

AI Just Saved 50 Tons of Food

A Purdue algorithm reroutes surplus food to food pantries in real time

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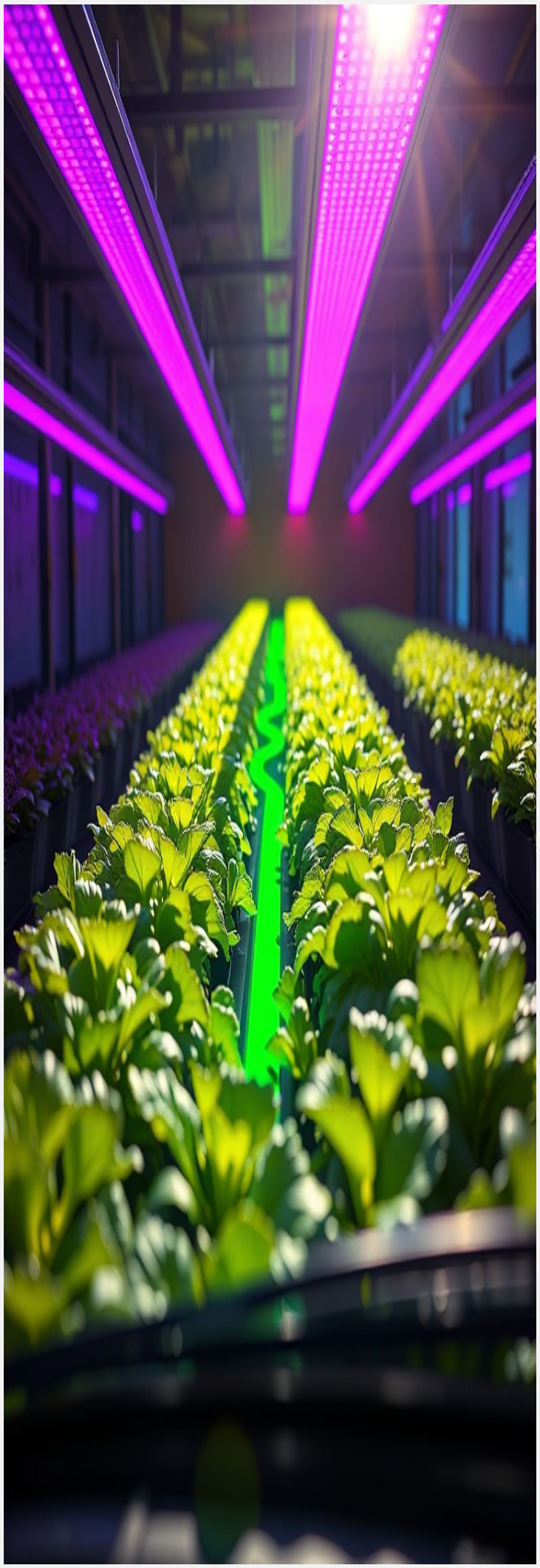
THE DATA

50 tons

Food diverted from landfills

Since implementation, Purdue's algorithm has rerouted excess food to food pantries.

This is not a projection — it’s a real-world outcome from a working AI system. The Food Drop algorithm, developed by Purdue computer science researcher Alex Psomas, dynamically reroutes truckloads of surplus food to nearby food pantries based on real-time availability, delivery windows, and food bank capacity. It turns waste into nutrition without adding labor or logistics overhead.



Source: Purdue University · Published November 9, 2026
https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/2026/Q4/purdue-computer-science-researcher-reroutes-truckloads-of-excess-food-from-landfills-to-food-pantries/

01

AI Solves the Last-Mile Food Crisis

The most persistent bottleneck in food redistribution isn’t production or transport — it’s the final decision point. Drivers with excess food often default to landfills because food banks are closed, under-resourced, or unable to accept spontaneous deliveries. Psomas’ system removes that friction by automating the match: it checks which pantries are open, what space they have, and what items they need — all in real time. The result?



02

AI Makes Ethical Choices Easy

The system doesn’t just optimize for distance or speed — it optimizes for impact. By balancing proximity with need, it ensures that food goes to where it can do the most good, not just the nearest location. This reflects a deeper shift in AI design: from pure efficiency to value-based allocation. The algorithm’s underlying math — based on the power of two choices — was revolutionary in computer science, but here it serves a moral imperative: making the right choice the easiest one.

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