

MEDIA RELEASE



An initiative by the
Consumer Education Project of Milk SA

Load shedding and making sure your **dairy products last**

Food loss and waste is nothing but a terrible drain on our already limited household resources. There are many ways that we are adapting to chronic load shedding in the country, and now protecting our food resources is becoming top of mind for consumers.



One of the great frustrations of load shedding is finding yourself throwing out good food that's gone bad through no fault of your own. South Africans surely have enough pressures on their wallets at this time and the perpetual energy crisis is forcing consumers to adapt. Long power outages result in spoiled fresh foods due to a lack of refrigeration, while blackouts over mealtimes cause families to abandon their usual meals plans because they simply can't cook their food. It's no wonder that household food waste is increasing. It has particularly become harder to safely store foods like fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat in fridges and freezers. This can lead to less bulk buying, which is important for households with limited budgets, and also increase the amount of food that is thrown away.

Milk can be heat-treated by three different methods:

- ✳️ Pasteurisation
- ✳️ Ultra high temperature (UHT) treatment to produce long-life milk (box milk)
- ✳️ And, sterilisation

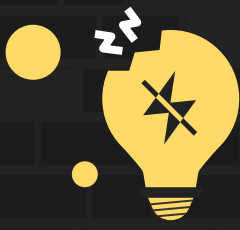
Maretha says, “For families who are finding that milk products are increasingly spoiling because of load shedding disruptions, UHT dairy products are a smart adaption that helps you to reduce food waste and save money.” Rediscover Dairy has also been gathering real-life #loadshedding #wastewise tips from South Africans on social media who are trying to mitigate the impact of load shedding on their food budgets.

As it is clear that load shedding is not going to ease up any time soon, families need to shop and store foods somewhat differently. Rediscover Dairy has highlighted some of the technologies for processing milk for a longer shelf-life. Maretha Vermaak, registered dietitian at Rediscover Dairy says, “Milk and other dairy products have long been enjoyed as part of our diets. As one of the five core food groups, dairy plays a key role in a balanced diet. Heat treatments make milk and other dairy products safe for consumption for longer periods of time. Heat treatment is used for many different food types. Appropriate heat treatment limits harmful bacteria that may be present in food and ensures that food is safe to consume.”

These include:

- ✳️ Choose UHT milk products.
- ✳️ After purchase, divide perishables such as hard cheeses and butter into smaller portions. Keep only what you need for the day in your fridge, and freeze the rest.

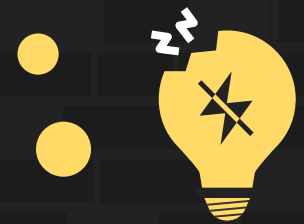




- ✦ Keep the fridge door closed during load shedding hours.
- ✦ Move milk to the back of the fridge as opposed to storing it in the door during load shedding hours.
- ✦ Use sour milk, yoghurt and cream as an ingredient in baked goods or meals.

✦ If you know you can't use certain foods before their use-by-dates¹, donate it rather than throw it away.

✦ Set up a cooler box with ice bricks for perishable foods such as milk, yoghurt and cheese during load shedding. You can also fill empty milk bottles with water, freeze them and use as cooling aids in fridge or cooler box.



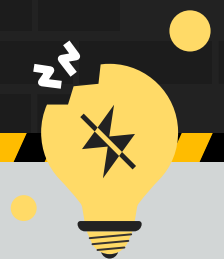
Maretha concludes, "It's a basic of life to make the most out of your food budget particularly during hard times. We also need to address the need to provide our families with daily healthy, balanced meals that include all the food groups. So, we need to pay more attention to how we store different foods effectively as well as understanding the difference between best-before and use-by labelling . Pivoting to long-life options is much smarter than reducing your consumption of important foods. So, carefully consider preserved and heat-treated foods so that your family is enjoying a variety of foods every day, regardless of load shedding."



Why reducing household food waste is so important

According to a 2021 CSIR study, more than 10 million tonnes of edible food goes to waste annually in South Africa. Matlou Setati, the Food Safety & Sustainability Initiative Executive at the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) says, “Food loss and waste has negative financial, social and environmental impacts throughout the country’s food value chain, including consumers.”

In 2020, the CGCSA launched the South African Food Loss and Waste Initiative to bring together food producers and retailers with a focus on achieving the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal to halve global food loss and waste by 2030. By March 2023, the CGCSA has notched up a 110 signatories to the initiative, including major food industry associations such as Milk SA. Setati says, “There is a need for behaviour change campaigns aimed at reducing food loss and waste at different levels of the food value chain, including at the household level. Research has indicated that food date labels are poorly understood by consumers and there are campaigns aimed at ensuring that these labels are interpreted correctly which could result in reduced food waste at the consumer level.”



For more recipes and inspiration, visit www.rediscoverdairy.co.za



For more dairy ideas join the RediscoverDAIRY Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/RediscoverDAIRY

1. Use-by dates

Best-before date: The suggested date before which the full quality of the product, as marketed, can be enjoyed.

Sell-by date: Refers to a product’s shelf life in-store – the recommended time in which it should be sold to retain marketed quality.

Use-by/Expiry date: The date after which food will perish and will no longer retain the marketed quality.