In 2019, USDA purchased almost $1.2 billion in food purchases as part of a trade mitigation program, and in 2020 an additional $1.4 billion in food purchases are planned. Most of these foods will be distributed through TEFAP.

In 2020, this increase in food is estimated to cost food banks an additional $227 million to store and distribute the foods to community members in need.

Feeding America urges Congress and USDA to support additional funding to offset this cost in Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations legislation by fully funding TEFAP storage and distribution at $100 million.

In Feeding America’s Fiscal Year 2019, our network food banks distributed 1.1 billion pounds of food through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). In Fiscal Year 2020, the Feeding America network food banks are expected to distribute an estimated 1.4 billion pounds in TEFAP food. The amount of food distributed is significantly higher due to the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Purchase and Distribution Program.
Impact of TEFAP Foods

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is the cornerstone of the food supply for Feeding America's network of 200 food banks and 60,000 partner agencies. The Feeding America network of food banks relies on TEFAP as well as the donations of surplus nutritious food from donors in the agriculture, food manufacturing, retail, and food service fields to provide almost 4 billion meals a year to people in need. Feeding America receives commodities through TEFAP food funded in the Farm Bill and from Section 32 Bonus and the Food Purchase and Distribution Program purchases to help provide market support when there is an oversupply.

Congress appropriates funding in annual spending legislation to help offset the cost for food banks to store and distribute TEFAP commodities. Historically, Congress has appropriated these critical funds at a little over half of the authorized level of $100 million annually—leaving food banks to cover the difference. In Fiscal Year 2020, Congress provided $79.6 million in TEFAP storage and distribution funding.

Unfortunately, the $79.6 million provided in FY2020 covered only 36 percent of the total projected cost to store and distribute TEFAP commodities—diverting already scarce resources that are needed to help food insecure families.

Food banks will need additional funding in Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations legislation to ensure they can continue to store and distribute the TEFAP food purchases. Left unmet, this funding shortfall has a disproportionately negative impact on food banks with larger service areas and that are serving rural populations.

Feeding America’s TEFAP Storage & Distribution Costs

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