

Exploring Food Waste Issues *Summer 2026*

Feed It Onward: Turning Food Waste into Opportunity Across America

Feed It Onward is a Trump EPA initiative that lends a national platform to spotlight the farmers, businesses, nonprofits, military partners, and communities who are doing incredible work to ensure good food is being put to use instead of turned to waste.

Feed It Onward connects food donors and organizations leading on food waste reduction with communities in need, while reducing the environmental impact of food waste in landfills. As part of the Freedom 250 celebration, Feed It Onward reflects the values that have always made our country strong — generosity, grit, and community. We partner with private and public groups to highlight these opportunities to reduce our nation's food waste.

The Challenge

In the United States, more than one-third of all food goes uneaten and gets thrown away. This creates a huge impact on both our environment and the wallets of American families. Food has become the largest contributor to our landfills — more than any other type of waste. Doing our part to ensure food is being used in productive ways like going to those in need, turned into animal feed, composting, and other innovative solutions can go a long way.

Key Statistics:

- $728 - Average annual food waste cost per person
- $2,913 - Average annual food waste cost for a family of four
- 11% - Percentage of household food spending that is wasted
- Over 133 billion pounds of food wasted annually
- Millions of families struggling with food insecurity
- $3,000 per family lost to food waste each year

Supporting Data

Data from EPA's 2025 report, "Estimating the Cost of Food Waste to American Consumers (pdf)" (3.92 MB, April 4, 2025) , shows that individual consumers lose $728 annually to food waste—equivalent to $14 thrown away every single week. A family of four wastes nearly $3,000 worth of food each year, representing about 11 percent of their total spending on food.

Together, We Feed It Onward

Feed It Onward is a voluntary program that partners with farms, restaurants, grocery stores, food brands, and military bases donating food within their communities. As part of the Freedom 250 celebration, Feed It Onward reflects the values that have always made the country strong — generosity, grit, and community.

Ways to Get Involved

Partners

- Share your story. If your farm, company, nonprofit, military program, or diversion and reuse operation is leading on food recovery, let us feature your success on the national stage. Discover our Feed It Onward Partners.

Communities

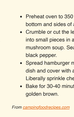
- Support these efforts locally. Take inspiration from our partners and bring food recovery into schools, neighborhoods, and hometowns.
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Families & Individuals

- Learn from these stories, talk about them, and spread the word. Leadership grows when people share what works.

Branding and Icon Use

Only entities that have signed a partnership agreement with EPA, that comply with and maintain a valid partnership agreement, as overseen and enforced solely by EPA, are authorized to use the Feed It Onward name and icons.



- Review the Feed It Onward Branding Guidelines.

Ready to Get Involved & Make an Impact?

Join the movement to put surplus food to its highest and best use in communities across America.

To get in touch with our team regarding a partnership opportunity or engagement, please contact the Feed It Onward team.

Feed It Onward is an initiative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of America's 250th anniversary celebration.

Refresh Recipes

Shopping your fridge first is an important strategy for reducing food waste. Here's a recipe idea that will help you use what you have before buying more!

Hamburger Patty Casserole

COZY COMFORT FOOD THAT WASTES LESS AND TASTES GREAT



Summer picnics and parties often result in leftover hamburgers. The cooked patties aren't great for making burgers the next day, but they are great for making this casserole! It's also a great option if you have leftover ground beef from making homemade burgers or tacos.

USES UP
Hamburgers

MAKES
6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb leftover Hamburger Patties
- 1 10.5 oz can Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 16 oz bag of Tater Tots
- 2 cups Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Salt & Pepper to Taste

TOPPING

So many things go great with hamburger meat and tater tots, so you can customize it any way you'd like. Some favorite sauces and toppings are crispy fried onions, BBQ sauce, ketchup, Ranch dressing, sour cream, Worcestershire sauce, bell peppers, black beans, crispy bacon, corn, and more.

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease the bottom and sides of a 9×13-in baking dish.
- Crumble or cut the leftover hamburger patties into small pieces in a bowl. Mix in cream of mushroom soup. Season to taste with salt & black pepper.
- Spread hamburger mix in bottom of baking dish and cover with a layer of tater tots. Liberally sprinkle cheese across the top.
- Bake for 30-40 minutes, or until tater tots are golden brown.

From carnewfoodrecipes.com



OILS, CONDIMENTS & SPICES

OILS

REFRIGERATE IT: Sesame, yes; others, no **AT FRESHEST:** Coconut oil—2 years in a cool, dark, dry place

Vegetable oil— Unopened, 1 year; opened, 2 months

Olive oil— Unopened, 2 years from harvest date; opened, 3 months

Sesame/flavorful nut oils— Unopened, 1 year; opened, 2 months

OPTIMAL STORAGE: All oils should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place.

For best quality, buy olive and vegetable oils in small quantities that you'll use within a couple of weeks. If you do buy larger amounts, transfer what you need for a week or two in the kitchen into a small, opaque bottle, and store the rest in a cool, dark place to minimize exposure to heat and light, then refill your small bottle as needed.

Coconut oil is a solid at room temperature and generally lasts longer than other oils.

Sesame oil and other flavorful nut oils are very sensitive and should be bought in small quantities and kept in the refrigerator after opening (but brought to room temperature before using).

FREEZING: Not beneficial/not recommended, though some products such as fresh herbs can be frozen in oil.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: If oil begins to get rancid, it can still be put to good use. You can use it to polish and condition both wood furniture and leather shoes (wipe down the surface with a sponge to remove dirt, grime, allow to dry, and then apply a light coat of olive oil, rubbing to allow the oil to fully soak in); to fix squeaky doors (use a rag to apply oil to the top of a problematic hinge); or to free stuck zippers (dab some olive oil on the zipper teeth). Olive oil and coconut oil can be used to make homemade salt or sugar body scrubs.

SPICES, GRIED AND GROUND

REFRIGERATE IT: No **AT FRESHEST:** Whole, up to 2 years; ground, up to 1 year

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Buy spices whole when you can and grind just before using. Also, buy them in small amounts. Keep in a cool, dark, dry place (not near the stove!) in airtight containers.

FREEZING: Not recommended.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Spices don't usually spoil, but they do lose potency over time. To test whether a ground spice is potent enough to be effective, rub a little between your fingers and taste/smell to see if the flavor and aroma are to your liking.

TEA

REFRIGERATE IT: No **AT FRESHEST:** Loose leaf, 6 to 9 months; tea bags: 2 years

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Loose leaf – Store in an airtight ceramic container or tin away from coffee and strong-smelling spices.

Tea bags— Store in original packaging in a cool, dry, dark place.

FREEZING: Not recommended.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Tea won't spoil, but it will lose potency and flavor over time.

Certain teas can be used to dye fabrics.

Bake cookies or quick breads and flavor them with dry tea.

Quick Tricks! Brought To You By:

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

NEBRASKA EXTENSION

QUICK TRICKS

Food tossed is money lost. One way to add new life to still edible foods is to re-purpose leftovers and reuse them in new ways and new recipes. This booklet will get you started with simple tips and recipes. You'll find "recycled" can taste just as good, maybe even better than the original recipe.

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN Emeritus Educator



REFRIGERATOR & FREEZER STORAGE CHART

These short-but-safe time/temp lists help keep refrigerated food (41° F. or 5° C. or less) cooling or reducing temperature.
• Perishable food should not be left out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperature is above 90°F.).
• Food may be safely refrigerated after the "use-by" date.
• Keep meat and poultry in its package and pull back packaging.
• Wrap tightly in moisture-vapor-resistant material, such as heavy-duty aluminum foil, plastic wrap, freezer paper, or plastic bags that are designed for freezing. Overwrap packages from the store.
• Use within the times listed below for best quality. Foods stored at 0°F. or lower maintain quality indefinitely, but will be safe after these times.

Product	Refrigerate	Freezer
Eggs		
Fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Don't freeze
Hard cooked	1 week	Don't freeze
Liquid eggs, egg substitutes, egg yolks	3 days	1 year
Casseroles, egg dishes	3 days	Don't freeze
TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles		3 months
Deli meats, once package is open	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Meat, Ground, Stew Meats		
Hamburger, ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb, mixtures of beef, pork	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Variety meats—tongue, liver, heart, kidney, chitterlings	1 to 2 days	Don't freeze
Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened	1 day	Don't freeze
Ham, canned, vacuum sealed, shelf-stable, unopened	2 years	Don't freeze
Ham, Corned Beef		
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	Drained, 1 month
Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Corned beef in pouch with pickling spices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month
Hot Dogs & Lunch Meats		
Hot dogs, unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Hot dogs, opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
Lunch meats, unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Lunch meats, opened package	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Sausage, raw—from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Sausages, fully cooked—from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	3 to 7 days	1 to 2 months
Smoked breakfast sausage, links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage labeled "Keep Refrigerated," opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage, shelf-stable, unopened	3 months	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage, shelf-stable, opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months

Product	Refrigerate	Freezer
Soups & Stews		
Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Bacon & Sausage		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw from pork, beef, turkey or chicken	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb, & Pork)		
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Variety meats (tongue, liver, heart, kidney, chitterlings)	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Meat Leftovers		
Cooked meat and meat dishes	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Gravy and meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Poultry		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked Poultry Leftover		
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry casserole	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Cooked poultry dishes	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Pieces covered with broth, gravy	1 to 2 days	6 months
Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months
Fish & Shellfish		
Lean fish	1 to 2 days	6 months
Fatty fish	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Cooked fish	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Smoked fish	14 days	2 months
Fresh shrimp, scallops, crawfish, lobster, crab	1 to 2 days	6 to 9 months
Cooked shellfish	3 to 4 days	3 months

Source: [illegible]

U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

For more waste reducing tips, go to:
Making-leftovers_planned-overs



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