization of date labels is the most economically efficient way to reduce food waste. Standardizing date labels could divert 398, 000 tons of food waste per year and provide an annual economic value of \$1.8 billion. (See [ReFED's Roadmap to Reduce Food Waste](#) for more information.)
- ▶ Most date labels are meant to indicate the time food will be at its peak quality, meaning the vast majority of those dates have no bearing on food safety.
- ▶ Except for infant formula, no federal standard exists for expiration dates.
- ▶ Instead, date labels are regulated by inconsistent state laws and industry discretion.
- ▶ 41 states require date labels on certain food products and 20 states prohibit or restrict the sale or donation of some or all food products past the expiration date.

Date Label Reform

- ▶ Federal legislation can help reduce consumer confusion, simplify regulatory compliance, and cut unnecessary food waste, by establishing a uniform national system for date labeling that applies to all food products. This should clearly distinguish between foods labeled for quality versus foods labeled for safety.
- ▶ National research conducted by Wal-Mart and FLPC, National Consumers League and John Hopkins Center for Livable Future has shown that “best if used by” is the phrase most easily understood by consumers as a quality indicator.
- ▶ Research conducted by the FLPC, National Consumers League, and John Hopkins Center for Livable Future found that the phrase “expires on” most clearly communicated safety to consumers.
- ▶ Most countries and governments that regulate date labels, including the entire European Union, utilize a dual label system with separate quality and safety labels.
- ▶ Federal law or state law should eliminate bans on the sale or donation of foods past their quality date. This would eliminate rules like Montana’s milk rule, which as shown in the film, prohibits the sale or donation of milk 12 days after pasteurization, when milk is actually good for much longer.
- ▶ If and when date labels are standardized, federal and state agencies, as well as food companies, will need to work to educate consumers about the meaning of these labels in order for them to be effective. In the meantime, we can all help by explaining to our communities that date labels are generally just indicators of quality.

TAKE ACTION

There are several things you and the attendees at your screening can do to help change the way we label our food. Here is a short list:

Reduce Your Waste

Armed with your new understanding of date labels, try to reduce your own food waste. Don't just toss your food once the expiration date has passed! Commit to using "expired" but perfectly safe food, not tossing it in a landfill. Only a small handful of foods, like deli meats, prepared foods and unpasteurized cheeses, can potentially be unsafe if kept too long. And don't pass by "ugly" fruits and vegetables. Looks can be deceiving – these are just as wholesome and delicious!

Spread the Word

Ask your local grocery stores what they are doing to reduce food waste, and encourage them to make plans to donate healthy, wholesome surplus food. When you see a friend or neighbor throwing away otherwise wholesome "expired" food, say something! Then tell them about the EXPIRED film and the [USDA FoodKeeper](#) app, which helps you determine how long food can be kept safely and at its peak quality.

Voice Your Support for Federal Reform

It's time to change the way we label our food! We need to enact a uniform, national system for date labeling. We should simplify the current number of date labels down to two: a quality date and a safety date. This can make a big impact on the countless gallons of milk wasted each year in Montana, and on reducing the senseless waste of food throughout the U.S. Visit www.notreallyexpired.com to learn about proposed federal legislation to reform expiration date labels.

RESOURCES

FLPC has published several resources and utilized many others in our quest to understand how much food is wasted in the U.S., the meaning of date labels, and the dizzying array of date labeling laws. Here is a short list:

- ▶ [The Dating Game: How Confusing Food Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America](#)
- ▶ [Not Really Expired: Date Labels should say what they mean and mean what they say](#) fact sheet
- ▶ [Consumer Perceptions of Date Labels: National Survey](#)
- ▶ [Episode 195, Best Enjoyed By](#) on 99% Invisible Podcast
- ▶ [Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Food Waste](#)
- ▶ [Waste Free Kitchen Handbook](#) by Dana Gunders
- ▶ [A Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste By 20 Percent](#) by ReFed
- ▶ [American Wasteland](#) by Jonathan Bloom
- ▶ [Waste: Uncovering the Global Food Scandal](#) by Tristram Stuart
- ▶ [Just Eat It: A Food Waste Movie](#)
- ▶ [Everything You Need to Know about Food Waste on RobGreenfield.TV](#)