



Feeding More with Less

Our Journey with Spreadsheet Struggles to Power BI Success

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The Weight of Manual Reporting:

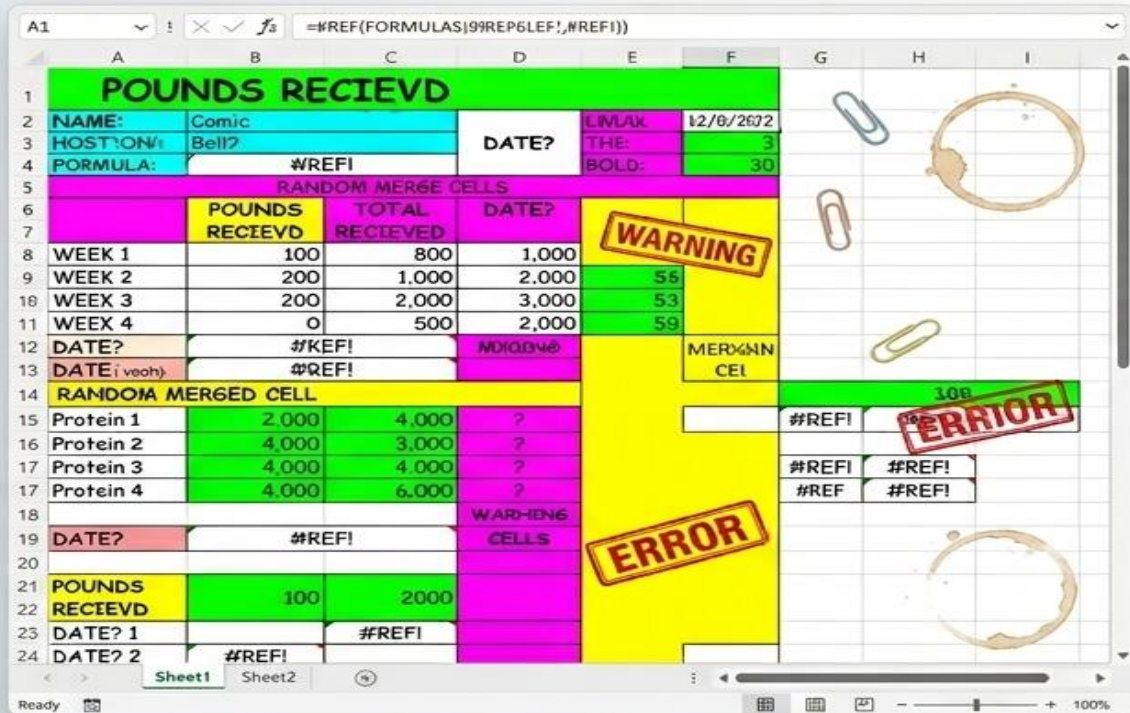
When our data was a burden, not a tool

- **Reporting by Crisis (Reactive vs. Proactive)**
 - Data was only pulled after a physical discrepancy was found in the warehouse.
 - We were managing by looking in the rearview mirror.
- **The "Excel Ceiling" (Labor-Intensive)**
 - Reports required hours of manual exporting, cleaning, and formatting.
 - Information was siloed in individual files, making it nearly impossible to see long-term trends.
- **The Bottleneck (Dependency)**
 - Leadership and departments were dependent on a few "data gatekeepers."
 - Simple questions (like poundage by county) took days to answer instead of seconds.
- **The Integrity Gap (Hidden Errors)**
 - Product setup and receiving errors remained invisible until they caused a physical inventory issue.
 - No automated way to "catch" mistakes at the point of entry.

**We weren't just missing data; we were missing the
time and clarity needed to act on it.**

Breaking the Cycle: Moving from Reactive Excel to Predictive Power BI

The "Dark Ages" (Chaos)



BEFORE (The Spreadsheet Era)

The "Data-Driven" Future (Sleek)



AFTER (The Power BI Era)

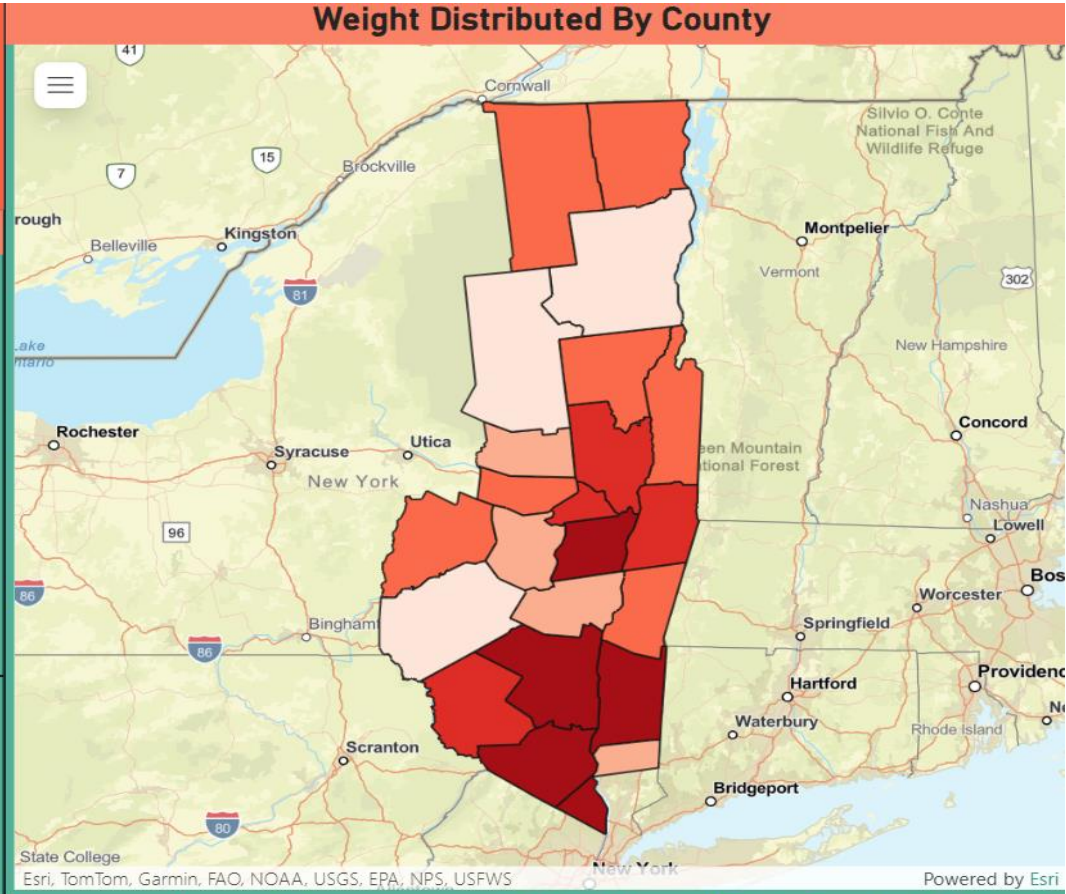
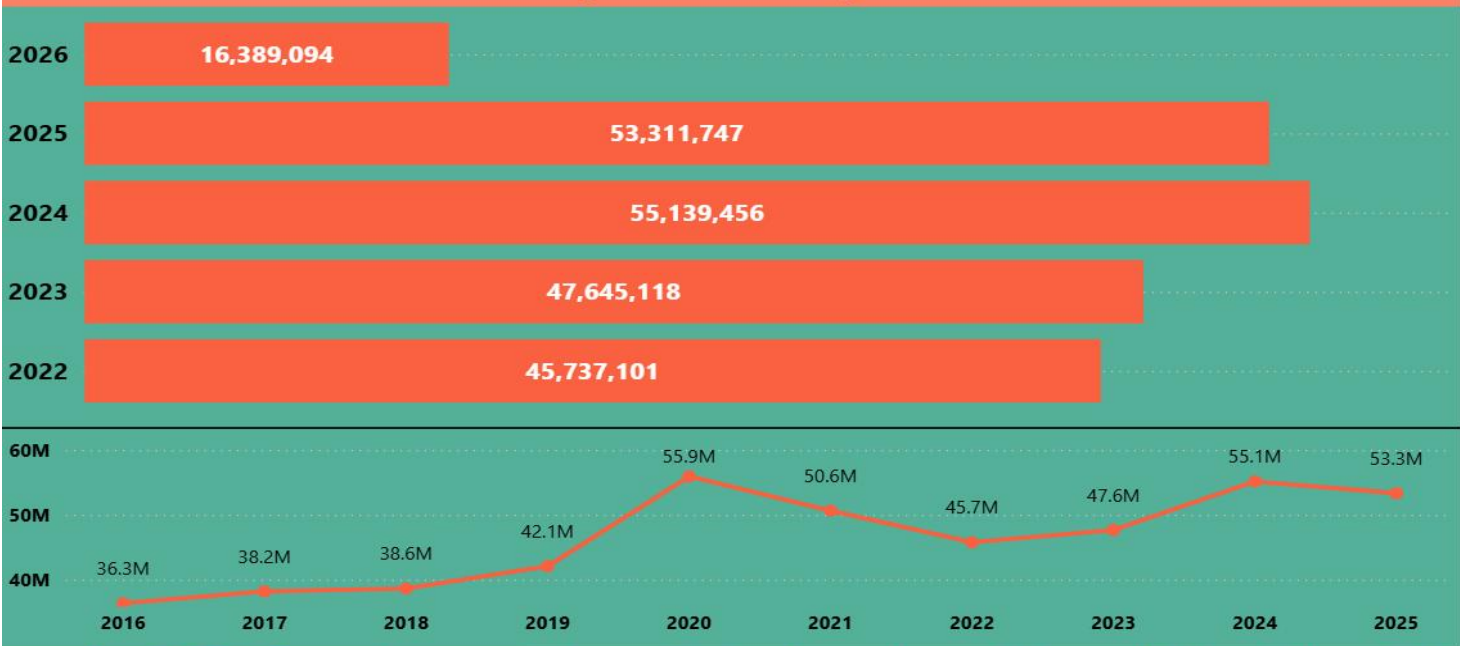
Breaking the Cycle: Moving from Reactive Excel to Predictive Power BI

Capability	The Excel Era (Past)	The Power BI Era (Present)
Warehouse	Reactionary / "Wait and See"	Predictive / Staffing to Weight
Inventory	Manual Audit / Found physically	Automated Flags / Error Checker
Leadership	Dependent on Staff Exports	Self-Service / Immediate Answers
Data Reach	Siloed in local files	Unified in the Cloud

REGIONAL

FOOD BANK

Weight Distributed by Year



Year To Date Comparison		Agency County	Agency City	Pickup/Delivery Date	Agency Type	State House	State Senate	Federal
☐ Year To Date Comparison		☐ **NONE**	☐ **None**	☐ 2022	☐ **NONE**	☐ **None	☐ **None	☐ **None
Product Category	Agency Zip	☐ ALBANY	☐ Accord	☐ 2023	☐ Affiliated Food Bank	☐ 100	☐ 38	☐ 17
☐ Donated	☐ 02118	☐ CLINTON	☐ Akwesasne	☐ 2024	☐ Agency	☐ 101	☐ 39	☐ 18
☐ HPNAP	☐ 03109	☐ COLUMBIA	☐ Albany	☐ 2025	☐ Back Pack Program/Agency	☐ 102	☐ 40	☐ 19
☐ NNY	☐ 05670	☐ DELAWARE	☐ Altamont	☐ 2026	☐ Direct Delivery to Agency	☐ 103	☐ 41	☐ 20
☐ Purchased	☐ 06492	☐ DUTCHESS	☐ Amenia	☐ January	Agency Group		Region	
☐ USDA	☐ 06810	☐ ESSEX	☐ Amsterdam	☐ February	☐ **NONE**	☐ Adirondacks & North Country		
Warehouse	☐ 07662	☐ FRANKLIN	☐ Ancramdale	☐ March	☐ BACK PACK	☐ Greater Capital Region		
☐ Albany County	☐ 08234	☐ FULTON	☐ Annandale-on-Hud...	☐ April	☐ Childrens Programs	☐ Hudson Valley & Catskills		
☐ Direct Service	☐ 10003	☐ GREENE	☐ Argyle	☐ May	☐ CLOSED FP - CLOSED PANTRY			
☐ Orange County	☐ 10474	☐ HAMILTON	☐ Athens	☐ June	☐ DAY PROG - DAY PROGRAM			
	☐ 10509	☐ MONTGOMERY	☐ Au Sable Forks	☐ July				
				☐ August				
				☐ September				



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Fueling the Mission: Why Power BI was Our Turning Point

- **Affordability: The Nonprofit Advantage**
 - For food banks, every dollar spent on software is a dollar not spent on meals. Power BI is unique because its entry point is nearly zero.
 - Microsoft Tech for Social Impact: Eligible nonprofits often get Power BI Pro at a deep discount (historically around \$4/user/month vs. the commercial \$10-\$14).
- **Ease of Use: From Spreadsheets to Insights**
 - You don't need to write code to see your impact. You just drag "Lbs of Food" into a chart and "Zip Code" into a map.
 - Power BI feels like Excel's "big brother." If your staff can use a Pivot Table, they can use Power BI.
- **Permissions & Security: The Right Data for the Right People**
 - Food banks handle sensitive data (donor amounts, client PI, and volunteer records). You need to show that Power BI keeps this safe while remaining accessible.
 - You can create a "Board Members" group for high-level trends and an "Operations" group for daily warehouse stats.
- **Amplification: The Force Multiplier**
 - Automation gave us back one full day every week. We traded manual data assembly for strategic data analysis—moving from 'What happened?' to 'What's next?'.
 - By building automated logic that flags inconsistencies instantly, we've eliminated the 'correction cycle.' We now present insights to our leadership that are validated in real-time, not weeks later.

Audience

Manage your audiences and their permissions. Select what content each audience can see by toggling the eye icon.



Regional Food Bank Repo...

Ordering

Receipts

Transfer

Expiration

Inventory Errors

AC Warehouse 2026

OC Warehouse 2026

Grants 2026

Food Industry 2026

Total Pounds Summary

Total Pounds Report

REGIONAL FOOD BANK

2025-2026 Donated Pounds

Warehouse - Source	2025 Pounds	2026 Pounds	25-26 Change	25-26 Change %	2025 Pounds %	2026 Pounds %
AC	4,600,807	4,911,764	310,957	6.76%	55.08%	51.96%
Farm	91,806	48,761	-43,045	-46.89%	1.10%	0.52%
Industry	2,267,319	2,545,475	278,156	12.27%	27.14%	26.93%
Retail	2,281,072	2,317,528	36,456	1.60%	27.31%	24.52%
Vendor	-39,390	0	39,390	-100.00%	-0.47%	0.00%
OC	2,815,321	3,452,295	636,974	22.63%	33.70%	36.52%
Farm	253,914	420,556	166,642	65.63%	3.04%	4.45%
Industry	825,669	1,155,381	329,712	39.93%	9.88%	12.22%
Retail	1,735,738	1,876,358	140,620	8.10%	20.78%	19.85%
Outside	937,572	1,088,761	151,189	16.13%	11.22%	11.52%
Farm	239,650	217,318	-22,332	-9.32%	2.87%	2.30%
Industry	693,542	871,443	177,901	25.65%	8.30%	9.22%
Vendor	4,380	0	-4,380	-100.00%	0.05%	0.00%
Total	8,353,700	9,452,820	1,099,120	13.16%	100.00%	100.00%

Year To Date Comparison

☒ 2025-2026 Year To Date Comparison

2026 Retail Pounds

AC Retail

2025-2026 Pounds

Category	2025 Pounds	2026 Pounds	25-26 Change
Donated	8,353,700	9,452,820	1,099,120
Purchased	5,561,598	6,407,542	845,944
USDA	1,685,241	1,013,547	-671,694
Total	15,600,539	16,873,909	1,273,370

2025

Donated

Purchased

USDA

Source

Agency

Foodbank

Total

Edit Audience

New Audience

Grant access to

☐ Entire organization [Learn more](#)

☒ Specific users or groups

Enter a name or email address

> Advanced

 Workspace users ⓘ



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Real-Time Data, Real-World Freshness

• The End of the "Data Lag"

- **Past:** Inventory was a "snapshot" taken 3 times a week. Agencies were shopping from old news.
- **Present:** Automated refreshes every 3 hours (8x a day). The data stays as fresh as the produce.

• Empowering our Partners

- Agencies can now see exactly what is on the floor *right now*.
- They can plan their distributions around high-protein items or short-coded perishables before they arrive.

• Strategic Waste Reduction

- By highlighting "Short-Life" items in real-time, we ensure fresh produce moves out the door and onto tables, not into the compost.
- **The Result:** Higher turnover of fresh food and a drastic reduction in spoilage.

REGIONAL FOOD BANK											Last Refreshed 4/20/2026 11:40:35 AM
Product Search		Click Here To Download Printer Version									
Ref Code	Name	Inventory Type	Packaging	Storage	Case Weight	Unit Price	Available Albany County	Available Orange County	HPNAP	Restrictions	Category
701349	365 CHOCOLATE ORANGE COFFEE PODS	Donated	6/12 CT CARTONS	DRY	3	\$0.48	0	241	No		03-Beverages
701106	365 SPICED CIDER SPARKLING WATER	Donated	2/12-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	318	359	No		03-Beverages
4937	ALKALINE WATER W/ELECTROLYTES	Donated	12/1.5 LITER BOTTLES	DRY	41	\$6.56	99	0	No		03-Beverages
3612	ASST FLAVORED SODA	Donated	8/2 LITER PLASTIC	DRY	38	\$6.08	256	39	No		03-Beverages
701077	BOBA MILK TEA	Donated	12/10.5 CANS	DRY	8	\$1.28	396	0	No		03-Beverages
701411	BOBA TEA - ASST FLVR	Donated	6/12 OZ GLASS BOTTLES	DRY	8	\$1.28	0	22	No		03-Beverages
701399	BREWED ICED TEA - ASST FLAVORS	Donated	12/12 OZ CANS	DRY	10	\$1.60	287	0	No		03-Beverages
24991	CHURRO LATTE POUR-OVER COFFEE AND CR...	Donated	6/5CT PACKS	DRY	4	\$0.64	0	21	No		03-Beverages
700809	CLUB SODA	Donated	15/33.8 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	35	\$5.60	58	0	No		03-Beverages
700969	CLUB SODA	Donated	2/12-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	0	69	No		03-Beverages
701189	CLUB SODA	Donated	24/7.5 OZ CANS	DRY	13	\$2.08	21	0	No		03-Beverages
95240	DIET CAFFEINE FREE PEPSI	Donated	12/2 OZ CANS	DRY	11	\$1.76	90	0	No		03-Beverages
864901	DIET COKE	Donated	24/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	0	347	No		03-Beverages
700820	DIET COLA - ZERO SUGAR	Donated	6/2 LITER BOTTLES	DRY	28	\$4.48	219	0	No		03-Beverages
8321	DIET PEPSI	Donated	36/12 OZ CANS	DRY	30	\$4.80	301	0	No		03-Beverages
701490	DUNKIN' ICED COFFEE - NUTTY PUMPKIN	Donated	12/13.7 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	13	\$2.08	0	1	No		03-Beverages
701313	ENERGY DRINK ASST FLAVORS	Donated	12/12 OZ CANS	DRY	19	\$3.04	347	0	No		03-Beverages
7582	GATORADE-ASSORTED FLAVORS	Donated	15/28 OZ PLASTIC BOT...	DRY	31	\$4.96	2	0	No		03-Beverages
701046	HINT WATER - ASSORTED FLAVOR	Donated	36/16 OZ BOTTLES/CASE	DRY	43	\$6.88	2,988	90	No		03-Beverages
701351	IMMUNITY SUPPORT DIET GREEN TEA	Donated	12/16.9 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	18	\$2.88	39	0	No		03-Beverages
701029	KARMA BLUEBERRY WATERMELON ENERGY ...	Donated	12/18 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	16	\$2.56	0	50	No		03-Beverages
701228	KARMA PROBIOTIC WATER VARIETY PACK	Donated	12/18 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	16	\$2.56	0	40	No		03-Beverages
701307	LAVENDER SINGLE-SERVE POUR-OVER COFFEE	Donated	8/5 CT BOXES	DRY	2	\$0.32	0	90	No		03-Beverages
700900	LEMON-LIME BODY ARMOR - ZERO SUGAR	Donated	12/28 OZ BOTTLES	DRY	23	\$3.68	0	31	No		03-Beverages
5454	LITTLE HUG FRUIT FLAVORED DRINKS	Donated	40/8 OZ PLASTIC BOT...	DRY	23	\$3.68	881	494	No		03-Beverages
700829	MIXED BERRY ASPIRE ENERGY DRINK	Donated	6/4-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	0	73	No		03-Beverages
700472	POPMI SODA VARIETY PACK	Donated	3/8-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	0	188	No		03-Beverages
701246	PUMPKIN SPICE GROUND COFFEE	Donated	6/12 OZ POUCHES	DRY	5	\$0.80	0	307	No		03-Beverages
701311	PUMPKIN SPICE HOT COCOA MIX	Donated	6/8 CT CARTONS	DRY	4	\$0.64	0	127	No		03-Beverages
84041	SPARKLING MINERAL WATER	Donated	4/6 PACK/24 OZ PLAST...	DRY	29	\$4.64	0	91	No		03-Beverages
30900	SPARKLING WATER	Donated	24/12 OZ PKG	DRY	19	\$3.04	589	0	No		03-Beverages
33380	SPARKLING WATER	Donated	12/1 LITER BOTTLES	DRY	26	\$4.16	126	0	No		03-Beverages
701517	SPARKLING WATER	Donated	3/10 PK CANS	DRY	17	\$2.72	115	0	No		03-Beverages
701475	SPARKLING WATER - ASST FLVR	Donated	2/12-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	0	84	No		03-Beverages
94857	SPARKLING WATER - ASST FLVR	Donated	3/8-PACK/12 OZ CANS	DRY	20	\$3.20	217	267	No		03-Beverages



From Crisis to Control: The Retail Audit Transformation

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- **The Discovery**

- **The Situation:** January 2025. A manual review flagged a single potential duplicate receipt.
- **The Resistance:** Institutional "gut feeling" vs. Data-driven observation.
- **The Reality:** An Excel-based deep dive revealed **1,500 duplicate records** buried in the 2024 data.

- **The Cost of Silence**

- **Financial Integrity:** Finance had to reopen the previous fiscal year—a high-risk, high-stress procedure.
- **Operational Strain:** 5 employees, 1 full week of overtime, and hundreds of manual corrections.
- **The Lesson:** When errors are "saved" for the end of the year, they don't just add up; they multiply in complexity and cost.

- **The Modern Solution**

- **The Shift:** We moved the logic from a "once in a while Excel audit" to a **daily Power BI exception report**.
- **The Result:** Errors are caught and corrected within 24 hours of entry.
- **The ROI:** Zero year-end reopening, zero emergency overtime, and 100% confidence in our reporting to stakeholders. This helps us spend every day focusing on our future.

For every neighbor
in need.



Information is the source of learning. But data is the source of truth - and a little 'wizardry' ensures that truth is told in real-time.



The Magic is in the Data Thank You for Your Time

Let's continue the conversation. Grab a business card if you'd like to see these tools in action or explore how your data can drive a greater mission.

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