WHAT TO DO WITH FOOD NOT SUITABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION:
If food cannot be donated to be consumed by humans, several options are environmentally preferable to landfill and may present opportunities for cost savings. They can also fulfill components of a company’s sustainability initiatives. Cost savings can accrue in the form of reduced waste hauling fees and potentially as a saleable product.

- Animal feedstock (partnering with local farmers)
- Bakery, dairy products, whey, and other appropriate food that has been treated at boiling temperatures for 30 minutes are excepted from this law. For more information, refer to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.
- Composting options (combining food scraps and brown matter such as leaves in a controlled environment to produce nutrient-rich soil)
- Partnership with a commercial hauler such as Atlas Organics
- Independent partnerships and compost sites

LOCAL RESOURCES
Memphis Food Waste Project
Tennessee Department of Agriculture
Tennessee Department of Health
Shelby County Health Department, Environmental Health and Food Safety Program
Mid-South Food Bank
Society of St. Andrew
Atlas Organics

Safe Food Donation in Shelby County, Tennessee
SAFE FOOD HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION

The national food standards at the retail level, as expressed in the FDA Food Code, do not differentiate between the protection provided to food consumed by paying consumers and to food consumed by individuals who receive food from FDOs. In other words, the procedures followed for donated food are the same as for food that is sold.

- **Date labels**
  - The following are indicators of peak quality and/or recommendations for inventory management: Best by, Use by, Best if used by/before, Freeze by.
  - If a product is apparently wholesome, donation of foods past these dates is allowed. Perishable foods may potentially be used safely a few days or a week after their dates (longer if frozen on or before their date), while shelf stable goods can often be used up to two years after their dates."
  - The exception to these guidelines is infant formula, which cannot be donated past its date.

- **TCS (Time and Temperature Control for Safety)**
  - TCS refers to any item susceptible to pathogen growth if left in the "danger zone" (41-135 F); these foods may only remain in the danger zone for a cumulative four hours.
  - These foods may be labeled "keep refrigerated" or "must be refrigerated."
  - Use refrigeration, freezing, or heat to keep food out of the danger zone.

- **Transport and storage**
  - Use coolers, cooling blankets, or refrigerated vehicles to keep food out of the temperature danger zones.
  - Use a digital bi-metal stem food thermometer to check TCS food temperatures before and after transportation.
  - Donated food should not be stored on the ground or in areas accessible to vermin.

- **Cross-contamination**
  - Store different types of protein separately (e.g. pork and chicken)
  - Separate raw and ready to eat items
  - Clearly label items with any of the eight major allergens: Milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans.

- **Training and safety**
  - Staff at the donating and receiving organizations must have current food safety training (e.g. Serve Safe, National Registry for Food Safety Professionals, etc.)
  - Unpackaged food should not be touched with bare hands and any person experiencing diarrhea, vomiting, fever, sore throat with fever, or jaundice should never handle food.

- **Examples of acceptable foods for donation**
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Dairy products
  - Baked goods
  - Prepared entrees or sides
  - Shelf-stable foods
  - Meat, poultry, and fish
  - Dairy products
  - Prepared entrees or sides
  - Shelf-stable foods

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