The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure® Newsletter

The Report Card

The Epic-Cure ***Report Card*** as of March 31,2025		
Life to Date *(since May 24, 2019)*		
Pounds In/Out	32,513,330	
Wholesale Value of Food Distributed	$65,651,016	
Pounds of Food per Family:	81.00	*Average pounds per family per visit*
Equivalent Meals Served:	27,094,442	*Assumes 1.2 pounds per meal*
Families Served		
Number of Families Served this month:	6,922	*in Month of March 2025*
Number of Distributions this month:	66	*in Month of March 2025*
Pounds of Food/Household Goods		
Total Pounds In / Out:	833,805	*in Month of March 2025*
Total Pounds In / Out:	876,163	*Average of 3 prior months*
Operating Efficiency		
Wholesale value of food distributed for each $1.00 spent on Operations since inception:		***$43.30***
Wholesale value of food distributed for each $1.00 spent on Operations in March:		***$75.85***

After a tumultuous 2024, particularly its second half, we are back to "normal" and issuing this latest edition of the, now more than ever, apltly named Almost Monthly Epic-Cure® Newsletter for April, 2025. We typically give the AMEC Newsletter a rest during the month of January – and sometimes February. This year, our Annual Report was a bit more dense than normal, as we felt it was time to revisit the state of food waste and food insecurity. In that report, we described the mental and physical impacts of food insecurity. We also refreshed everyone on the nature of food waste, how much of it there is, and how best to address it. Epic-Cure's volunteers care deeply about the wellbeing of everyone in the communities we serve; therefore, reminding everyone, and especially ourselves, of the human impacts of the problems we are solving together seemed like a really good way to start 2025! Information is key to understanding and motivating action. The data show: (1) The problems are recognized (we **ought** to do something about it). (2) The food is there (we **can** do something about it). So, Immanuel Kant was right, at least on our view: **Ought implies Can!** Let's get to it, shall we?

Upcoming Fundraisers

Join Us for Epic-Cure's Giving Day Campaign – May 7-8!

Keeping food moving to those who need it most takes more than just generosity—it takes trucks, forklifts, refrigeration, and power. This Giving Day, we're rallying businesses and individuals to help sustain our mission by funding the fuel, power, and maintenance that keep Epic-Cure® running. Our goal is to welcome **50 new monthly donors** to ensure our operations stay strong.

With a monthly gift, you can make a lasting impact:

- **$25/month** helps support a power pallet jack.
- **$50/month** fuels a refrigerated truck.
- **$100/month** keeps our refrigeration units running.

Join us in making a difference—sign up as a monthly donor and help keep the mission alive! **Together, we are changing lives.**

The Farm Connection

In our 2024 Annual Report, we mentioned that we are now tracking pounds of food sent to farms to feed animals. Our goal is to remind all food rescue charities, that this is a viable and effective option for food waste prevention. It is preferred to composting or placement in landfills. The farm food donation statistics for the last 2 months are:

Month	Pounds Donated to Feed Livestock
February 2025	63,109
March 2025	90,454
Total	**153,563**

The challenges keep coming on that front. On 3/28, we received over 30,000 lbs of meat unfit for human consumption—but we are turning it into a win. Check out this lion (next page) at a wildlife refuge enjoying a steak from our donation. We are partnering with refuges to feed lions, tigers, alligators, and other animals, keeping this meat out of the waste stream.

EPIC - CURE

SUSTAIN·U

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!

GLEANING

Another farm connection – GLEANING

Farmer Mike Connor and his volunteers from Society of St. Andrew have gleaned 5,485 pounds of beautiful broccoli from the fields in Hastings.

A message from Mike:

Everyone loves volunteering at EPICURE. If you enjoy that there is a volunteer opportunity with the Society of Saint Andrew that can benefit EPICURE and the community immensely.. SOSA is an organization that’s been around for over 70 years and it was formed to help take farm waste and get it to the community where it is needed. Here in Northeast Florida we are very fortunate to be so close to very productive farmland. Currently we are harvesting broccoli in Hastings and if you’ve never done it, it is a different kind of fun kind of like volunteering at EPICURE. You get to enjoy the beautiful farmlands of Hastings, and the sea of broccoli growing very close to us. After broccoli, we will be gleaning potatoes, which sounds horrible but actually we just sort potatoes in bins to go to food banks. If anyone is interested, please contact me Mike Connor at 904-810-8630. Currently we clean every Monday morning. If you want more information on the Society Of St Andrew, please go on their website and explore this amazing organization, helping to feed the communities in our area.

Operations

Infrastructure, Infrastructure, Infrastructure

"If you can't store it, you can't take it."

We took that message to heart.

Over the past six years, we have made strategic investments in infrastructure—refrigerated trucks, cold storage, and warehouse space—and the results speak for themselves.

Year	Feeding Northeast Florida	Epic-Cure®	
2019	17,000,000	315,927	1.86%
2020	31,000,000	3,213,096	10.36%
2021	31,900,000	4,480,754	14.05%
2022	33,000,000	5,477,867	16.60%
2023	34,600,000	6,562,114	18.97%
2024	35,000,000	9,835,000	28.10%

Feeding Northeast Florida annual budget as reported on the 2022 Form-990 (the tax return for a nonprofit) was $6.5 million (not including in kind food donations), with salaries of $3.4 million.

Epic-Cure's annual budget as reported in 2024 was about $473,000 (excluding in kind food donations and state funding for new building), with salaries of $0.

We are achieving nearly a third of the impact on less than 8% of the budget—a testament to the strength of our volunteer-led model and our commitment to investing in infrastructure over administration. We have achieved amazing results as a true charitable operation.

But, we also recognize that to ensure long-term viability, especially in the eyes of donors and grantors, we must now increase our administrative capacity. As we continue to grow, we regularly seek grant funding and partnerships (strategic and financial partnerships) to build the staffing and systems necessary to support our expanding operations without compromising the efficiency and agility that define Epic-Cure®. While it irks us, we will, therefore, seek granrt funding specifically for salaries for key administrative and operations personnel.

Infrastructure, Data, and a Whole-Supply-Chain Approach to Reducing Food Waste

Two recent studies by the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment (PCFWC), in partnership with LIDD, KOR Consulting, and Measure to Improve, examined food loss and waste (FLW) in the fresh strawberry and frozen potato supply chains. These studies not only identified key loss points but also offered tangible, scalable solutions.

Fresh Strawberry Supply Chain – Key Findings & Solutions

Key FLW Hotspots:

- 36% of strawberry losses occur on farms, mostly due to cosmetic standards or labor shortages.

Proposed Interventions: At the Farm:

- Track In-Field Losses – Ongoing monitoring to develop recovery strategies.
- Bulk Harvesting + Automated Sorting – Capture edible berries with reduced labor costs and open new markets.

At Retail:

- Advanced Demand Planning – Prevent overstock and speed movement to shelves.
- Dynamic Pricing – Automate markdowns to reduce shrink.
- Product Reworking – Salvage and repackage strawberries with minor defects.

Frozen Potato Supply Chain – Key Findings & Solutions

Key FLW Hotspots:

- Major losses occur both on farms and in processing, due to limited data and operational inefficiencies.

Proposed Interventions: At Farm/Processing:

- Enhance FLW Tracking – Enable real-time adjustments and upcycling.
- Engage Production Workers – Leverage frontline insights to reduce waste.
- Use Surplus Platforms – Sell off-spec but edible products.

Across the Supply Chain:

- Adjust Product Lines – Upcycle misshapen or non-standard potatoes into new offerings.

At Retail:

- Strengthen Cold Chain – Reduce losses caused by equipment failures.

Why Studies Like These Matter

We frequently cite ReFED's Insights Engine, which remains a leading resource in food waste analysis. While ReFED's data is robust, there are some notable gaps and areas for improvement. Studies like these improve important gaps in the current data landscape that, if addressed, could make ReFED's data even more powerful and actionable. Areas for improvement include:

1. Pre-Harvest Food Loss is Underreported

- Losses from weather, labor shortages, and market shifts are largely invisible.
- Solutions: Partner with ag organizations; use satellite/drone tech.

2. Lack of Real-Time Data

- Current tools reflect past trends, not current ones.
- Solutions: Direct data feeds from food banks, retailers, and foodservice.

3. Neglected Small & Informal Sectors

- Local markets and small vendors often excluded.
- Solutions: Partner with cities, nonprofits, and local health departments.

4. Consumer Behavior Isn't Deeply Tracked

- Household waste data lacks detail.
- Solutions: In-depth consumer surveys; collaboration with smart tech.

5. Limited Geographic Resolution

- Most data is at a national or regional level.
- Solutions: Drill down to city/county-level granularity.

6. Few Longitudinal Studies

- We need to track outcomes over time to measure what works.
- Solutions: Fund long-term monitoring of interventions.

7. Reliance on Self-Reported Data

- Inconsistent and potentially biased.
- Solutions: Independent audits and third-party verification.

8. Weak Tracking of Redistribution Impact

- We know how much food is rescued, but not how much is eaten or its impact on hunger.
- Solutions: Work with food banks to gather outcome and consumption data.

Final Thought: If we want to dramatically reduce food waste across the U.S., we must go beyond theory and spreadsheets. We need on-the-ground insights, real-time data, and a whole-chain approach. Studies like these from PCFWC don't just map the problem—they spotlight actionable solutions.

[Measure to Improve - Case Study]

Volunteer Spotlight

Don Wilkinson

By Janet McNabb

Sunny calls Don "the Handyman! He can fix anything!"

Don calls himself "a Junkaholic", for which there is " no known cure".

So, with great interest I traveled to the fabulous new Palatka warehouse to meet this valued person. Don is living an enviable life. He and his wife Candy have been married 62 years. Growing up on a farm in Connecticut, he didn't care much for school, but he was fascinated with creating things out of nothing. His mom found a big box of old horseshoes which gave him the idea to learn how to weld, use his grandfather's anvil and a forge, and create interesting and useful things. He was on the farm until he was 27.

He moved to Kentucky where he worked in a factory, a union job, and one which made him realize he much preferred working on his own. He and Candy purchased a four acre farm which had a house built in 1932 with no bath, but there was a kitchen sink and a chicken coop. That's where they lived while they fixed it up. Meanwhile Don found a fire tower to purchase for $5. It took him eleven days just to haul it home. This led to becoming a blacksmith and a builder, turning the excellent quality steel into other useful objects. He and Candy then participated in upscale arts and crafts shows along the Atlantic coast. Other interesting inventions:

using knotless fishing net and PVC pipes he made hammocks of all sizes. They were so sturdy that they could handle 400 pounds. He also built furniture, made canes and walking sticks. Out of some wooden barrels made of staves that he purchased for a pittance he created thirteen butter churns. It took a while to find a buyer for those, but the buyer who came along wanted all of them, sold for $20 each.

Meanwhile his lifelong love of motorcycles had him in dirt bike races and just enjoying the ride. Unfortunately a hit and run accident last year has curtailed those activities. Always infatuated with old cars (ie. junk cars) he is always buying and selling.

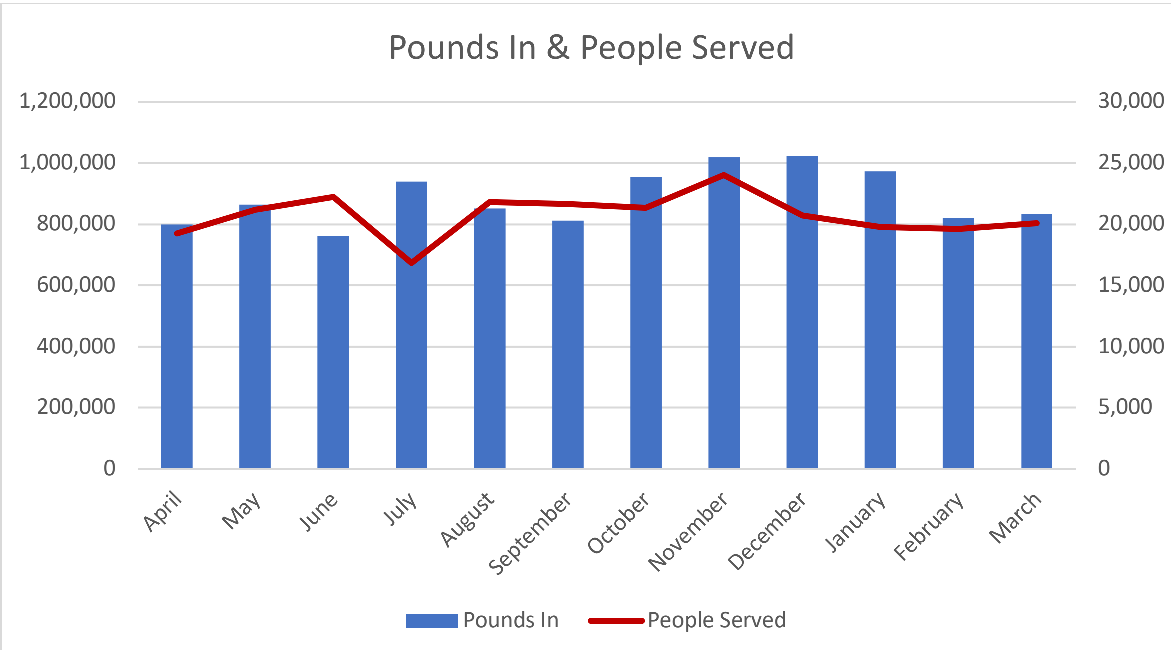
In 1972, they set out with their double cab pickup, a travel trailer, and two children to see the United States. They were able to make that trip on $20/day for camping, food, and gas.

They've been here in Palatka since 2015. His son and daughter live nearby, and they have two wonderful grandchildren. Don loves to help others. He helps three families,and found a van for a fellow living in his car. He enjoys working at Epic-Cure®, fixing things, keeping busy, feeling useful.

Way back when, when Mother Earth News #1 first came out, their motto was "Quit your job, buy a farm in the country, and don't owe anybody." Don has followed that good advice and has found an excellent way to live.

Epic-Cure® is lucky to have you around, Don. Thank you for being a "work-a-haulic"

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



Notes on the graph:

The story on the reduction in pounds in is DAIRY. We reached out to our main supplier foodrecovery.org to see why we went from receiving several 40k pounds loads per month to no loads in the last 2 months. The reason – loss of transportation funding. It costs anywhere from $750 to $1000 per load to have a semi truck deliver from Jacksonville to Palatka. They only have enough to ship 1 load a quarter now.

We reached out to our friends at Move for Hunger. They said they could cover transportation costs of the donation is 8,000+ lbs of unexpired dairy. So, we are working on making that connection. We miss the iced coffee in every flavor imaniginable!!

Month	Total Pounds	Bakery	Water	Dairy	Deli	Dry Goods	Frozen Misc	Produce	Meat	Non-Food	Refrigerated Products
January	974,070	32,228	107,114	237,997	5,482	77,940	35,769	254,700	121,326	41,976	59,538
February	820,613	23,506	77,764	188,401	5,543	119,498	27,860	280,571	65,886	27,060	4,524
March	833,805	44,101	111,300	79,275	10,361	127,146	65,116	267,150	105,735	22,679	1,544
Grand Total	**2,628,488**	**99,835**	**296,178**	**505,673**	**21,386**	**324,584**	**128,745**	**802,421**	**292,947**	**91,715**	**65,606**

A Return to the Geopolitics of Food

In our October 2022 AMEC Newsletter, we observed that:

> Events since March 2020 have us thinking about the world differently. We have experienced a global pandemic where governments sang in harmony – if not in unison – with debilitating social, economic, and political policies that led to paralyzing fear, looming anxiety, food insecurity, and what may prove to be the beginning of the end of globalization. The weakening of globalization and the retrenchment of the world's only Superpower – the United States – has created a more volatile world, one inviting dictators to act on their most heinous instincts. One has moved to war and threatened the use of nuclear weapons.

We believed for decades after the end of the Cold War that we had international institutions (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Bank for International Settlements, others) ensuring that nothing could go wrong. We did not see what was coming: domestic inequality soaring out of control, political polarization spiraling out of control, and the winners and losers between countries spiraling out of control. Some countries ran massive trade deficits while thers ran massive trade surpluses, which, of course, increased inequality.

With supply chains disrupted during and after the COVID emergency (2020 – 2022), the US government stimulated the economy, distributing unimaginably large amounts of currency (fiscal stimulus). This fact should command your imagination and consternation:

> In constant 2020 dollars, the U.S. spent more on post-COVID fiscal stimulus ($5.5 trillion) than on World War II ($4.7 trillion).

Inflation came roaring back in 2022, creating record numbers of victims of food insecurity. The growing numbers of the food insecure continues today.

> The Secretary of the Treasury of the US is Scott Bessent. In an interview recently, Mr. Bessent noted that in the Summer of 2024, more Americans were using food banks than they ever have in history.

We conclude that the geopolitics of food has not lost its immediacy and importance.

So, where are we now? What's up with the American Order today? Tariffs. Wars. Shipping lanes closed – or severely crimped – by terrorists. Slow moving and expensive supply chains. These are the symptoms of a a world with no single hegemon (no single Superpower). Instead, the world is characterized by competing powers (the US, China, Russia, Europe, and India) and a growing regionalization. Globalization is deteriorating, breaking down, even.

- There will be much disruption to the economy and to food supply chains. There will be: regionalization,
- de-industrialization,
- and re-industrilization.

As we wrote in the October 2022 AMEC: “This impending breakdown of globalization is forcing a reorientation and, in places, a de-industrialization of now less connected economies.”

We expect that these changes and trends will lead to more food insecurity. Inflation will be at the center of it all. The US can easily produce all the food it needs, and its unmatched river system means that transportation of that food is assured. On the other hand, labor costs are expected to rise with onshoring manufacturing to the US. Training and retraining costs will add to that strain. And the entire logistics infrastructure of the US – from roads and bridges to railways, cold storage, commercial and industrial facilities – requires transformation. Because this is not an evolutionary trend but instead a revolutionary one, the investment will be extremely costly – rising training and labor costs; rising infrastructure costs, whether in the electrical grid and energy provision infrastructure or for efficient ports (land, sea, and air) characterized by leading edge automation and machine learning technologies; and disruptions to supply chains.

As an example of a long lead time supply chain item, we can look at the case of soybeans. Based on total U.S. soybean production, here are the timelines:

Soil Preparation (1–4 weeks):
Soil prep involves tillage, applying fertilizers, and ensuring proper pH (ideally 6.0 – 6.8). No-till methods can reduce this to days, while conventional tillage may take 1 – 4 weeks, depending on field conditions and weather. This typically starts in early spring (March–April in the Midwest).

Planting (1–2 weeks):
Planting occurs when soil temperatures reach at least 50°F (ideally 60 – 77°F), often late April to mid-May in the U.S. Midwest. Planting a single field takes hours to days, but multiple fields can extend this to 1 – 2 weeks for a farm. Seeding depth is 1 – 1.5 inches, with 100,000 – 140,000 seeds per acre.

Growing Season (90–150 days):
Soybeans take 90 – 150 days from planting to maturity, depending on variety and region. Vegetative growth lasts until flowering (40–60 days), followed by pod development and seed filling. Harvest readiness is signaled by pods drying and leaves yellowing, typically September–October.

Harvesting (1–3 weeks):
Harvesting begins when soybeans reach 13 – 15% moisture, using combines to cut plants and separate beans. A single field takes hours to days, but a farm's full harvest may span 1 – 3 weeks due to field size, weather, and equipment.

Post-Harvest and Shipping (2–8 weeks):
After harvesting, soybeans are cleaned, dried, and stored or sent directly to grain dealers. Domestic shipping to processors (e.g., for oil or feed) can take days to weeks via truck or rail. International shipping involves additional steps: transport to ports, loading onto ships, and ocean transit (e.g., 2 – 4 weeks to Asia). From farm to global consumer markets, this typically takes 2 – 8 weeks, depending on destination and supply chain efficiency.

Total Timeline:

- **Minimum:** ~4.5 months (early planting in April, fast-growing variety, efficient domestic shipping).
- **Average:** 5–7 months (mid-May planting, 120-day growth, 4–6 weeks for international shipping).
- **Maximum:** ~9 months (late planting, longer-maturity variety, delays in global logistics).

It is easy to see just how disruptive changing trade routes, partners, and conditions can be.

What about tariffs? Prominently in the news today, are tariffs a potential source of inflation? What about non-tariff trade barriers? And why is this war of words about tariffs happening now? We can address this topic in greater detail in future editions of the decidedly Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter, but here is a hot take: through the tariff tantrum, the US has made the world a compelling offer: (1) reduce tariffs to zero – in both directions (US tariffs = 0, your tariffs = 0) and (2) start making your products inside the U.S., too.

Reducing tariffs to zero is likely to increase the amount of trade between partners, permitting the trading partners to focus on the trade that each is best equipped to deliver.

Building products in the US will enable countries to climb up the value-added curve. This is precisely what happened with Toyota, which, in the face of material trade tensions between Japan and the US, made the leap to building Toyotas in the US years ago – with great success: Toyota's US manufacturing plants are their most profitable and produce the highest US content autos in the US market.

Are tariffs inflationary? Adding costs to the products we buy is by definition inflationary. Are there forces that stand to mitigate inflation? Yes, automation will do that pretty nicely, though not completely. Is there another reason to fear inflation? Yes, as the labor costs to use the automation will rise to meet the increased training and education needed to build, operate, and maintain this sophisticated equipment. This tension is normal: rising labor costs opposing the rising standard of living from higher value-added jobs.

Back to the single biggest input into prices, there is the supply of energy to power the growth of American manufacturing. Oil and natural gas reserves in the US are the largest in the world; however, these are depleting assets (once pumped from the ground and refined, the oil is used and gone forever) – they will not last forever. Neither do we have sufficient refining capacity or type (light/sweet or heavy/sour crude oil) "onshore."

> U.S. production is increasingly light/sweet due to shale (28% of output >45° API in 2022), but many refineries are configured for heavier/sour imports, leading to a mismatch.
>
> Light/sweet crude (US based crude oil): Primarily fuels for transportation (cars, trucks, planes) and light industrial uses. High gasoline yield makes it ideal for consumer markets.
>
> Heavy/sour crude (imported to US): Diesel for heavy transport (ships, trucks), bunker fuel for shipping, asphalt for roads, and industrial feedstocks. Common in markets needing durable, heavy-duty products.

From where will the US secure the heavy.sour crude it does not produce but still needs for industrial uses? Might there be reasons to think that supply disruptions – supply chains and geopolitics – might jeopardize the free flow of this oil around the globe? And, would it not be wise to invest in refining capacity for more of each crude oil form? The re-industrialization of the US will demand it. The safety and comfort of the citizens of the US require it. The investment will not be quick or cheap.

In short, inflation is structural (it <u>must</u> come), unavoidable. How much inflation and when? That is not realistically predictable. Are there any productivity advances on the horizon that can act as a counterweight? There probably are such gains to be had, and they may be quite effective. What they will not be is: on time to prevent further inflation and food insecurity.

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