

Big-rig stuffed with turkeys crashes; birds now headed to feed hungry this Thanksgiving

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SAN RAMON -- A big-rig stuffed with Thanksgiving turkeys took a spill on Interstate 680 Wednesday morning, dumping part of its 23,000-pound load of frozen birds, authorities said.

No one was seriously hurt in the crash, and most of the turkeys were no worse for the wear. They were to be sold at a wholesale marketplace but now are headed to East Bay food banks to feed poor people this Thanksgiving.

"It's quite a nice windfall heading to what is our busiest time of the year," said Michael Altfest, a spokesman for the Alameda County Community Food Bank. "In the spirit of sharing we decided to share half with Contra Costa and Solano food banks."

Food bank workers were still weighing the birds Wednesday afternoon at their headquarters near Oakland International Airport, but a county health inspector verified that much of the load was still edible, officials said. By eyeball estimates, the bounty was about 15,000 to 20,000 pounds, according to California Highway Patrol Officer Kevin Bartlett.

"Some of them spilled out of the truck and got diesel on them, got punctured, or dirty but they were able to salvage whatever was good," Bartlett said.

The big-rig crashed while taking the Alcosta Boulevard exit on southbound I-680 at about at 2:30 a.m., shutting down the off-ramp for hours, the CHP said.