



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure® Newsletter

The Report Card

The Epic-Cure <i>Report Card</i> as of April 30,2025		
Life to Date <i>(since May 24, 2019)</i>		
Pounds In/Out	33,490,023	
Wholesale Value of Food Distributed	\$67,575,103	
Pounds of Food per Family:	109.00	<i>Average pounds per family per visit</i>
Equivalent Meals Served:	27,908,353	<i>Assumes 1.2 pounds per meal</i>
Families Served		
Number of Families Served this month:	6,693	<i>in Month of April 2025</i>
Number of Distributions this month:	64	<i>in Month of April 2025</i>
Pounds of Food/Household Goods		
Total Pounds In / Out:	976,693	<i>in Month of April 2025</i>
Total Pounds In / Out:	876,163	<i>Average of 3 prior months</i>
Operating Efficiency		
Wholesale value of food distributed for each \$1.00 spent on Operations since inception:		\$43.84
Wholesale value of food distributed for each \$1.00 spent on Operations in April:		\$76.28

Upcoming Fundraisers



BINGO for a Cause at Global Bites!

We're teaming up with the brand-new Global Bites Food Truck Park for an evening of food, fun, and fundraising!

Join us for Bingo Night and help support Epic-Cure's mission to eliminate food waste and fight hunger in our community.



Operations

Of significant note: We have done 2,948 food rescue pick-ups in the last 12 months. That averages 8 per day.

Lets start with some of the inventive solutions our volunteers came up with.

1. When your dumpster is too tall to reach, they created the pallet staircase.



2. With a mix of ingenuity, grit, and scrap metal, they engineered a custom ramp that can be moved with power pallet jacks—making it SO much easier (and safer) to unload our heavy freezers.

This clever solution has massively boosted our efficiency, and the best part? It cost next to nothing. We could never have afforded the expensive hydraulic ramps that would have been needed otherwise.

Check out this video of that amazing contraption.

Volunteer Inventiveness



Now let's talk about some of the crazy things we've had to deal with and find solutions for recently.



1. 2,200 pound bags of potatoes – 26 pallets in the last few weeks and more on the way.



2. 1,200 pound boxes of diced pepperoni – 25 pallets

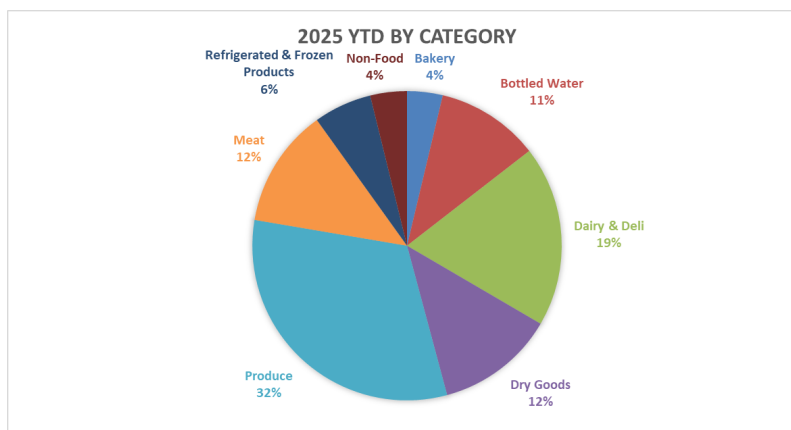


This is how the pepperoni came to us. Obviously not easy to distribute.

What did we do with all of it? We shared with other food banks. We shared with the Putnam county jail. We put the surplus potatoes on the Palatka warehouse shopping floor for patrons to self bag. The pepperoni had a dedicated volunteer bagging up pet treats. We are not allowed to repack food so it is the best alternative in between people and feed for farmers' livestock.

- And then, of course, there was the 30,000+ pounds of spoiled meat. Check this video out: [Epic-Cure Rescues 30,000 Pounds of Meat from Waste!](#)
- It was exhausting but absolutely worth it. Food, and all the use of resources behind it, should never be wasted.

Since the memory of the 30,000 pounds of meat depackaging we had to do is still fresh on our minds, we are going to revisit a topic we discussed back in our March 2023 Newsletter – meat waste. Of the 3.6m pounds of food we rescued YTD April 2025, 455,889 pounds of that was meat. That is a lot of animals.





Before we take our deep dive, let's discuss the condition of meat and the way we receive and distribute it.

When meat approaches its sell-by date, stores will remove it from the displays and freeze it.

*According to the USDA, the “best-by” and “sell-by” dates indicate when a food product will have the best flavor or quality. Best-by dates are recommendations for enjoying the food product when quality is at its peak, meaning the flavor and texture will be optimal when consumed within and by these dates. **It is not a purchase-by or safety date.***

When stores have excess inventory of meat, it is already being stored frozen. Here are some examples:

- After Thanksgiving, excess turkey inventory.
- After Easter, excess ham inventory.
- Overestimating demand which results in overordering.
- Overstocking to create the appearance of abundance (psychological marketing strategy).

Epic-Cure sends volunteers to pick up the donated meat. Depending on the volume each source donates, the volunteers use either personal vehicles or one of our refrigerated trucks to safely transport the the meat. Once the meat arrives, each package is inspected for quality and package integrity. Any meat that is deemed not suitable for people is sent to the farms to feed livestock. We store the meat frozen and distribute it while still frozen.

The Feeding America safety guidelines for freezing and storing meat are below. We never store it for more than a week or two. Food does no one any good while we are storing it.

- Ground Meats that have been frozen can be kept for three to four months past expiration.
- Muscle cuts that have been frozen can be kept for 9 - 12 months past expiration.
- Frozen Hot Dogs, Frozen Deli Meats, Bacon, and TV Dinners can be kept for one to two months past expiration.

We are just one of many food banks and food pantries rescuing food in Northeast Florida. Now, let's get to the shameful big picture.

Key Points

- Using sources from 2021–2025, the estimated annual meat waste in the US for 2025 is approximately 21.5 billion pounds, based on USDA production forecasts and EWG-derived waste percentages.
- Approximately 20% of meat production is wasted, with slight variations across sources.
- Limited meat-specific data within the timeframe introduces some uncertainty, but the estimate is robust given available evidence.



Total Meat Production

The USDA, via Feedstuffs (August 2024), forecast 2025 total red meat and poultry production at 107.43 billion pounds, covering beef, pork, lamb, and poultry, the primary meat types in the US.

Waste Percentage

The Environmental Working Group (EWG), cited by Animal Outlook (2021), estimates 20% of US meat production is wasted across the supply chain. This is supported indirectly by Earth.Org (2022), which notes 21–33% waste for agricultural products, including meat, and ReFED (2023), which highlights meat’s high waste impact without a specific percentage. The 20% figure is used for its meat-specific focus.

Final Estimate

- Calculation: 107.43 billion pounds × 0.20 = 21.486 billion pounds.
- Rounded estimate: ~21.5 billion pounds of annual meat waste in 2025.

Table of Key Data Points

Metric	Value	Source
Total Meat Production 2025	107.43 billion pounds	USDA, via Feedstuffs (2024)
Meat Waste Percentage	20%	EWG, cited by Animal Outlook (2021)
Annual Meat Waste Estimate	21.5 billion pounds	Calculated (Production × Waste Percentage)

Meat production involves the slaughter of sentient animals, often raised in inhumane conditions. Wasting 20% of meat annually in the US disregards the ethical weight of their suffering and death. Each wasted portion represents an animal life taken without purpose, violating principles of respect for sentient beings.

While some waste may be unavoidable (e.g., spoilage), systemic overproduction and careless disposal are choices. Reducing waste through better planning, storage, or redistribution aligns with moral imperatives to minimize harm and respect life.

And then there is the wasted water...

Groundwater is a valuable resource both in the United States and throughout the world. Where surface water, such as lakes and rivers, are scarce or inaccessible, groundwater supplies much



of the hydrologic needs of people everywhere. In the United States, it is the source of drinking water for about half the total population and nearly all the rural population. And, it provides over 50 billion gallons per day for agricultural needs. Groundwater depletion, a term often defined as long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping, is a key issue associated with groundwater use. Many areas of the United States are experiencing groundwater depletion.

Key Points - Meat Waste and Groundwater Depletion

Meat production, particularly beef, is water-intensive, requiring ~15,000–17,000 liters of water per kg (~1,800 gallons/pound), mostly for irrigating feed crops like corn, soy, and alfalfa. Groundwater, supplying 60% of US irrigation, is heavily drawn from aquifers like the High Plains and Central Valley. The 21.5 billion pounds of wasted meat embody this water, which is lost without benefit when meat is discarded. For example:

- **Beef Waste:** Assuming beef is ~30% of meat waste (6.45 billion pounds, based on USDA consumption shares), at 1,800 gallons/pound, this equates to ~11.6 trillion gallons of water wasted. Poultry and pork use less water but still contribute.
- **Groundwater Share:** The National Science Foundation (2022) notes 70% of global groundwater withdrawals support agriculture, with meat-related feed crops a key driver. In the US, ~50 billion gallons/day are withdrawn for irrigation, much from depleting aquifers.

Meat waste thus amplifies groundwater depletion by wasting resources already over-extracted, exacerbating stress on critical aquifers.

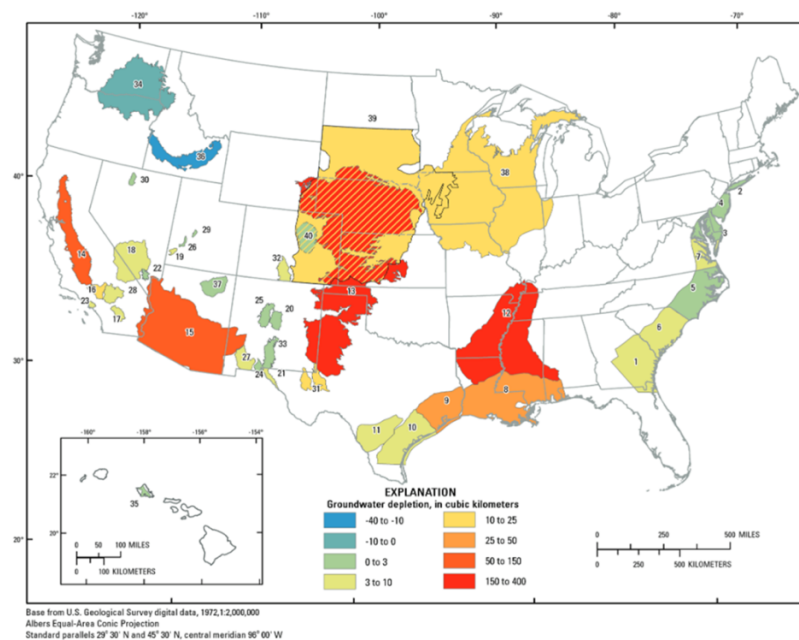
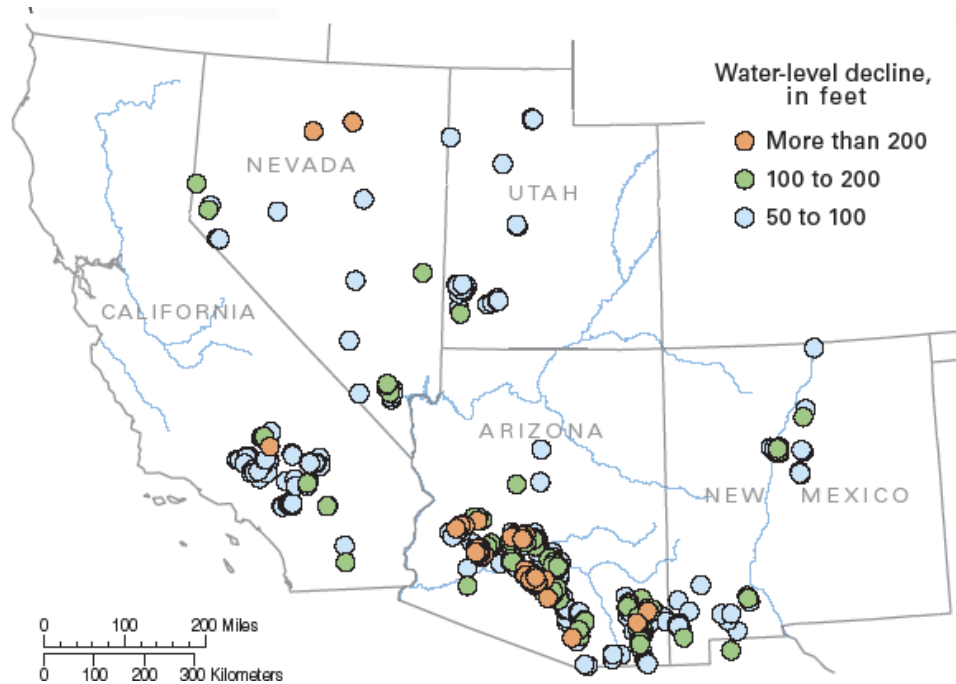


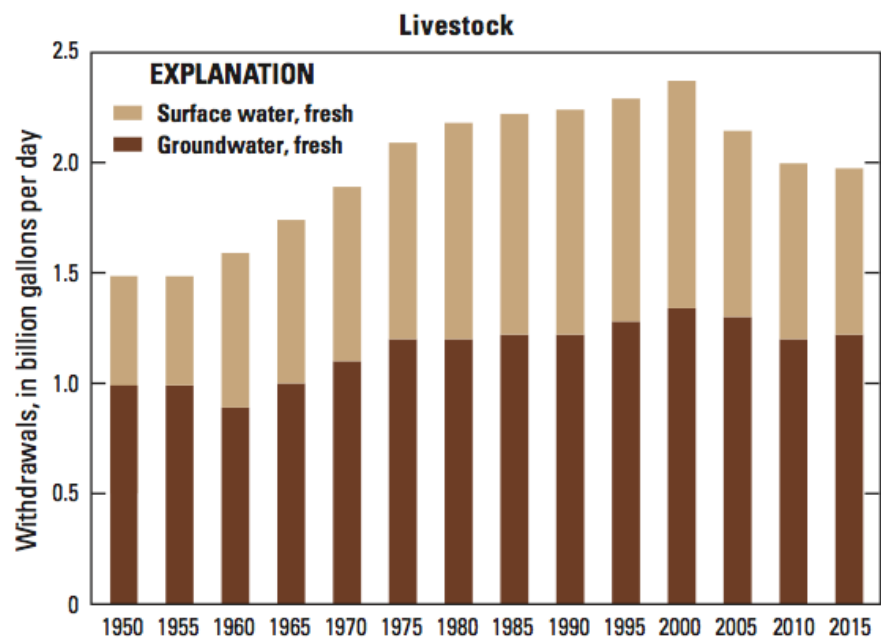
Figure 2. Map of the United States (excluding Alaska) showing cumulative groundwater depletion, 1900 through 2008, in 40 assessed aquifer systems or subareas. Index numbers are defined in table 1. Colors are hatched in the Dakota aquifer (area 39) where the aquifer overlaps with other aquifers having different values of depletion.



[US Geological Survey - Groundwater Decline & Depletion](#)



[US Geological Survey - PDF](#)





And then there are the chemicals...

The 21.5 billion pounds of annual US meat waste (2025) exacerbates pesticide pollution by squandering ~154 million pounds of pesticides applied to feed crops like corn and soy, which account for 70% of the 1.1 billion pounds used annually. These pesticides, embodied in wasted meat, contaminate groundwater in aquifers like the High Plains and Central Valley, pollute surface waters, harm pollinators, and degrade soils, with health and ecosystem impacts. Mitigation through waste reduction (supply chain improvements, food recovery), precision pesticide application, IPM, organic farming, and stronger regulations could reduce this impact, but high costs, slow adoption, and agribusiness resistance pose challenges. Reducing the 20% meat waste rate is critical to minimizing pesticide waste and protecting environmental health.

All Cattle: Agricultural producers applied 2.16 million pounds of insecticides to beef and dairy cattle in 1999. Applications made to beef cattle accounted for 72 percent of the total while insecticide use on dairy cattle accounted for 28 percent. Xylene was the top active ingredient in total quantity used at 459,700 pounds followed by tetrachlorvinphos at 287,300 pounds and piperonyl butoxide at 154,300 pounds. These three active ingredients accounted for 42 percent of the U.S. total. Of the total chemical applications made to cattle in 1999, the method of application was 37 percent by spray, 28 percent by pour-on, 9 percent by rubbing device, 9 percent by dust and 7 percent by injectable shot. All other methods (dip, mineral block, pill, ear tags, and other) accounted for the remaining 10 percent of applications.

All Cattle Facilities: A total of 354,400 pounds of insecticides was applied to cattle facilities in 1999. Tetrachlorvinphos had the highest quantity used at 125,200 pounds. Dimethoate had the second highest quantity used at 98,700 pounds followed by diazinon with 39,300 pounds. Beef Cattle Facilities: A total of 148,400 pounds of insecticides was used to treat beef cattle facilities in 1999. Diazinon was the predominant active ingredient in treating beef cattle facilities with 39,300 pounds used. Malathion had the second highest quantity used at 15,100 pounds followed by dichlorvos with 14,600 pounds.

[Agricultural Chemical Usage - Cattle and Facilities \(USDA\)](#)

Some thoughts about all this discouraging news – Why so glum?

We at Epic-Cure® believe that food waste is a problem of abundance and distortions and interventions that warp planning, production, and distribution. Great success and the unmatched geographic characteristics of the U.S. (the river system, arable soils, etc.) have led to abundance in agricultural production – produce and proteins – and their cheapness relative to our affluence have invited a lack of awareness about the amount of waste we create each year.



As food insecurity has risen hand in glove with the decline in the purchasing power of the U.S. dollar – in other words, with inflation – the problems of food waste have become more evident, whether the food itself or all the inputs (e.g., water) that are also wasted in the wasted food's production. More of us are aware of the problems – a kind of blessing of the COVID pandemic response and its disintegration of the economic forces keeping a lid on prices for so long. This awareness is key. One must first see the problem. Then one must grapple with it to understand the problem. As we investigate the problem of food waste, solutions will certainly come.

Epic-Cure® itself is one such solution, as are all the food rescue and distribution organizations across the U.S. If we rescue it and serve it to the food insecure, we solve both problems at the same time. That is pretty neat.

But, we are but one part of the only solution set. Advances in technology are ready to truly revolutionize farming. Imagine a robot, managed from a farmer's cell phone or tablet, progressing along the rows of crops in the farmer's field. Imagine that it stops at each plant and, using sensors, does the following:

Seed sowing: Robot sensors identify the optimal locations for planting seeds, and then use a mechanical arm to plant the seeds at the correct depth and spacing.

Weeding: Robots use cameras and other sensors to identify weeds and then use lasers to remove them, saving water and soil nutrients for the crops.

Fertilizer dispensing: Robots use sensors to determine the nutrient levels in the soil, and then dispense fertilizer in the correct amounts to ensure that the crops are getting the nutrients they need.

Moisture sensing: Robot could use sensors to monitor the moisture levels in the soil and trigger irrigation when necessary.

Pesticide spraying: Robot sensors identify pests and spray pesticides in the correct amounts to control the pests without harming the crops.

Plant diseases: Robots can help detect and diagnose plant diseases early on so that farmers can take corrective action before the disease spreads.

Here are a couple of quick YouTube videos that will introduce you to robotic farming and its usefulness to sustainable farming and mitigation of food waste.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sV0cR_Nhac0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBtZF8CB4HU>

Our point is simple. It is the same point we made about air pollution in a previous AMEC Newsletter: once understood, we can solve these problems effectively completely. Acid rain is no longer a problem. After seeing these videos, you may predict that the water waste and fertilizer problems can be solved, too.

Let's avoid the negative. Epic-Cure® is all about solving problems, not complaining about them. Direct action, not angry activism. Let's solve problems because we can. Ought implies Can!



Why so glum? No need. If we can do this:



Surely, we can do this:



At Epic-Cure®, we turn pessimists into optimists. Only optimists change the world for good.



Volunteer Spotlight



Larry Cundiff

By Janet McNabb

Larry is one of the mainstays in the Palatka Epic-Cure warehouse. Sonny's comment about Larry is that he is always busy, always willing to help or do anything. About Sunny, Larry says she's "amazing! It's impossible to say no to her."

Larry's wife Tudy started volunteering and urged Larry to come along and help clean up one Friday evening. While there he was asked, "Is that your pickup?" Before he knew it he was picking up at four stops on Tuesdays. First it was with a trailer, then he graduated to a 26-foot box truck.

Originally from Louisville, KY, he started to work for L&R Railroad in 1966. Then the L&N railroad sent him to business school, and he graduated from the University of Louisville in 1975. He

worked for the railroad in Evansville, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and ultimately in Jacksonville as the railroad mergers eventually became CSX. Then, as the railroad downsized, he was offered a handsome opportunity to retire. So, at the age of 52, he happily stepped away. After 14 years of retirement he took the position of Territory Manager with the Loyal Order of Moose which he held for nine years. At 75 he retired again.

When Epic-Cure learned that they had 90 days to leave the old warehouse in Palatka, they were scrambling to find something suitable in the area. When the old school bus barn became available, they had to get in high gear to renovate it to their needs. They had less than six weeks to get it ready. There was some talk of just closing down awhile, but Larry knew that could be disastrous as they could lose all momentum. So a group of volunteers spent every day, seven days a week starting at 7 a.m. and working until dark for nine weeks demolishing and rebuilding. Larry was complimentary of the cooperation of the City planners, community, and contractors in getting the job done. He said "that's why it happened. It was a village." Larry was project manager for that huge undertaking. Now, he says, they have a five year lease with a possible five year extension. The warehouse is not done, he says, it's still a work in progress. One of his goals is to conduct a workshop for those who operate pallet jacks and fork lifts, as it is dangerous job. He took me on a tour showing me the 40'x40' refrigerator and the three sea-truck containers that are the freezers. It's an amazing facility, perfect for their needs.

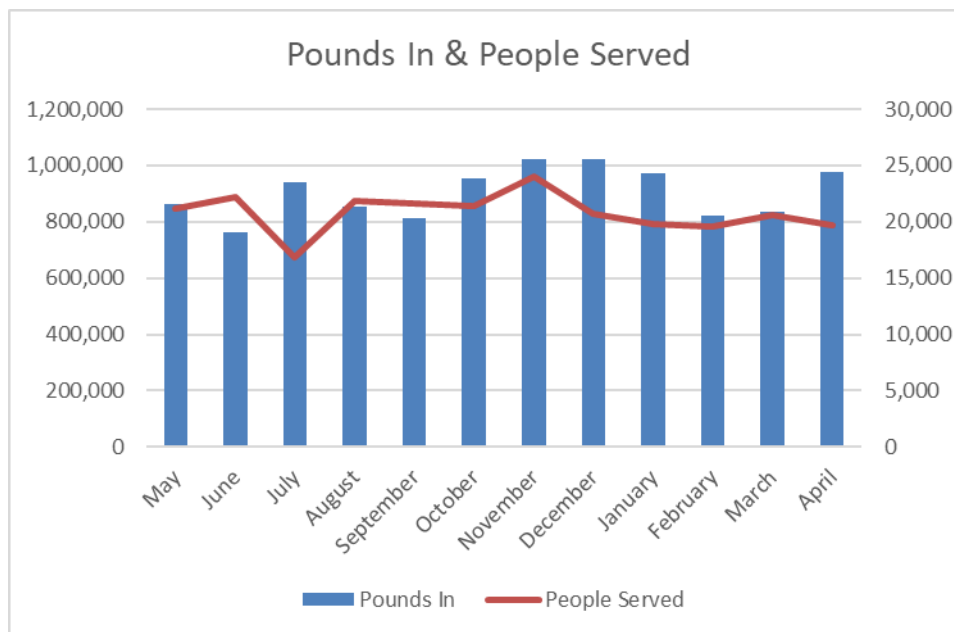


One of the latest projects happened recently when Epic-Cure learned that an entire semi-truck load of packaged chicken meat, 30,000 lbs, had spoiled. Trying every way to avoid it being thrown into the landfill they contacted wildlife refuges, the Alligator Farm, any avenue to help. Finally they found a rendering company that would take all of it but without the packaging. So Sunny and Larry and several other stalwart volunteers took on the task. The chicken had been thawed, then partially refrozen, so EC moved it into a freezer to freeze it solid. Doing that would greatly reduce the smell (“to some degree...” Sunny says) as they removed the packaging. Still, prying the plastic wrap where it was caught in the chicken crevices was no fun. The amount of packaging that they removed filled two huge dumpsters, compacted. They worked from 5:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Besides his wife Tudy and their two children, and besides Epic-Cure, Larry has another great love, and that is the Loyal Order of Moose. He has recently become the President of the local organization in Pomona Park. He is hoping to create a satellite distribution center of Epic-cure there. He has dedicated 20 years to the Moose. There he feels he is meeting “the best of the best”. Just as he does with the wonderful volunteers of Epic-Cure.

Larry, thank you for your dedication to worthy causes. You are an enormous asset to Epic-Cure.

Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) Graph





Notes on the graph: Besides the 30,000 pounds of bad meat, our friends at Farmlink Project sent 175,000 pounds of grapes (at least 40,000 pounds of those were bad too) our way in April. You take the good with the bad and find solutions. There is no room for complainers or cherry pickers in this line of work: gratitude is essential and the acceptable risk that we take by “always saying yes” is that we may have to send some food away to feed livestock. I.e., no downside!

What We Are Reading

For some time, we have thought about adding this section to the AMEC Newsletter. We have described everything from food waste to geopolitics to carbon credits in its pages. We have drawn what we think are fair assessments of what we have learned from a number of sources, including the books, papers, and content rich websites that we peruse.

Our first entrant is **Neil Howe’s *The Fourth Turning Is Here***. In *The Fourth Turning Is Here* (2023), Howe expands on the generational theory he codeveloped with William Strauss, focusing on the cyclical nature of history through four recurring “turnings” that span roughly 80 – 100 years, or a saeculum. Each turning, lasting about 20 – 25 years, reflects distinct social, political, and economic moods. The book centers on the Fourth Turning, a crisis period marked by upheaval and transformation, and anticipates its transition to the First Turning, a phase of renewal and stability. Howe argues that understanding these cycles equips societies to navigate turbulent times and prepare for a new era.

The Fourth Turning, which Howe posits began around 2008 with the Global Financial Crisis, is characterized by societal unraveling, institutional distrust, and existential challenges. Drawing on historical parallels like the Great Depression, Civil War, and American Revolution, Howe describes this phase as a crucible where old systems collapse, and collective action reshapes the social order. He identifies key drivers in the current Fourth Turning, including economic inequality, political polarization, and global power shifts. These stressors, amplified by generational dynamics – particularly the rise of Millennials and Gen Z – culminate in a “Climax,” a decisive moment of resolution expected around 2030–2033. Howe emphasizes that the outcome depends on society’s ability to unite and address these crises, potentially leading to a stronger civic framework or, if mismanaged, decline.

The transition to the First Turning, or “High,” is the book’s hopeful horizon. Historically, First Turnings (e.g., post-World War II America, 1945 – 1965) are eras of optimism, institution-building, and social cohesion. After the Fourth Turning’s chaos, Howe predicts a First Turning beginning in the early 2030s, marked by renewed trust in institutions, economic stability, and a collective focus on community. This phase will likely see Millennials, shaped by the crisis, emerge as pragmatic leaders, while Gen Z contributes idealistic energy.



The transition hinges on the Fourth Turning’s resolution: a successful Climax, such as policy reforms or technological breakthroughs, could usher in a robust High, while failure might yield a weaker recovery.

Howe underscores the role of generational archetypes – Prophet, Nomad, Hero, Artist – in driving this cycle. Millennials (Hero) and Gen Z (Artist), forged in crisis, will prioritize stability and cooperation in the First Turning, contrasting with the individualism of prior decades. However, Howe warns that the transition requires navigating the Fourth Turning’s volatility, including potential conflicts or economic shocks. He advocates proactive engagement – policy innovation, civic participation, and cross-generational collaboration – to ensure a positive outcome.

Howe’s “Fourth Turning” may entail a period marked not merely by the destruction of institutions like NATO but possibly by the destruction of the foundations of Western society. What if the U.S. Constitution is reimagined. Does that sound preposterous? Well, take a look at this *New York Times* editorial:

The New York Times

OPINION
GUEST ESSAY

The First Amendment Is Out of Control

July 2, 2024

That *is* The New York Times!

Tim Wu, a professor of law at Columbia University who served served on the National Economic Council as a special assistant to the president for competition and tech policy from 2021 to 2023 – during the Biden Administration, wrote the editorial. He claims that the First Amendment is too old (an 18th Century document) and naïve (how could it envision the “Big Tech platforms” with the power “to control commerce and speech in ways that would make totalitarian states jealous”) to be relevant today.

Mr. Wu writes (next page):



Free speech rights have been hijacked to suppress the sovereignty of humans in favor of the power of companies and machines. As Justice Robert Jackson put it in 1949, “If the court does not temper its doctrinaire logic with a little practical wisdom, it will convert the constitutional Bill of Rights into a suicide pact.”

Now, we believe that Mr. Wu’s argument rests on an internally incoherent (self-refuting) premise, which he characterizes with this statement: “In a democracy, the people ought to have the right to react to and control such private power, as long as it does not trample on the rights of individuals.” The U.S. Constitution was written to regulate only the power of the government, not the power of private entities. (He teaches law: how does a law professor miss this crucial, even primitive concept?) As soon as private entities’ speech is limited by the government, we can conclude, at a bare minimum, that individual people are next. How, then, does his position not rest on a fallacy (eliminating individual freedom to preserve individual freedom)?

Despite Wu’s self-refuting position, our point is that, in the Fourth Turning, the predicted institutional destruction is underway, and we do not know to what means it might descend.

Our further point is that, while this journey through the “Fourth Turning” will be fraught and institution destroying, we will emerge from it and into the “First Turning,” a time of stability, optimism, and institution building. We counsel against quick and harsh reactions; rather, take a step back and understand that all human improvement can be seen as what Joseph Schumpeter described as, “progress through a dynamic process where innovation and entrepreneurship continuously disrupt existing industries, products, and practices. (Schumpeter, Joseph. *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. 1942). For Schumpeter, this creative destruction involves new technologies, business models, or ideas replacing outdated ones, creating value while simultaneously destroying old economic structures. The broader social and economic change that Howe describes should not frighten us because it is, if we take Schumpeter at his word, something to which we should already be conditioned and over which we should have no fear.

Revisiting Tariffs

In the previous edition of the Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter, we brought up tariffs and disruption in the economic realm. Tariffs will almost certainly increase the general level of prices – if they go up, on balance. The realignment of trading around the world and the end of the American Order are intrinsic to the “Fourth Turning,” at least this time around. And since we at Epic-Cure® believe in productive endeavor – in words and deeds – it is worthwhile revisiting the topic of tariffs.

Tariffs have been widely described as contradictory to free trade. We agree. They have also been ascribed the potential to plunge the world into a Great Depression, and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 has regularly been invoked in an attempt to link trade talks, tariffs, and a Great Depression. We disagree.

Let’s do something radical and strange in today’s world: look to history. In fact, let’s look to the



actual Great Depression to find clues. Will tariffs plunge us into a Great Depression marked by 25% unemployment, mile-long bread lines, and “brother, can you spare a dime?”

Looking to history, our contention is that tariffs and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 exacerbated and prolonged the Great Depression of the 1930’s but did not cause it. This contention is key, because the narrative today is cleverly imprecise on this point, implying strongly that tariffs will cause a Great Depression.

The major causes of the 1930’s Great Depression include the stock market crash of 1929, bank failures, overproduction in agriculture and industry, unequal distribution of wealth, a decline in consumer spending, monetary policy failures, and international economic instability.

The **stock market crash of 1929** eroded public confidence, wiped out significant wealth, and triggered a sharp decline in consumer spending and investment. It also curtailed the credit cycle in a particularly vicious way, leading to ...

Bank failures: Thousands of banks failed in the early 1930s due to depositor runs, poor regulation, and overextension of credit during the 1920s. By 1933, over 9,000 banks had collapsed.

During the 1920s, farmers and manufacturers produced more goods than could be consumed, leading to falling prices, reduced profits, and mounting debt. **Overproduction** caused widespread layoffs, farm foreclosures, and reduced incomes, particularly in rural areas, contributing to a downward economic spiral.

Of particular note, a **wide wealth gap** had a terrible effect. In the 1920s, a large share of national income went to the wealthiest, while wages for workers and farmers stagnated. This limited mass purchasing power, and insufficient consumer demand weakened the economy, making it vulnerable to shocks like the stock market crash of 1929.

The **decline in consumer spending** deepened the recession, as businesses reduced production and laid off workers, creating a vicious cycle.

Monetary Policy Failures: Let’s face it, the Federal Reserve Bank was not ready for the Great Depression’s challenges. It failed to provide adequate liquidity to banks and tightened monetary policy in the late 1920s and early 1930s, exacerbating deflation and credit shortages. Tight money supply worsened bank failures and economic contraction, making recovery more difficult. This is considered a major policy failure contributing to the Depression’s severity.

Post-World War I global economic challenges, including war debts, reparations, and the collapse of international trade, weakened economies worldwide. The gold standard constrained monetary flexibility. Global economic fragility – **international economic instability** – amplified the U.S. downturn, as international trade and investment plummeted.

What, then, was the contribution of the **Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930** to the Great Depression of the 1930’s? This act raised U.S. tariffs on over 20,000 imported goods, prompting retaliatory tariffs from other nations, which reduced global trade. Smoot-Hawley raised average U.S. tariffs to about 50% on dutiable imports, leading to retaliatory tariffs from countries like



Canada and European nations. Global trade fell sharply—by about 66% between 1929 and 1934. However, much of this decline was due to the broader economic contraction, not tariffs alone. Studies estimate that Smoot-Hawley accounted for only a fraction of the trade collapse (roughly 15-20% of the decline in U.S. exports).

Economists, such as Milton Friedman and Barry Eichengreen, argue that monetary policy failures and bank collapses were far more significant than tariffs. For example, the Federal Reserve's inaction allowed deflation to spiral, reducing nominal GDP by nearly 50% from 1929 to 1933. In contrast, Smoot-Hawley's effect on GDP is estimated to have been modest—reducing U.S. GDP by 1-2%, at most.

The greatest damage wrought by tariffs under Smoot-Hawley came from the perception of the U.S. as an international trading partner. The tariffs damaged international cooperation and signaled protectionism, further eroding business and consumer confidence.

In sum, tariffs were a contributing factor, but their relative importance is modest compared to the systemic and policy-driven causes listed above. So, again, we counsel against reactions that are too quick, as they will create undue stress. There is plenty to worry about, but first, put the whole problem in its whole context and then decide whether to hit the “panic button.”

Awareness:

An easy, impactful way that you can help us is to please ...

Save And Drop Off Your Grocery Store Plastic Bags.

You will help reduce waste by allowing us to re-use them. You will save us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

Transparency:

Anyone who wishes to see [*Epic-Cure's financial statements*](#) need only ask.

Our CPA-Audited financial statements and tax returns for fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023 have been released and are available upon request.

- Also available on our website.
- Click here to view: [Epic-Cure's Financial Statements](#)

Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org