

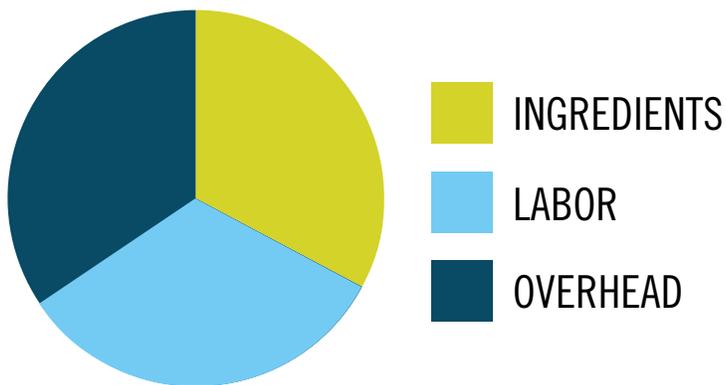
# SPECIAL REPORT

## Food Storage and the Bottom Line

With today's savvy consumer, operators can't take the chance of letting withered produce find its way onto a guest's plate. Foods that don't pass visual inspection in the kitchen will likely find their way into the trash as a result.

According to research, approximately 4 to 10 percent of food purchased by restaurants becomes kitchen loss, both edible and inedible, before reaching the consumer.<sup>1</sup> In fact, a 2005 study at the University of Arizona measured food waste of an average 9.55% in American fast food establishments and 3.11% in full service restaurants. That may not sound like much on a percentage basis, but it translates to an estimated total food loss per day of over 49 million pounds in all full service restaurants and over 85 million pounds in all fast food restaurants. Although these numbers are projections based upon collected data, there is no question that the amount of food wasted daily in foodservice is staggering and preventable. The loss of all that food is disturbing in and of itself, but what about the cost?

### RESTAURANT OPERATING COSTS



Statistics gathered by the National Restaurant Association show that food comprises 28%-35% of the typical, profitable restaurant's costs. So, what does that mean to a restaurant with a million dollar budget? If that restaurant spends \$330,000 (33% of the total budget) on food and 5% of that food never makes it onto a plate, \$16,500 worth of food is landing in either the trash can or the compost bin – \$16,500 that could be going straight to the bottom line.

## HOW MUCH IS FOOD WASTE COSTING YOU?

**Your Total Budget x 33% x 5% = Cost of Food Waste**

### What makes good food go bad?

Food spoilage is defined as a disagreeable change in a food's normal state that can be detected by smell, taste, touch or sight. These unappealing changes are caused by a combination of the following common culprits: air and oxygen, moisture, light, microbial growth, and temperature.<sup>2</sup> We will focus here on the conditions that can be controlled with proper food storage in a well-functioning walk-in cooler:



**AIR AND OXYGEN:** Air consists of 21% oxygen. While oxygen is essential for life, it can have a degenerative effect on food color, vitamins, fats and flavors. It can provide conditions that support microbial growth and cause damage to foods when it meets up with enzymes.



**MICROORGANISMS:** Molds and most yeast that cause food spoilage need oxygen to grow. They can often be found growing on the surface of foods when air is present.



**ENZYMES:** Oxidizing enzymes are naturally present in food and speed up chemical reactions between oxygen and food components, leading to food spoilage.



**MOISTURE:** The amount of water in a food influences its appearance, texture, and flavor. All foods contain some water, but fresh fruits and vegetables contain the most — between 90% and 95%. Microorganisms need water in an available form to grow in food products.<sup>3</sup>

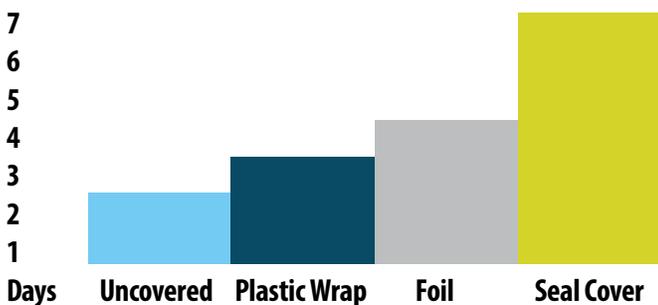
## How can you slow these destructive forces of nature in your operation?

The trick to maximizing shelf life is to control the food's environment as much as possible by keeping out air, additional moisture and microbial cross-contamination. How? All it takes is a lid that seals onto a storage container, one such as the Cambro Seal Cover.

## The proof is in the testing.

Third party laboratory testing has shown that when used properly with a Cambro® Food Pan, Cambro Seal Covers can extend the shelf life of produce by **two to three days** beyond storage with disposable wraps, foils or no cover at all.

**STRAWBERRY SHELF LIFE (in days)**



**Extend Shelf Life by Two to Three Days**



Want to see for yourself? Ask your Cambro rep for a free product sample, try the test with fresh strawberries or spinach and start diverting dollars from the bottom of the dumpster to the bottom line.

### Sources

1 *Short Guide to Food Waste Management Best Practices*, LeanPath, 2008, [www.leanpath.com](http://www.leanpath.com)

2 [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov); Department of Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Science, Clemson University

3 *Evaluation and Definition of Potentially Hazardous Foods, Factors that Influence Microbial Growth*, [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov)