

Appendix 2:

Herein lie two accounts of archivists who have studied the narrative of this solution to food waste, and have written accounts for how this issue came to rise, and how we were able to survive in the wake of the drought of 2019.

Archivist 1:

After the old system of food consumption was put out of effect, there was an obvious demand for new legislation. Industrial farms that transported hundreds of pounds of food across the country were put out of business either by the droughts of 2019 or by the government itself that demanded that all large scale production be replaced with small, localized farming practices. The change was drastic, but there was no other option if the United States was going to survive. By 2024, small farms were being subsidized by the government to promote initial growth and were run by individuals who were put out of work by the closing of industrial farms. The workers' relocation was essential to making sure these new small farms were sustained; as a result, urban areas saw a decline in population while the suburbs and rural areas were overwhelmed by new homeowners.

The issue of determining what and how much produce would be necessary to support the local communities for which these small farms were responsible was a task that took a considerable amount of work. In the years that the last of the large-scale farms were capable of feeding the nation, a census was put out to all Americans. Each household was responsible for reporting their daily food consumption to the minutest detail. Sociologists were shocked to see that the majority of the nation was more than willing to record its intake to the detail demanded by the government; however, this reaction was necessary for the United States to regain its footing in feeding the entire country, so I personally understand the interest in making sure the new initiative was executed perfectly.

In 2024, municipal composting was also undertaken as a nationwide ordeal. Individuals who had originally worked in industrial farming and could not afford to relocate or could not find a job at local farms took jobs in the composting business. Garbage disposal was broken up into three categories instead of two: waste, recycling, and now food waste. Compost was collected weekly with the stipulation that only a certain percentage of the food that was brought into one household could end up in their respective compost bin. Because food was weighed and documented upon purchase, it was easy for government officials to notice when one household accumulated too much waste. Further, any food waste that was incorrectly discarded would land those individuals a generous fine.

By 2030, the composting initiative had taken off spectacularly. Compost was collected, brought to the local composting centers, and turned into usable soil. The government had also encouraged those who could support an at-home garden to do so. Not only would this take some of the burden off of local farms to provide all produce for an entire county, it also diminished the cost of food in the home. Grocery store prices had risen to discourage buying petty items imported from other farms, and being able to grow personal produce was a cost-effective and eco-friendly alternative. Because most Americans in the suburbs could support a home garden, the compost initiative was a key ingredient to starting and maintaining

these plots. Once properly treated at the municipal centers, compost was delivered back to households to stimulate growth of their personal gardens. All other compost went to the local farms to sustain their production.

Archivist 2:

It is a Saturday morning and I'm sitting at my kitchen table drinking my morning coffee, thinking about how much has changed in my lifetime. Every once in a while I find myself strolling down memory lane, thinking back to childhood, college, and young adult life and how that is so different from today, being in my early sixties. To put it simply, the world is a different place today.

I was born in 1980, and to be honest, I do not remember much of my early years of life. From conversations with my parents and some research I know that consumerism and the food industry was very different. Before I was born, food used to be grown and consumed locally and people consumed food that could easily grow in their region. When the industrial revolution and the World Wars hit, there was a boom in new packaging, such as glass, metal, cardboard and plastic. There was also a greater demand for trading food products. As technology and globalization advanced throughout the late 20th century, trade and packaging only continued to increase. In the mid to late 1900s it was still common to shop locally and have certain foods delivered, like fresh milk and eggs. As a young child I remember putting the glass milk containers in a box out on the front steps and anxiously await for the milk man to exchange the glass bottles for fresh containers of milk. Soon, it was possible to get food from any part of the country or world. There was no such thing as eating seasonal foods, as it was possible to get anything you wanted all year round. Walking into a grocery store it was almost impossible to guess what time of year it was. Fruits and vegetables were available year round. If they could not be grown locally, it was easy to import them from somewhere else.

This constant demand for food year round continued to grow and by the time I was in college it seemed as though more food was imported to America than actually grown domestically. Food prices also were relatively low compared to other life expenses. With ample food and low prices this lead to many individuals, families, and restaurants over buying and over serving food. Back then, there was no regulation for what to do with leftover unwanted food and there were consequences for improper disposal. People did whatever they wanted to with the food. Some people would keep the leftovers and eat it the next day, others would use it as ingredients for another dish, and some would simply just toss it in the trash. Similarly, restaurants sometimes donated leftover or unused food to local food banks and shelters while other times the food went right to the trash. This makes me laugh because now in days that is illegal. There is no such thing as throwing food straight into a garbage can that then goes to a landfill. The last time I threw a piece of food in the trash was probably after I graduated college. There was also was a drop off of individuals going to the food store weekly to pick up fresh food. Instead, stores started food delivery services. From the comfort of their home, people can place orders at the food store online and within a couple of hours the food will arrive at someone's doorstep. People were no longer going to the food store and picking out the perfect apple, tomato, or melon. Slowly people became even more disconnected from food and the experience of buying, and prepping.

The disconnection between farm and fork only grew farther and farther apart as I went through my young adult life. Eventually the number of farmers declined because farming became more mechanical and machines were replacing the work of farmers. The combination of food delivery and the disconnection widening, food became more of an object than a process that needed to be thought about and protected. There were large amounts of food waste, as people cared about the food system decreased each year.

In 2019 things began to change within the food system because in 2019 there was a drought that struck the west coast, midwest and southeast of the US. This had a catastrophic effect that spread throughout the country, especially as the areas that were directly affected are major agricultural producing areas. This was a result of the combination of increased pressure on natural resources from climate change, over production and industrialization of farms. Farmers, and their machinery, were exploiting the land too heavily. The overproduction of food lead to extreme amounts of water being wasted and being taken away from other uses. The drought lasted until 2022 and it was within these three years that a lot of legislation was passed and attitudes were changes when it came to agriculture and food production.

Individuals started to realize what went into food production and just how many resources were wasted along the supply chain. In the months and years that followed the drought there were many investigations and studies done to see just how much water, fertilizer and other resources went into agriculture and then tracked food all the way to the store and consumer's home to see how much was wasted. The numbers were astonishing. It was discovered that there certainly is not a food shortage problem in America, but rather a distribution and marketing problem. In 2023 throwing food away in a trashcan was outlawed. Instead of throwing food away, food waste and scraps can be composted or be used as animal feed and leftover food can be donated to food banks and shelters. Each city also has municipal compost facilities, similar to how cities have garbage and recycling facilities. Residents can either pay for compost to be picked up from their house, in the way they may have garbage and recycling picked up, or they can drop off household food scraps to the facility. As long as the food was not going to landfills, almost any other alternative was okay.

There was also a huge mindset change for individuals when it came to eliminating food waste. Not sending food to a landfill helps a lot, but realistically, its better to not have so much leftover food so consumers and industries were trying to get better at buying appropriate amounts of food in order to eliminate waste. A major problem back in 2000-2020 was that individuals had the image of the perfect food, most often when it came to fruits and vegetables. These foods had become idealized so that the ideal apple was perfectly round and shiny with no imperfections, flaws, or bumps. The perfect carrot was straight with perfect orange coloring and smooth skin. The ultimate strawberry was round with dark red coloring and green leaves perfectly folding over the top. Anything that diverted from this standard for each piece of food was often unacceptable to the consumer. Even if it was from the same plant or bush and was equally as nutritious and safe to eat, the consumer eye has deemed it as no good. Foods with imperfections, color flaws, or simply not the ideal shape were often thrown away because producers know that the consumer will not buy it. However, in the mid to late 2020s consumers were more focused on no waste and more economical production that they were no longer concerned with the ideal looking food. Farms also had a maximum amount of food, in terms of

weight, that could be properly disposed of. This encouraged farmers to promote and sell the imperfect looking food.

To help decrease food waste and promote composting, it became a law that every home had to have a garden on their property. This also led to individuals growing more of their food and buying less industrially produced foods, especially fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Since every household also has to compost unused food, the compost can be used on said household gardens. There was also legislation passed to regulate how many farms could be in a given county and the size of each farm. The reasoning for this is that nowadays, society is prioritizing eating local so if farms get too big it will push out other competitors. Consumers would rather have something grown in their city or county than buying that same piece of food that was imported from the other side of the world. In fact, there is now a governmental limit on how much food can be imported. Additionally, there are no longer farms non-cropping, now each farm has at least 3-5 different types of crops growing, if not more. And many farms will rotate crops in order to fertilize and protect their land. Farms were hit very hard by the drought back in 2019 and are taking large steps to prevent that from happen again.

Another major change today in 2040 is that food is now tracked and monitored to make sure there is no food waste. Now when a consumer purchases food from the store, each products weight is incorporated into the barcode scan. At the end of a transaction, a consumer will know how much they spent on food but also the total weight of purchased. Households have a maximum amount of weight that they are allowed to dispose of or compost at the end of each week or month, which is a fraction of the incoming food weight. Food manufactures also agreed upon standardizing the date on food packaging to all mean the same thing and extend the date so people do not preemptively get rid of food.