



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

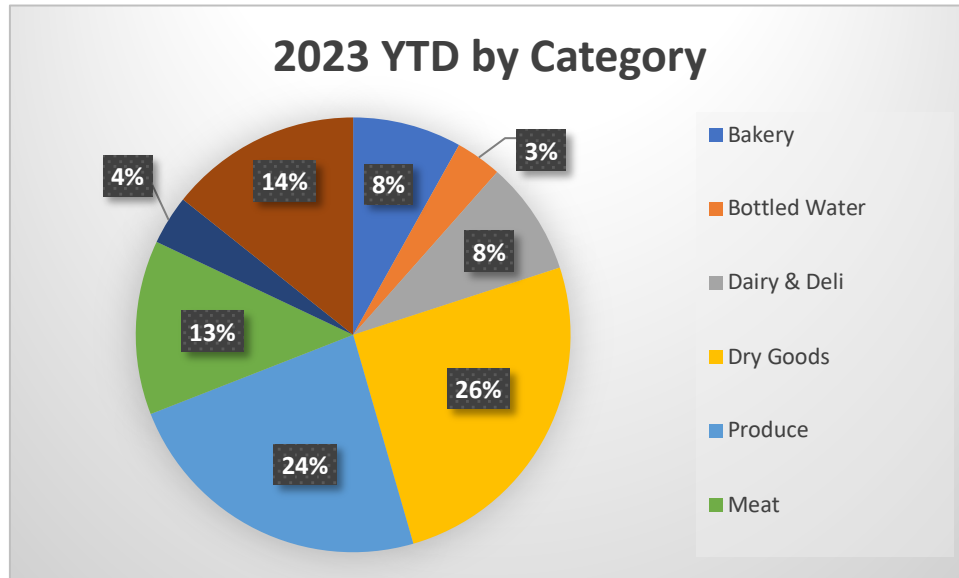
June 2023

The Epic-Cure <i>Report Card</i> as of May 31, 2023		
Life to Date <i>(since May 24, 2019)</i>		
Pounds In/Out	16,298,087	
Wholesale Value of Food Distributed	\$30,813,786	
Pounds of Food per Family	67.18	<i>Average pounds per family per visit</i>
Meals served	13.6 million	<i>Assumes 1.2 pounds per meal</i>
Families Served		
Number of Families	7,248	<i>Month of May 2023</i>
Number of Distributions	82	<i>Month of May 2023</i>
Pounds In – April 2023		
Total Pounds In / Out	643,625	<i>Month of May 2023</i>
Total Pounds In / Out	476,051	<i>Average of 3 prior months</i>
Operating Efficiency		
Wholesale value of food for each \$1.00 spent on Epic-Cure's® Operations		\$34.30



Operations

People ask us all the time what types of products we get, and the answer is almost everything you see at every grocery store comes through our warehouses. This chart shows the percentage of overall pounds we process by category. In this edition of the newsletter, we are going to focus on dairy/deli.



What does dairy and deli food rescue look like for us? Let's first look at the overall volume of food waste in the dairy/prepared foods categories by sector:

2021			
Sector	Dairy & Eggs	Prepared Foods	Total
Food Service	600,079,611	22,701,154,342	23,301,233,953
Manufacturing	11,819,631,890	111,428,297	11,931,060,186
Residential	15,353,261,954	10,928,208,961	26,281,470,915
Retail	1,427,915,640	1,1125,607,238	2,553,522,878
Total	29,200,889,095	34,866,398,837	64,067,287,932



Our successful efforts so far have been limited to the Retail sector (not for lack of trying with manufacturing companies – our calling card hasn't gotten us in the door – yet). Volunteers using their own vehicles do daily store pickups from local grocery stores and then we use our trucks to pick up bulk donations from distributors or other large food banks.

These are some examples of what grocery store dairy/deli food rescue looks like. It is a very hands-on process where every date is checked, every item is inspected for quality, good eggs are salvaged from broken ones in cartons, and then the products are sorted for distributions.



On the bulk donation and distributor level, we receive full or partial pallets of yogurt, cheese, milk, silk milk, cottage cheese, eggs, cream cheese – everything you see if the grocery store. For those, all dates are checked, and any damaged cases/products are sent to the farm to feed animals.



These are the guidelines we follow when it comes to dairy and deli food rescue.

- Milk can be kept for one week past expiration.
- Soft Cheeses can be kept for one week past expiration, but hard cheeses can be kept for three to four weeks.
- Yogurt can be kept for one to two weeks past expiration.
- Eggs can be kept for three weeks past expiration.
- Dips, Salsas, and Prepared foods can be kept two to three days past expiration.

[Food Safety for Agencies](#)

When we look at this chart of causes by sector, you can see the value in proposed legislation to address food waste by establishing requirements to standardize the quality date and discard date labels on food packaging. While a bill was introduced to the Senate in December of 2021, it has not been approved. In the meantime, all we can do is keep talking and educating people about Use By/Sell By/ Best By dates.

Year	Sector	Cause	Dairy & Eggs	Prepared Foods	Total
2021	Manufacturing	Buyer Rejections	392,061,374	104,615,111	496,676,484
		Excess	9,943,694	6,813,186	16,756,880
		Trimnings & Byproducts	11,417,626,822	0	11,417,626,822
	Manufacturing Total		11,819,631,890	111,428,297	11,931,060,186
	Retail	Date Label Concerns	955,931,202	109,625,439	1,065,556,641
		Excess	0	865,870,487	865,870,487
		Food Safety	713,958	562,804	1,276,761
		Mistakes & Malfunctions	195,880,338	33,248,824	229,129,162
		Other	21,418,735	20,908,525	42,327,260
		Spoiled	253,971,407	12,685,423	266,656,830
		Trimnings & Byproducts	0	82,705,736	82,705,736
	Retail Total		1,427,915,640	1,125,607,238	2,553,522,878
2021 Total			13,247,547,530	1,237,035,534	14,484,583,064

[ReFED Food Waste Monitor](#)

[ReFED Policy Monitor](#)

[Congress: Food Date Labeling Act of 2021](#)



Expiration Date Terminology - Decoded

- **Best if used by/before date:** With an emphasis on the *best* qualifier in this term, it means the product should retain maximum freshness, flavor, and texture if used by this date. It is not a purchase-by or safety date. Beyond this date, the product begins to deteriorate, although it may still be edible.
- **Use by date:** This term has a similar meaning to "best if used by." It means the product will have the best qualities if used by the date noted.
- **Sell-by or pull-by date:** This date is used by manufacturers to tell grocers when to remove their product from the shelves, but there is generally still some leeway for home usage. For example, milk often has a sell-by date, but the milk will usually still be good for at least a week beyond that date if properly refrigerated.
- **Guaranteed fresh date:** This date is often used for perishable baked goods. Beyond this date, freshness is no longer guaranteed although it may still be edible.

We covered produce in the April newsletter and the benefits of gleaning in the May newsletter. If you are interested in opportunities to be part of the solution to ending food waste at the farm after harvest, the Society of St. Andrew has several more gleanings going on over the next few weeks. To register, please visit the link below:

[Society of St Andrew](#)



Inflation Update

Inflation has an immediate and harmful impact on everyone; however, it has the most severe impact on the food insecure. With all the prevailing talk of inflation cooling, it seems an appropriate time to revisit inflation and food insecurity. Let's dig in.

Inflation has indeed cooled. In 2022, inflation peaked at over a 9% annual pace. In April 2023, inflation clocked in at about half that rate, rising 4.9% year-over-year (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5/10/2023). Here is what that looked like:

Percent changes in CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. city average

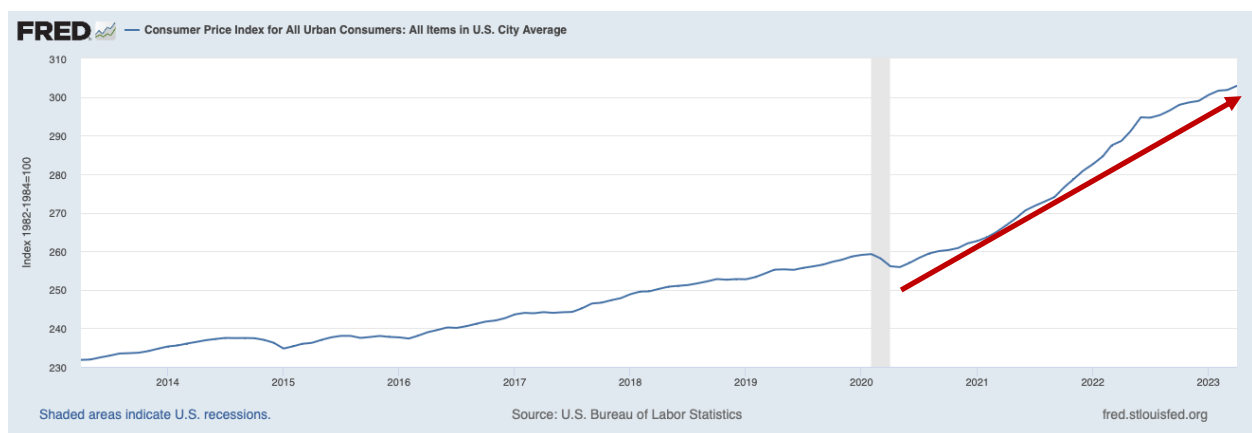
All items	4.9
Food	7.7
Food at home	7.1
Food away from home	8.6
Energy	-5.1
Energy commodities	-12.6
Gasoline (all types)	-12.2
Fuel oil	-20.2
Energy services	5.9
Electricity	8.4
Utility (piped) gas service	-2.1
All items less food and energy	5.5
Commodities less food and energy commodities	2
New vehicles	5.4
Used cars and trucks	-6.6
Apparel	3.6
Medical care commodities	4
Services less energy services	6.8
Transportation services	11
Medical care services	0.4
Shelter	8.1

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics (5/10/2023)



The energy figures are noteworthy. Look at how much these prices have fallen over the past year. Yes, they have indeed fallen. Despite their declines, overall prices still rose 4.9%. A falling rate of increase is still ... wait for it ... an INCREASE. Increased prices leave less money in the wallet for the necessities of life.

A little historical perspective will help us to understand just how painful inflation is. Here is a 10 year chart of the Consumer Price Index (a deeply flawed statistic, but that is for another discussion).



Over the last 10 years, the CPI has risen 30.7%. That is almost one-third higher in a decade where little to no inflation was evident (look at the point around 2015 – inflation declined!). Most of the rise in inflation has occurred recently – in the years after the COVID-19 pandemic induced recession (the little grey strip on the graph). Here are the annual rates for all ten years. I have highlighted those years when inflation measured less than 2.0%.

Year	CPI
1	2.02%
2	-0.10%
3	1.17%
4	2.18%
5	2.47%
6	1.99%
7	0.35%
8	4.13%
9	8.23%
10	4.96%



But someone might object: “Hasn’t pay been increasing? I see help wanted signs everywhere. Don’t workers have the upper hand?”

The answer can be easily seen in the following graph.



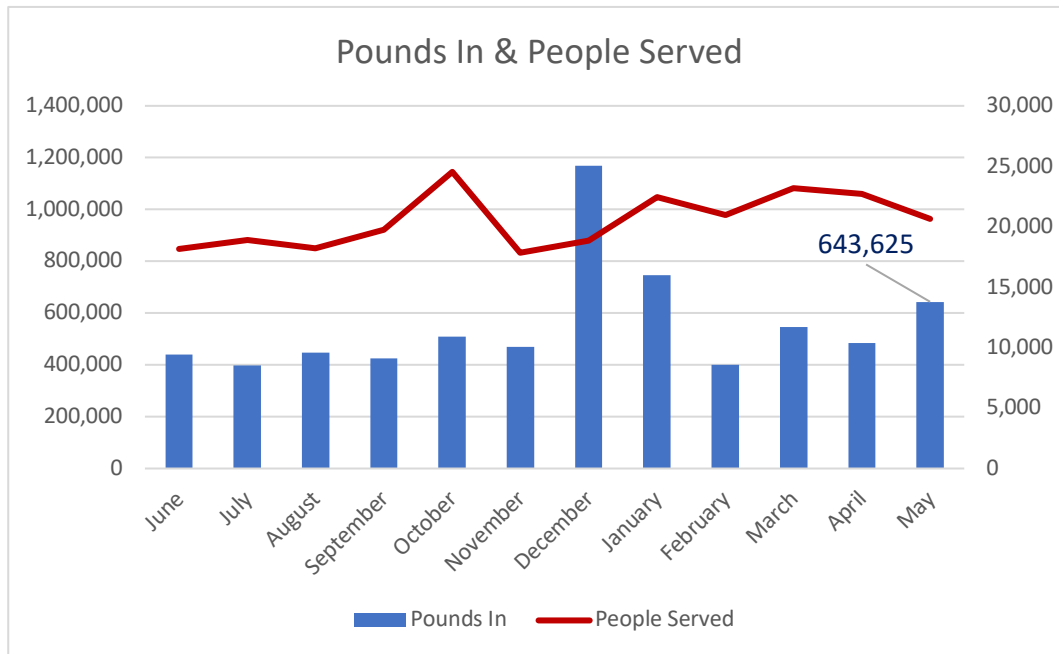
In this graph, we measure the rise – or fall – in wages (wages and salaries) AFTER taking into account inflation. As you can plainly see, inflation has swamped wage increases since the pandemic. This trend explains why Feeding America believes that food insecurity is 25% greater now than it was at the height of the pandemic. We at Epic-Cure have seen an increase in food insecurity in excess of 33%.

Inflation is still a problem. Food insecurity will continue to rise as long as inflation squeezes every wallet. And, if the US economy falls into recession, job losses will make the problem worse.

And now, back to our regularly scheduled programming...



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



Notes on the graph:

FEMA December 605,728

Volunteers are moving mountains of food.

FEMA January 302,390

From February through May, our volunteers, using their own vehicles, have personally picked up 123 tons of food for Epic-Cure, averaging 61,433 pounds per month.

FEMA February 21,000

FEMA March 36,190

Month	Pounds Delivered	Pounds Picked Up	Pounds Picked Up Personal Vehicles	Pounds Picked Up Trucks
February	182,235	217,639	62,167	155,472
March	231,415	314,588	54,896	259,692
April	168,150	315,490	62,863	252,627
May	171,566	472,059	65,804	406,255
Month	# of Deliveries	# of Pickups	# of Pickups with Personal Vehicles	# of Pick Ups with Trucks
February	54	134	105	29
March	62	152	116	36
April	51	155	114	41
May	52	188	124	64



Fundraising

Our friends at Asado Life sure know how to put on a memorable (and delicious!!) charity event!! The chefs & bartenders were extraordinary, making the two day event a delight-filled experience. That was no small amount of effort, and we can't thank them enough!!



The full gallery of pictures from can be viewed through this link:

[Pictures - AsadoLife benefit for Epic-Cure](#)

Since the very early days of our existence, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has been a valued friend and continuous supporter of Epic-Cure's mission to help those suffering food insecurity to travel a path to self-reliance. We are proud of, and honored by, our partnership with these truly good people.

On May 30th, they delivered a semi-truck (36,532) pounds full of dairy, meat, hygiene products and dry goods to our Palatka warehouse. Over the next 3 weeks that will be spread all over Putnam and St.



Johns counties by us, Bread of Life Soup Kitchen, South Putnam Christian Service Center, Hopefull Handbags, Hugs of St. Johns, and Heart of Putnam.



If you live up in the Palencia area, you can support Epic-Cure by dining or dropping off non-perishable food at **Your Pie** on Sunday June 11th.

Your Pie: 389 Paseo Reyes Dr, #205 St. Augustine, FL 904-547-2437

Link: [Your Pie Food Drive for Epic-Cure](#)





Sustain U.

Our student Anna from Woodlawn Terrace got a job at Forgotten Tonic!! Her first day was on 5/29. We could not be more thrilled and proud that she made that huge step towards independence.



On 6/3, we delivered 2 full kitchen set ups to veterans transitioning into independent living from the 5 Star Veterans program ([5 Star Veterans Center](#)). We are very excited that once a month cooking classes begin there on 6/12.

Our summer is shaping up to be a very busy one. On top of our normal classes at the Boys and Girls Club we added at 5 Star Veterans and are doing 5 days of summer enrichment classes at Webster Elementary and Southwoods Elementary. Woodlawn Terrace cooking classes have been suspended temporarily due to management turnover at the apartment complex.



For the Boys and Girls Club and 5 Star, we are doing a breakfast/brunch series including:

- Breakfast Sandwiches
- Traditional and Nutella French Toast
- Eggs Benedict
- Smoothies and Homemade Granola
- Café Au Lait & Beignets
- Huevos Rancheros
- Omelets
- Biscuits and Gravy

For Webster School we are participating in a farm to table event where Arthur Culbert from Compassionate St. Augustine will teach the students how to make rosemary infused vinegar with rosemary harvested from the school garden. Our volunteers will bring Rosemary Waldorf Chicken Salad Croissants, Caprese Corn Summer Salad, and Mint & Melon Salad for the students to sample before they assemble all of the ingredients to take home to share with their families.

For Southwoods Elementary, we are doing a series of 4 classes where the kids will do 2 classes making their own well rounded paper bag lunch, 1 class on fruit & vegetable smoothies (we'll try tropical, berry, peanut butter, and other combinations), and 1 class on healthy snacks (sliced apples, grapes, and a big variety of cut veggies and pretzel chips with hummus, tzatziki dip, and yogurt ranch dip).



Volunteer Spotlight

By Janet McNabb



Chris Doyle

Have you noticed someone out on the grounds of the St. Augustine warehouse with a funny looking “grabber” picking up trash on Tuesday mornings? Well, that would be our very own Chris Doyle tidying up. She manages to complete that while also working in Unit 2 creating pallets for distribution to all the people we serve on Tuesdays. The pallets are ultimately delivered to Awaken City, Flagler Estates, and St. Benedict and others.

Once a month she delivers to the Homeless Coalition. She informed me that the Homeless Coalition is a little area in St. Augustine that is like a small town with houses surrounding a central courtyard that has

housing and food distribution, and some are really without a home. Those that are homeless have no storage facilities.

Occasionally she’ll distribute to the tiny town of Elwood when Jean Clapp is unable to go there. Chris is very faithful to her volunteer duties on Tuesday mornings, so much so that she plans her travels around that day. She’ll leave on a Wednesday and return on a Monday so she can help out on Tuesdays.

Originally from Westchester County in New York, she attended college in NY close to the Canada boundary. She has worked in many areas over the years touching on real estate, Social Security, Department of Army, and an insurance agency.

Hobbies are listed as gardening, reading, and NOT cleaning the house! On her bucket list is travel, travel, and more travel. She recently enjoyed an inland waterway cruise to Alaska, and now yearns to see the national parks in the inland area of Alaska. Also high on the list are Ireland and Scotland. She’d love to live in another country some time.

Another volunteer position she enjoys is working at GTMNERR, Guana, Tolomato, Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. There she monitors the butterfly population and the plankton in the water. She observed that she doesn’t like what she’s found in the water, which is worrisome.

You might be very surprised to learn that Chris’s music of choice is ... are you ready?heavy metal! Her favorite: Aerosmith.

Chris, we are delighted to learn more about you, and are so happy to have you as a dedicated and diligent volunteer. Thank you!



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 fiscal year 2021 financial statements have been released and are available upon request.
- Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org