

Thank you for helping us feed Arizona families.

These guidelines are designed for produce wholesalers and inventory control teams making donation decisions for product that did not sell or will not sell due to cosmetic or quality issues. We welcome produce that is not retail-perfect, **as long as it is still safe, fresh, and wholesome**. If you would not feel comfortable eating it yourself, please do not donate it.

## General Food Safety Requirements (All Produce)

### We accept produce with cosmetic defects, such as:

- Irregular shapes or sizes
- Minor scarring or superficial blemishes
- Slight color variation appropriate to the variety

### We cannot accept produce that shows signs of spoilage, including:

- Mold of any kind
- Slimy or mushy texture
- Leaking fluids
- Off, sour, or rotten odors
- Advanced decay or internal breakdown

### Packaging & Handling

- Produce must be packed in cases or bins suitable for safe transport.
- Reusable plastic containers (RPCs) cannot be accepted if they need to be returned.
- Please ensure packaging is clean, intact, and able to withstand handling and distribution.

### Storage & Temperature Control

- Keep produce stored under proper refrigeration or ambient conditions based on commodity requirements prior to donation.
- Temperature abuse significantly shortens shelf life and may make otherwise acceptable product unsafe to distribute.

**Earlier donations = less waste.** Waiting until the very end of shelf life often results in product becoming unusable before distribution.

### Important Notes

- **We distribute product as it is received.** We do not have the capacity to sort, trim, or re-grade donated produce.
- Produce that does not meet these guidelines must be discarded for food safety reasons.
- We do not have a way to sort produce, we distribute it in the condition it is received.
- We need the product to be 80% good and edible.
- No RPC will be returned.

## Why does it take 5 days?



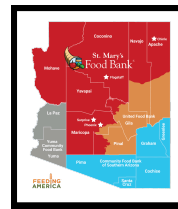
Day 1

Donations are received at St. Mary's Food Bank.



Day 2

Food is allocated to agencies and recipients for distribution.



Day 3

Food is sent to more than 600 partner agencies and distribution sites across 81K square miles of AZ.



Day 4










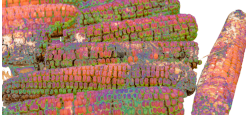






Food is distributed to hungry individuals and families.

➤ Visit these resources for more information:

Still Tasty: <https://www.StillTasty.com>

Food Keeper: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>

Bill Emerson Act: <https://www.congress.gov/104/crpt/hrpt661/CRPT-104hrpt661.pdf>

Produce Category	Acceptable		Not Accepted	
Apples		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm, crisp, free of rot and mold. The shape may not be perfect.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotten, over-ripe or moldy.</li> </ul>
Bananas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The earlier the donation the better. Don't wait till the last stage.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donate as early as possible. Late donation may end in the trash.</li> </ul>
Cabbage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm, retain original color (green or purple), less blemishes, cracks, and soft spots. Discolored outer layer is acceptable.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pungent smell, black spots and decolorations.</li> </ul>
Celery		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm, green and no smell.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discoloration, slimy, smells and loss firmness.</li> </ul>
Corn		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bright green husks, fresh and no smell.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moldy, rancid odor, black silk and mushy texture.</li> </ul>
Melons		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks heavy, firm without fluid oozing out.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft, black spot, mold, mushy and smell</li> </ul>
Potatoes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Firm, no mold, smell, or long sprout.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mold, bad odor, sprouting, and soft.</li> </ul>
Strawberries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bright, no mold, smell or slimy.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moldy, decaying and slimy.</li> </ul>

When in doubt, please call for inspection prior to donation:  
602 -343- 3133 or email: [tolorunfemi@stmarysfoodbank.org](mailto:tolorunfemi@stmarysfoodbank.org)