

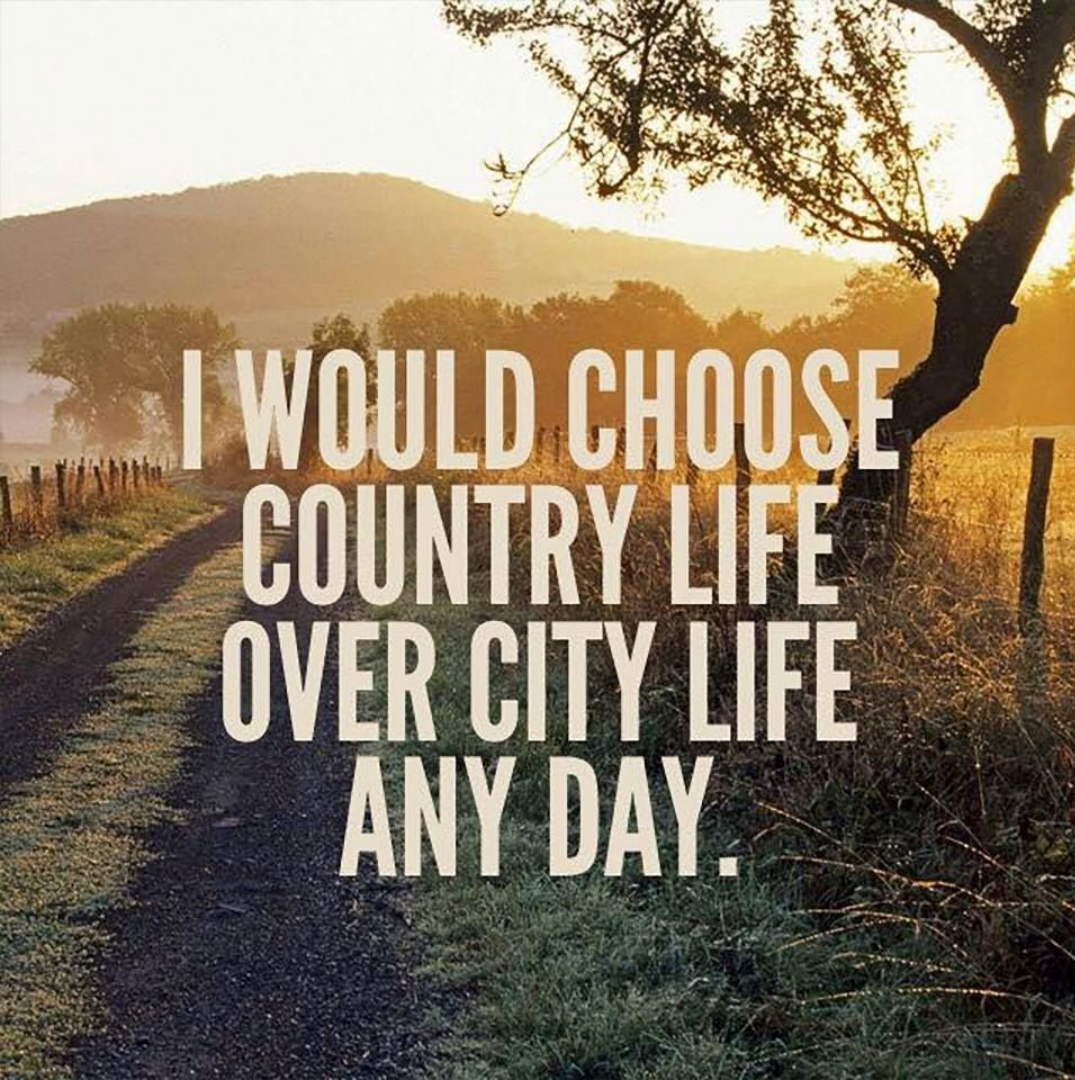


Advancing Data-Driven Solutions  
to Reduce Food Loss and Waste

# Addressing Food Waste & Recovery to Build Resilient Rural Communities

Rural Grocers Association  
JUNE 2022





**I WOULD CHOOSE  
COUNTRY LIFE  
OVER CITY LIFE  
ANY DAY.**

**Shawn Shepherd**

ReFED

Director of Development

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# Our Mission

We're a national nonprofit working to end food loss and waste across the food system by advancing data-driven solutions to the problem.



# Our Vision

We envision a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system that optimizes environmental resources, minimizes climate impacts, and makes the best use of the food we grow.

## DATA & INSIGHTS

Leveraging data and insights to highlight supply chain inefficiencies and economic opportunities

## CAPITAL & INNOVATION

Catalyzing capital to spur innovation and scale high-impact initiatives

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Mobilizing and connecting supporters to take targeted action

# The Challenging Environment: The Food Landscape in Rural America



# Quality of Life in Rural America



Rural Americans have strong ties to their local communities

- 81% report feeling attached to their local communities
- 67% have been helped by neighbors
- 51% say they're actively involved

Quality of life issues that rise to the top of concerns:

- 64% of respondents say better long-term job creation would be most helpful to their local economy
- 61% believe improving quality of local schools
- 55% report improving access to health care
- 51% view advanced job training or skills development
- 49% report knowing someone who has struggled with Opioid addiction

# Hunger in Rural America



- 1) Rural communities have faced higher food insecurity rates compared to urban communities.
- 2) People of color who live in rural communities experience hunger disproportionately — 2.2x more.
- 3) Children in rural counties are particularly vulnerable to hunger.
- 4) Federal nutrition programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) are integral to ending rural hunger.

# Food Deserts are Real in Rural America

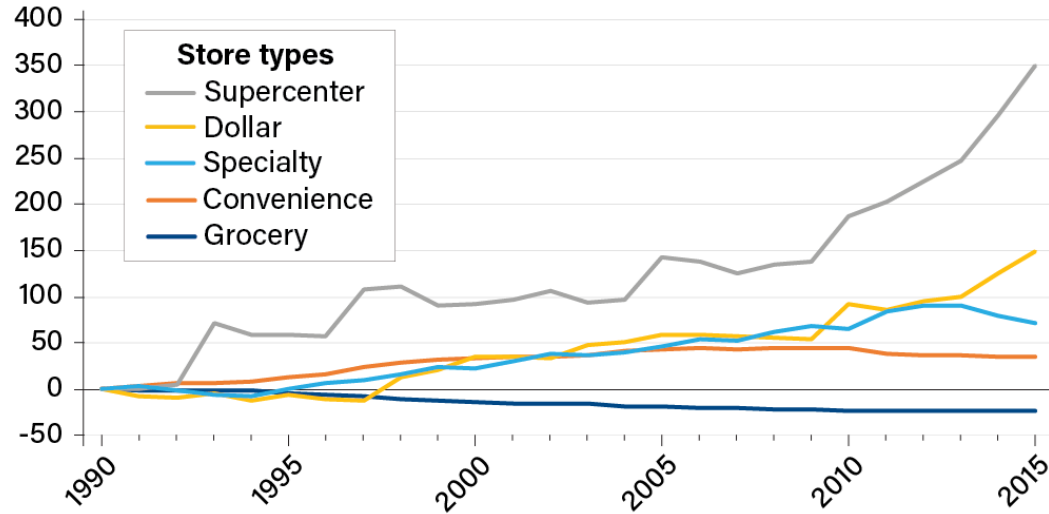


- **5 million rural Americans live in a rural food desert**, far from fresh, affordable food
- Of the 1,947 nonmetro counties in the contiguous United States, **rural nonmetro counties had fewer of all five types of food retailing stores** than large and small urban nonmetro counties

# The Changing Face of Rural Food Retail

**Dollar stores and supercenters had the greatest percentage growth in rural nonmetro counties from 1990 to 2015**

Annual percent change in share of stores



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from National Establishment Time Series from 1990 to 2015.



# Building Community Food Security

“...concerns the underlying **social, economic, and institutional factors** within a community that affect the **quantity and quality of available food** and its **affordability** or price relative to the sufficiency of financial resources available to acquire it.”



# Food Loss and Waste: An Overview of a Solvable Problem



# The U.S. Problem:



35%

of all food goes uneaten



\$408B

a year is spent on food  
that is *never eaten*

Source: ReFED Insights Engine

Meanwhile...

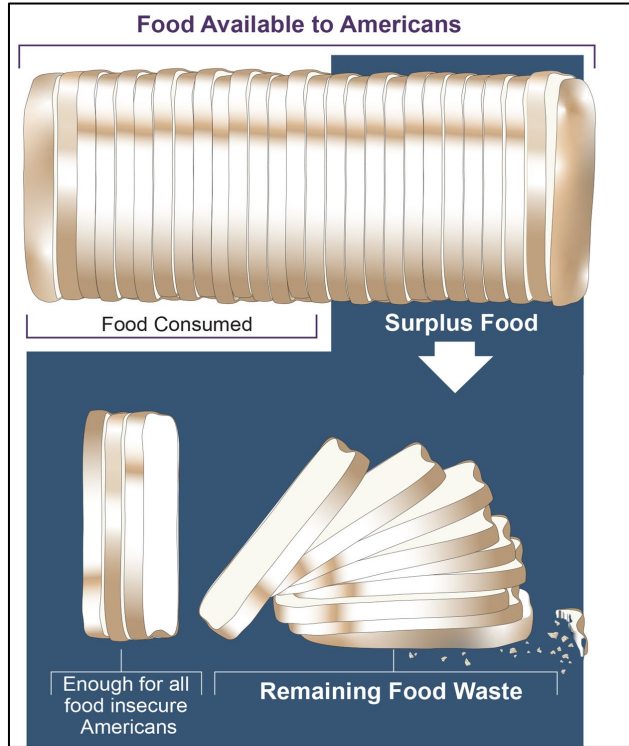


38.3M+

Americans are food insecure

Source: Feeding America

# Food Need is Small Compared to Waste

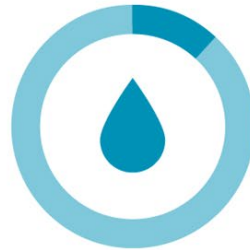


Cutting food waste in half would provide  
**4 Billion Meals**

# Food Waste Environmental Impacts



4%  
of U.S. GHG  
Emissions



14%  
of all  
Fresh Water Use



18%  
of all  
Cropland Use



24%  
of Landfill Inputs  
**#1 material** (EPA Estimate)

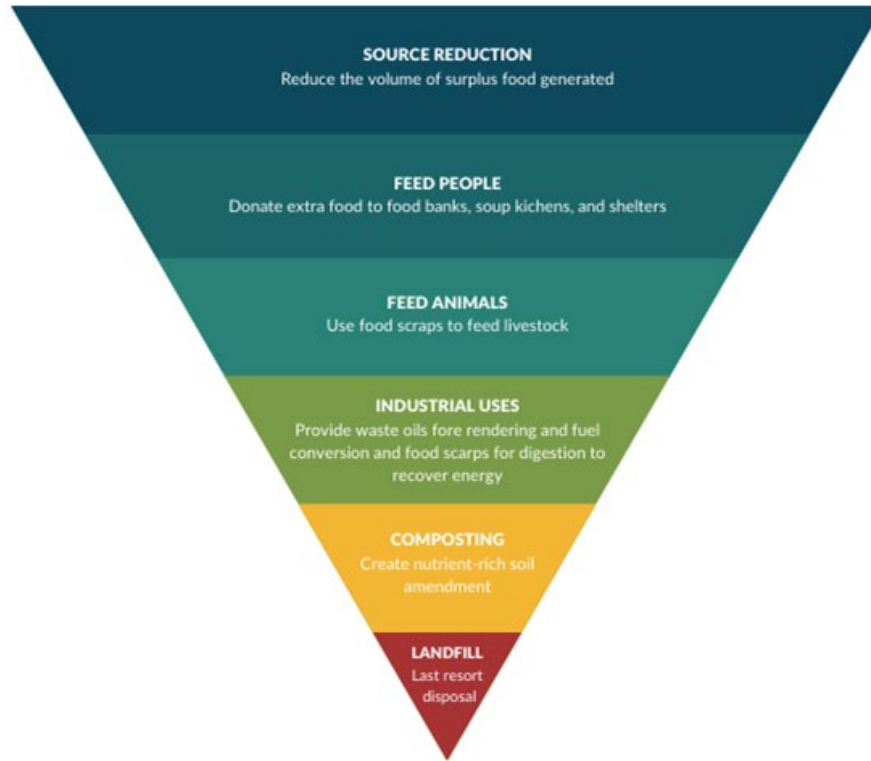
Source: ReFED

# The Drive for Efficiency Builds Waste Into the System



In 2019, 16.7 million tons of produce never made it off the farm, according to ReFED's [Insights Engine](#). Some 51% of those fruits and vegetables – more than 8.5 million tons – were perfectly edible. But they were deemed either not pretty enough or not worth the trouble of harvesting.

# Reduce • Reuse • Recycle



# Our Changing Food System: What We're Seeing

Hybrid work environments  
Labor "reshuffle"  
Closing restaurants  
Gigantic rise in food delivery  
Supply chain disruptions



Less predictability  
More immediate



Increased chances of more  
food loss and waste



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Rising fuel costs  
Rising food prices  
Trucker shortage  
Pending food shortages  
Climate change/Natural disasters



Food seen as more precious



Increased motivation and  
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Consumer awareness of FLW  
Consumer economic angst  
COVID rollercoaster  
Racial inequity an open concern



Increased attention toward  
food as a source of pleasure  
and control



Opportunity to influence food  
behavior

# A Roadmap of Solutions to Food Loss & Waste



# Food Waste is a Systemwide Problem

**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Outside expertise to be a voice on the issue, help understand what to do and where their influence is most effective

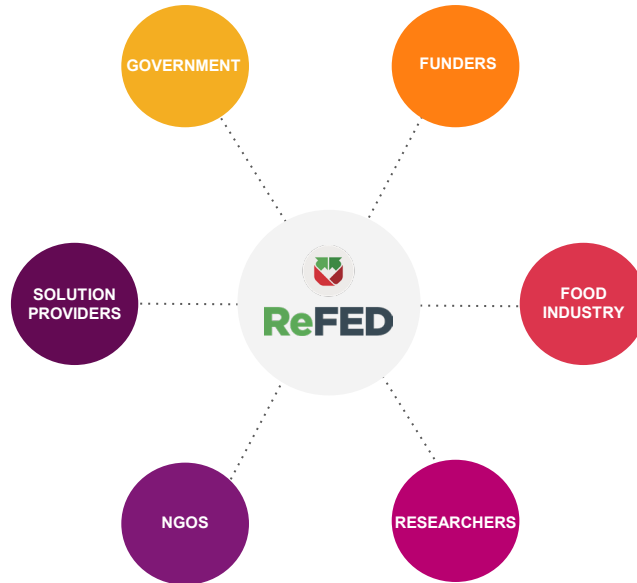
**ReFED'S ROLE:** Partners with federal agencies to provide feedback and be a conduit to other stakeholders; provides policy recommendations

**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Support to innovate and scale solutions, including funding, expert guidance, corporate connections, market analysis, etc.

**ReFED'S ROLE:** Serves as advisor for open calls (e.g., Kroger, POM Wonderful, DoorDash), provides connections, hosts Solution Provider Directory, promotes deal flow reports, hosted Food Recovery Accelerator

**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Partnerships to increase impact; funding

**ReFED'S ROLE:** Hosts network with NGO members and participates in smaller collaborations; attracts capital to the space, helping NGOs receive this funding



**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Help identifying and evaluating funding opportunities and impact of investments

**ReFED'S ROLE:** Hosts Funders Circle, provides advisory services, landscape analysis, deal flow reports, and introductions to solution providers seeking funding

**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Guidance on the most effective solutions and how to implement them

**ReFED'S ROLE:** Provides measurement tools, solutions analysis, connections to innovators and peers, and roundtables to tackle joint issues

**WHAT'S NEEDED:** Input on where research is needed, connections to funding, and amplification of their findings

**ReFED'S ROLE:** Provides expert support; promotes findings; incorporates relevant studies into Insights Engine analysis

# ReFED Insights Engine Driving Change

An interactive knowledge hub for food loss and waste launched in 2021, the Insights Engine lets users:

1. Understand the Problem

2. Explore the Solutions

3. Find Solution Providers

4. Calculate Impact

## NEW TOOLS

5. Track Capital

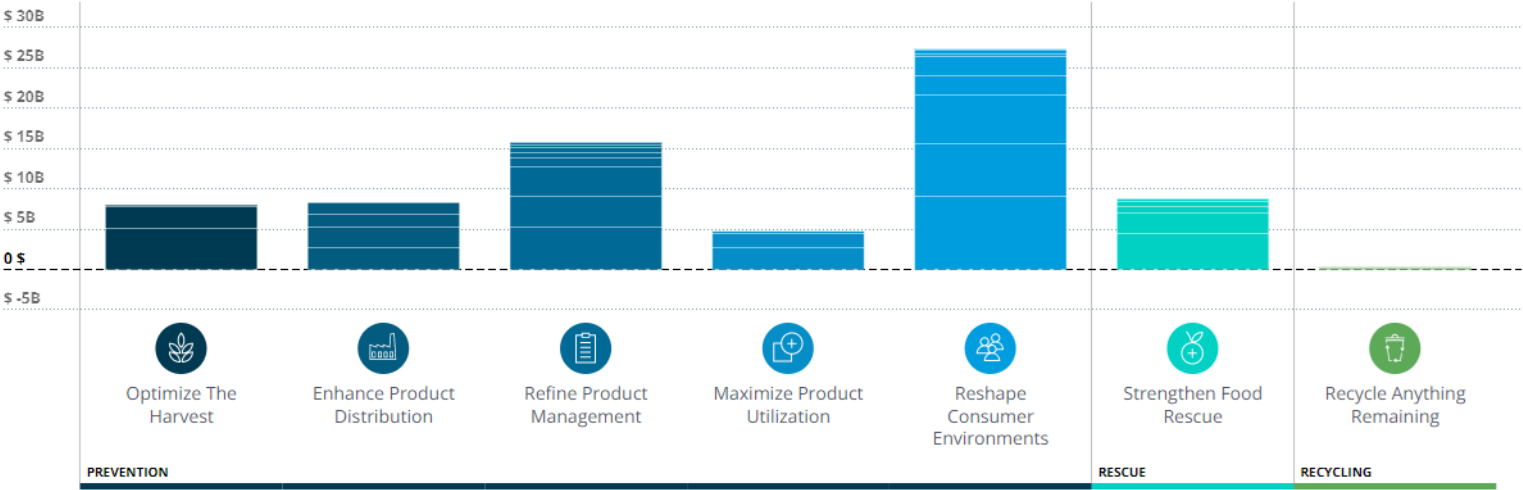
6. Review Policies

Launch the Insights Engine

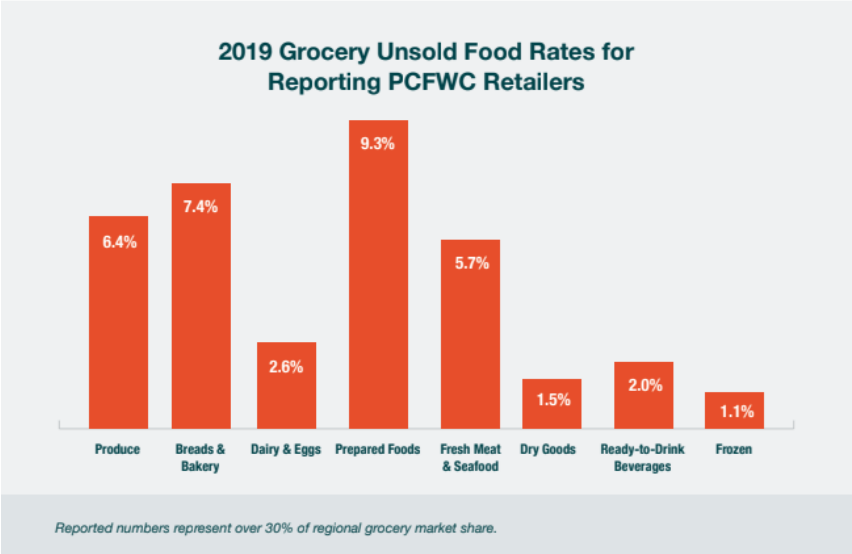


# Food Waste Solutions Offer Significant Financial Benefits

ANNUAL NET FINANCIAL BENEFIT  
POTENTIAL OF FOOD WASTE  
SOLUTIONS  
U.S. DOLLARS



# Creative Solutions to Building a Better Rural Food System



# Creative Solutions to Building a Better Rural Food System

- Support imperfect and surplus produce channels
- Retailers, foodservice providers re-evaluate their size/cosmetic standards
- Whole crop purchasing (the farmer right-sizes production, the retailer gets a bargain price, and nothing — or very little — goes to waste)
- Enhanced demand planning and inventory controls by retailers
- Coordinate regional approaches to food rescue and recovery
- Community composting
- Engage schools in food waste prevention and family education





For further information, please contact:

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