

## 2.1.2 Brainstorming

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Questions:

WHAT

- **What are the purpose of expiration dates on food?**  
There are different types of dates on food. Best if used by/before is the date the manufacturer recommends for the best quality and flavor of food. This does NOT mean a date for the safety of the food. Sell by is so the inventory manager knows how long to display the product for sale. This does NOT mean a date for the safety of food. Use by is the last date recommended for use for the peak of freshness. This is NOT a date for the safety of the food. The exception to the rule is infant formula- its sell by date refers to expiration.
- **What do consumers understand about the dates on their food?**  
PBS.org, Donald Schaffner, Food Science Professor at Rutgers. "State of confusion in terms of date labeling. Primarily exist for food manufacturer to communicate with customers what to do or what to expect from the food product, not a lot of standards. "
- **What are the current beliefs of consumers?**  
Consumers most commonly throw anything in the trash that has a date that has passed or is getting close because they fear the item is no longer any good

WHEN

- **When do labels help determine food safety?**  
Expiration dates= food safety. Best by, use by, sell by= food quality (except for infant formulas sell by date is the expiration date). Food like ready to eat (deli means, prepared sandwiches, etc) need an expiration date. If foods are kept properly, there is a low risk of food borne illnesses. The risk does not usually increase as food ages.
- **When does the confusion occur?**  
Confusion occurs anytime a consumer is looking at a date on a product. Instead of researching what it means, they immediately throw it away and waste it.

HOW

- **How can this conclusion be clarified?**  
Standardization of what labels mean. A bill is being introduced to congress to use expires on for safety and best if used by for quality.
- **How can we change consumers misconceptions?**  
EDUCATE!!!

## WHO

➤ **Who is responsible for labels?**

There are no standardization federally (except infant formula). State laws vary. It is up to the food manufacturer what to do for labels.

➤ **Who is causing confusion among consumers?**

Most confusion is caused from being miseducated from others around you. The confusion also comes from unclear regulations that consumers may or may not of looked at when determining whether an item is good or bad.

## REVERSE BRAINSTORM

Consumers can define and differentiate- use by date, sell by date, expires date, and best if used by/before date. Consumers understand quality vs safety. Consumers can identify food spoilage vs. food born illness.

## CONCLUSION

1. Brainstorming helps you write down all the ideas you are interested in and thinking of that moment. It helps you to write down all the possibilities and then look at them to help narrow it down.
2. How and Why were most helpful.
3. Expiration Date Confusion/Food Waste: Consumers misunderstanding of quality labels leads to greater food waste.