Apples

**Receiving and inspecting**
Apples should be firm and have smooth skin.

**Storing and handling**
Apples should be stored at 32-34°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; do not store below 29°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: No
- Odor-sensitive: Yes
- Produces ethylene: Yes
- Odor-producing: No

---

**Acceptable**

- Bruises
- Superficial spot

---

**Not acceptable**

- Blue mold
- Gray mold
- Alternaria rot
- Bull’s eye rot
**Apricots**

**Receiving and inspecting**  
Apricots should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

**Storing and handling**  
Apricots should be stored at 32-36°F, 85-95% humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene</th>
<th>Odor-sensitive</th>
<th>Produces ethylene</th>
<th>Odor-producing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acceptable**

- Sunburn or ripe fruit OK.
- Surface scarring, mechanical damage OK

**Not acceptable**

- Rot-mushy and discolored
- Split skin
**Bananas**

*Receiving and inspecting*
Avoid fruit with damaged skins.

*Storing and handling*
Bananas should be stored at 56-58°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. To ripen green bananas, store at 60-65°F. Bananas bruise easily; handle with care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene: Yes</th>
<th>Odor-sensitive: No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acceptable**

- A few bruises
- Slight speckling

**Not acceptable**

- Chill damage
- Overripe
Bell peppers

**Receiving and inspecting**
Bell peppers should be firm in texture.

**Storing and handling**
Bell peppers should be stored at 45-50°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Avoid storing below 42°F to avoid chill injury.

- **Sensitive to ethylene:** Yes
- **Odor-sensitive:** No
- **Prod"uces ethylene:** No
- **Odor-producing:** Yes

---

**Acceptable**

![Acceptable peppers](image1)

Variations in colors

Surface cracks, blemishes, slight puckering

---

**Not acceptable**

![Not acceptable peppers](image2)

Decay, heavy puckering or rotting

Mold
Berries (black, blue)

Receiving and inspecting
Berries should be firm and fairly dry. Berries do not ripen after harvest; discard any green berries.

Storing and handling
Blueberries and blackberries should be stored at 32-34°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 30°F, as blackberries are very susceptible to freeze damage. Blackberries in particular are very perishable, so handle with care and use soon after receiving.

Sensitive to ethylene: No  Odor-sensitive: No
Produces ethylene: No  Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Should not be green or underripe
Check that cartons are not oozing, slight moistness ok

Not acceptable

Mushy and discolored fruit
Mold
Broccoli

Receiving and inspecting
Broccoli should be firm and not limp. Some yellow is ok.

Storing and handling
Broccoli should be stored at 32°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Handle with care to avoid damage to bud clusters.

Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
Produces ethylene: No
Odor-sensitive: No
Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Some yellowing
Multi-colored varieties

Not acceptable

Bacterial soft rot on broccoli
Discoloration from rot (soft, dark spots)

Moldy
Brussels sprouts

*Receiving and inspecting*
Brussels sprouts should be firm, green, and have compact leaves.

*Storing and handling*
Plums should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

- **Sensitive to ethylene:** Yes
- **Odor-sensitive:** No
- **Produces ethylene:** No
- **Odor-producing:** No

**Acceptable**

Firm, green, some surface spots OK

**Not acceptable**

Yellowing due to age or ethylene exposure

Rot, large black spots
Cabbage

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cabbages should be fairly even colored and heavy for its size.

**Storing and handling**
Cabbages should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. 
Sensitive to ethylene: Yes  Odor-sensitive: Yes  
Produces ethylene: No  Odor-producing: No

---

**Acceptable**

Small spots on outer leaves

---

**Not acceptable**

Black rot  
White rot  
Downy mildew
Cantaloupe

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cantaloupes should be round with good netting or webbing over creamy-colored rind. They have a distinctive aroma and the blossom end will yield to gentle pressure when ripe.

**Storing and handling**
Cantaloupes should be stored at 36-41°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, do not store below 30°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: No
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: Yes
- Odor-producing: No

---

**Acceptable**

- Slight discoloration
- Variations in shape (e.g., oval)

---

**Not acceptable**

- Mold
- Decay
- Anthracnose
Carrots

**Receiving and inspecting**
Carrots should have firm, smooth exteriors (i.e., should snap when bent far enough). Color should be vibrant orange to orange-red.

**Storing and handling**
Carrots should be stored at 33-35°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 30°F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene</th>
<th>Odor-sensitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produces ethylene</th>
<th>Odor-producing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acceptable**

![Spots on outer surface](image1.jpg)

![Odd shapes](image2.jpg)

**Not acceptable**

![Rot](image3.jpg)

![Mold](image4.jpg)

![More rot](image5.jpg)
Cauliflower

**Receiving and inspecting**
Cauliflower should be firm in texture. Most are white, though there are other color varieties as well.

**Storing and handling**
Cauliflower should be stored at 32°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F to avoid freeze injury. Cauliflower is susceptible to bruising; handle with care and do not drop shipping containers on the floor.

*Sensitive to ethylene:* Yes  
*Odor-sensitive:* No

*Produce ethylene:* No  
*Odor-producing:* No

---

**Acceptable**

Light brown spots are fine as long as cauliflower is still firm

**Color variations**

---

**Not acceptable**

Rot – soft/mushy, discolored or moldy
Celery

*Receiving and inspecting*
Celery should be firm in texture and not too limp; ribs should snap crisply when bent. Color is green but some yellow is ok.

*Storing and handling*
Celery should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% humidity. Do not store below 30°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: No
- Odor-sensitive: Yes
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: No

---

**Acceptable**

Some yellow is ok

Some brown at base is ok

---

**Not acceptable**

Soft and slimy

Moldy
Corn, sweet

**Receiving and inspecting**
Sweet corn should be firm but kernels not hard and dry like feed corn. Color varies white to deep yellow. It should have fresh green husks with silk ends that are free of decay or worms.

**Storing and handling**
Corn should be stored at 34-38°F at 95% relative humidity. Do not store below 32°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: No
- Odor-sensitive: Yes
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: No

**Acceptable**

- Varied colors and odd shaped or missing kernels
- Dark silks can be ok (check kernels for moisture)

**Not acceptable**

- Corn worm
- Corn smut mold
Cucumbers

Receiving and inspecting
Cucumbers should be firm in texture. Color should be green (or mostly green).

Storing and handling
Cucumbers should be stored at 45-50°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 45°F.

Sensitive to ethylene: Yes  Odor-sensitive: No
Produces ethylene: No  Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Outer blemishes  Slight yellowing

Not acceptable

Rot-puckered and soft (especially common after chill injury)  Moldy
Grapefruit

Receiving and inspecting
Grapefruit should be firm and heavy for its size. Grapefruit may exhibit some regreening of the skin, but that does not affect the internal fruit quality.

Storing and handling
Optimal storage temperature varies by type. CA and AZ: 50-55°F; FL and TX: 50-60°F, 85-95% relative humidity.

Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
Produces ethylene: No

Odor-sensitive: No
Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Slight greenish skin

Some surface blemishes

Not acceptable

Rot

Mold
Lemons/Limes

Receiving and inspecting
Lemons and limes should be firm in texture.

Storing and handling
Lemons and limes should be stored at 45-48°F, 85-95% relative humidity.
- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Variations in colors are ok

Some surface blemishes are ok

Not acceptable

Diseases or rotting

Moldy
Lettuce

**Receiving and inspecting**

In general, avoid wilted and discolored leaves. For iceberg lettuce, some browning of the core end is natural and occurs from oxidation after lettuce has been harvested and trimmed.

**Storing and handling**

Lettuce should be stored at 34-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity. Keep lettuce away from drafts to avoid dehydration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Odor-sensitive:</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene:</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Odor-producing:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acceptable**

- Brown core
- Tear/slight bruising

**Not acceptable**

- Wilted leaves
- Translucent leaves (freeze damage)
- White mold
Mushrooms

Receiving and inspecting
Mushrooms should have a firm texture and be free of spots. Open veils are not a sign of poor quality, size and color do not affect quality. Some common types are portabella, cremini, white, and oyster.

Storing and handling
Mushrooms should be stored at 32-36°F, at 90-98% relative humidity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable

Irregular shapes or dirt

Not acceptable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sliminess or dark spots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shrivelled or dehydrated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nectarines

Receiving and inspecting
Nectarines should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

Storing and handling
Nectarines should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 31°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: Yes
- Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Slight pitting OK

Not acceptable

Shrveling

Rot, mold
Onions, bulb

**Receiving and inspecting**
Good quality onions should be firm and hard with short, tight necks and dry papery skin. Slightly loose outer skin is common and should not affect quality.

**Storing and handling**
Onions should be stored at 40-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. For extended storage (longer than 7 days), hold at 32-36°F. Keep out of direct sunlight.

- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: Yes
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: Yes

---

**Acceptable**

- Small sprouts
- Unusual shape

---

**Not acceptable**

- Bulb rot
- Bacterial soft rot
Oranges

Receiving and inspecting
Oranges should be firm, heavy for size, and have fine-textured skin. Skin color of a ripe orange ranges from orange to greenish-orange. Many oranges go through a regreening process on the tree in which the skin color begins to turn from orange back to green again. Regreening is a natural occurrence and does not affect the flavor quality of the orange.

Storing and handling
Optimal storage temperature varies by type. FL: 32-34°F; CA: 45-48°F; AZ & TX: 32-48°F, at 85-95% relative humidity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene: No</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable
Slightly green oranges

Not acceptable
Mold
Mold in navel
Stem end decay
More mold (green)
Peaches

**Receiving and inspecting**
Peaches should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

**Storing and handling**
Peaches should be stored at 32-36°F, 90-98% humidity. Do not store below 31°F.
- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: Yes
- Odor-producing: No

![Acceptable](image1)
- Skin discoloration (inking) OK
- Surface scarring OK

![Not acceptable](image2)
- Severe bruising
- Rot, mold
Pears

Receiving and inspecting
Pears should be at least fairly firm in texture.

Storing and handling
Pears should be stored at 32°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Do not store below 29°F to avoid freeze injury. Ripen at 60-70°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: No
- Produces ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: Yes
- Odor-producing: Yes

Acceptable

Variations in colors and green unripe

Some surface blemishes and slight bruising

Not acceptable

Heavy bruising and mushiness

Moldy
Plums

*Receiving and inspecting*
Plums should be firm to slightly soft (ripe), but not overripe (mushy).

*Storing and handling*
Plums should be stored at 32-36°F. Do not store below 31°F.
Sensitive to ethylene: **Yes**
Odor-sensitive: **No**
Produces ethylene: **Yes**
Odor-producing: **No**

Acceptable

Skin discoloration, surface scarring OK

Not acceptable

Shrivelng

Rot, mold
Potatoes

Receiving and inspecting
All potato varieties should be fairly clean, firm, and smooth. Avoid potatoes with wrinkled skins, soft dark spots, or green appearance.

Storing and handling
Potatoes should be stored at 45-50°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, do not store below 42°F.

Sensitive to ethylene: No
Produces ethylene: No

Odor-sensitive: Yes
Odor-producing: Yes

Acceptable

Small peepers (sprouts)
Odd lumps

Not acceptable

Moldy cut
Green potato (solanine)
Common scab

Late blight
Squash, hard-shell

Note: Hard-sell squash types are generally larger than soft-shell types and have hard, inedible rinds. Major types include acorn, buttercup, kabocha, and spaghetti.

Receiving and inspecting
Squash should be firm in texture.

Storing and handling
Hard-shell squash should be stored at 50-55°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 50°F.

- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: No

There are many varieties—very similar needs in terms of handling and storage

Acceptable

Discoloration, slight surface blemishes

Not acceptable

Start of decay

Moldy and rotting
Squash, soft-shell

Note: Soft-shell squash are also known as summer squash. Common varieties include zucchini, straightneck (yellow squash), crookneck, and pattypan.

Receiving and inspecting
Squash should be firm in texture with shiny, tender rinds.

Storing and handling
Soft-shell squash should be stored at 41-50°F at 85-95% relative humidity. To avoid chill injury, avoid storing below 41°F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene: Yes</th>
<th>Odor-sensitive: No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable

Irregular shapes

Discoloration, slight surface blemishes

Not acceptable

Blossom end rot

Mold
Strawberries

**Receiving and inspecting**
Strawberries should be firm in texture. Color should be red, though some lighter color is ok. Avoid strawberries that are green, or those that appear mushy, shriveled, or leaky.

**Storing and handling**
Strawberries should be stored at 32-34°F at 90-98% relative humidity. Berries should not be rinsed until just before they are used. Temperatures above 36°F will accelerate the growth of gray mold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene: No</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acceptable**

Red in color, though some lightness is fine

**Not acceptable**

- Rot-mushy and discolored
- Moldy

Odd shapes
Sweet potatoes

**Receiving and inspecting**
Good quality sweet potatoes should be firm with smooth skins.

**Storing and handling**
Sweet potatoes should be stored at 55-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Store in well-ventilated area.

- Sensitive to ethylene: Yes
- Odor-sensitive: No
- Produces ethylene: No
- Odor-producing: No

Acceptable

Odd shapes

Small sprouts

Not acceptable

Mold

Chill damage (soft spots)
Tomatoes

**Receiving and inspecting**

Good quality tomatoes should have bright, shiny skin and firm flesh.

**Storing and handling**

Ripe (nearly full red) tomatoes should be stored at 55-60°F; less ripe tomatoes should be stored at 62-68°F. 85-95% relative humidity is ideal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitive to ethylene: No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable

![Slight dent](image1)

![Greenish tint](image2)

Not acceptable

![Moldy bruise](image3)

![Black rot](image4)

![Late blight](image5)

![Mold and bruising](image6)
Watermelon

**Receiving and inspecting**
Watermelons should be firm. Watermelons do not ripen after harvesting; a ripe watermelon will produce a distinct hollow sound when thumped.

**Storing and handling**
Watermelons should be stored at 50-60°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; to prevent chill injury, avoid storing below 41°F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Produces ethylene: No</td>
<td>Odor-producing: No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Acceptable**

![White/yellow patch](image1)

![Small spots](image2)

---

**Not acceptable**

![Decay](image3)

![Anthracnose](image4)

![Fruit blotch](image5)
Appendix

Inspection form

Inbound Produce Inspection

Complete this form for any produce load arriving at the food bank. Inspect truck and product before unloading from truck. If product is damaged, infested or out of temp range, or truck is unacceptable, stop unloading truck and reject load.

Inspected by: ___________________________  Date: __________________

Donor: ___________________________  Time: __________________

Carrier: ___________________________

Receipt Ref Number: ___________________________

Product type and quantity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle/Trailer Condition</th>
<th>Yes/No/NA</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Product Condition</th>
<th>Yes/No/NA</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free of damage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free of unaccept. spoilage, odors, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean (free of mold, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free of apparent pest activity (insects, rodents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill of Lading (BOL) present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free of damage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal unbroken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Product count(s) match BOL and quantity ordered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Acceptable?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truck monitor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature recorder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product sample 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product sample 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product sample 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If product needs to be rejected:
1. Describe the reason for rejection on the back of this form.
2. Do not return any paperwork to the driver or let the truck leave.
3. If this is a Feeding America Choice System produce load, refer to their instructions for handling rejected produce loads.
4. The appropriate operations supervisor should contact the donor for handling instructions and note the resolution steps on the back of this form (including name, phone number of contact person and date/time of conversation).

If load is accepted:
1. Keep this completed form and copy of signed BOL with any other receiving documents.
2. Give this completed form, signed BOL, any other receiving documents and copy of the receipt to the appropriate operations supervisor.

Inspector signature: __________________________________________________________

Complete these sections if rejecting the load.

Reason(s) for rejecting the load:

Details of donor conversation and resolution steps to be taken
Contact name and phone number:

Date/Time of conversation:

Details:
Choice Bad Load Resolution Process

Scenario: A bad produce load arrives at your dock.

Solution: Truck must remain at your dock.

YOU MUST NOTIFY FEEDING AMERICA IMMEDIATELY TO ENSURE THESE LOADS ARE HANDLED PER FEDERAL PACA REGULATIONS AND TO ENSURE PROPER CREDIT. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Step 1: Call Feeding America immediately at 1.877.344.8070 (Shared Services) or 312-547-9404 (Mark Thomas, National Produce Program Operations Manager). Or email Feeding America at donatetofa@feedingamerica.org or mthomas@feedingamerica.org.

Step 2: Check to see if the refrigerated unit on the truck is running. Examine the condition of the trailer and make note of any holes in the trailer on either the side, bottom, back, or the roof area. A damaged trailer can lead to improper refrigeration and temperature controls.

Step 3: You will need to off-load a few of the pallets of product and do the following: (1) Pulp (take temperature readings) the product from different location points inside the trailer. (2) Photograph the product on the trailer, off the trailer, standing alone and cut open. Check if the product is infested with bugs. If so, take pictures of that too. Send photos via email to Feeding America immediately.

Step 4: Reload truck and close up trailer.

Step 5: Before returning bills or load manifest to the driver, you must note damage on the bills. Use terminology similar to this: LOAD REJECTED DUE TO DAMAGE. WAITING FOR DISPOSITION FROM THE BUYING OFFICE.

Step 6: Wait for Feeding America to call back and DO NOT SEND TRUCK AWAY. Additionally, if it is determined that the load is going to be dumped, we will need your assistance to find a local landfill that accepts bad produce to direct the driver to--this is key because not all landfills accept bad produce. If you have contact information for the local landfill readily available, that will speed up the process.

Step 7: Feeding America will advise and work with you to resolve this problem, but again, DO NOT SEND TRUCK AWAY until we have a joint resolution and a next-step action plan.

Things to remember:

In many cases these loads are U.S. Number 2 grade produce (grade 1 is available at the grocery store). Please keep in mind that there could be some discoloration, deformation, and exterior/surface blemishes that are common reasons for the grading difference. For example, an apple may have what is referred to in the produce industry as "limb or branch rub" meaning that the apple was rubbed by blowing branches during a certain point in their development leaving a bark-like section due to the fruit’s continued growth.
and healing process—essentially creating a “scab.” The interior fruit quality is not poor, but this surface blemish causes the fruit to be effectively “unmarketable” to the commercial fresh market. Even though it may lack the cosmetically pristine look on the outside, it does not mean that it is not good quality in the inside. In addition, grade 2 produce might have 1 to 2 percent decay (this is common industry standard approval guidelines).

Any further questions or comments about this procedure should be referred to Mark Thomas, Produce Program Operations Manager, by email at mthomas@feedingamerica.org or by phone at 312.641.6606. Your cooperation with these rare cases of bad produce arrival is greatly appreciated.
Produce labeling form instructions

The following templates can be used to label produce while it is at the food bank, after receiving and before it is loaded for distribution. It is meant to help capture relevant handling information (like type, quantity, expiration date) and make it easy to identify at a glance if it has been sorted or not. Using this labeling system, volunteers and staff immediately know what needs to be sorted and in what priority (yellow tags by date), and staff know what is available to send out to agencies (green by date).

Using the yellow side indicates that the produce has not yet been sorted, while the green side indicates that it has been sorted already.

Instructions for use:

1. Print the following two templates on one sheet of paper, yellow on one side and green on the other.
2. Laminate the sheet.
3. After produce is received, use dry erase marker to fill out the yellow side with relevant information. Date is especially important (expiration date for a FEFO inventory management system, arrival date for a FIFO system).
4. Use a binder clip to fasten the filled-out sheet to an item on the pallet with the yellow side facing out.
5. After the produce is sorted, flip the tag around and copy the info to the green side. Clip to pallet.
6. Remove before the produce is loaded and reuse as needed.
Produce labeling form (FRONT, before volunteer sort)

Expiration date:__________________________

Arrival date:____________________________

Product:________________________________

Quantity:_______________________________
Produce labeling form (BACK, after volunteer sort)

Expiration date:______________________________

Sort date:________________________________

Product:___________________________________

Quantity:_________________________________
Produce lifespan estimation method (from Frank Bonner, formerly at St. Mary’s Food Bank in Phoenix, AZ)

**Product lifespan estimation:**

The inspection process is conducted by assessing Condition and Temperature. You will need to determine the percentage of decay or damage on each carton sampled (using best judgment practice) and record that percentage along with general description of findings. Each percentage will be totaled and an overall percentage will be determined.

The same basic process will be used to determine percentages on temperatures. Each overall percentage is equal to one point. Example: 20% = 20 points. Add the two numbers together to obtain your overall score.

*Example of Inspection #1:* 10 pallets of cantaloupes come into the food bank; during your inspection you notice the following. All cartons are straight and show no damage externally, but about 20% of the cantaloupes you inspected have minimal or some sunken places and appear sound. There is no sign of mold or decay visible on the melons. When you cut (generally 1 to 3 melons per pallet if suspect) a few of the melons showed some slight translucent discoloration in the flesh near or under the external sunken places. The pulp temperatures (taken from the sample melons) are reading 40 degrees consistently.

Condition is good no visible decay, sunken area’s 20%........... score = 20

Temperature is only 4 degrees above standards................ score = 4

**Total score = 24**

**Result:** Product recommended to be distributed within 4 days for maximum usage

*Example of Inspection #2:* 10 pallets of cantaloupes come into the food bank; during your inspection you notice the following. Most cartons are broken and show damage externally; about 60% of the cantaloupes you inspected have multiple sunken places and some mold is present sporadically through the carton. There are also consistent signs of decay visible on the vine end (belly button). When you cut (generally 1 to 3 melons per pallet if suspect) a sample of the melons, there is discoloration in the flesh near or under the external sunken places. The pulp temperatures (taken from the sample melons) are reading 73 degrees consistently.

Condition is poor, visible decay, sunken area’s 60%........... score = 60

Temperature is 35 degrees above standards................... score = 35

**Total score = 95**

**Result:** Product should be disposed of, and not distributed.
Banana Ripening Guide for
Suggested Guide For

Notes:
- Keep bananas away from fruit trees.
- Use a vinegar to prevent ripening.
- Optimal ripening temperature is 68°F.
- Ripening rate is faster at higher temperatures.
- Bananas should be stored at room temperature.

Days:
- Day 0: Green, firm.
- Day 1: Yellowing.
- Day 2: Full yellow.
- Day 3: Spotting.
- Day 4: Overripe.
- Day 5: Brown.
- Day 6: dusk.
- Day 7: Old.
- Day 8: Overripe.

Pulp Temperatures:
- Day 0: 60°F
- Day 1: 62°F
- Day 2: 64°F
- Day 3: 66°F
- Day 4: 68°F
- Day 5: 70°F
- Day 6: 72°F
- Day 7: 74°F
- Day 8: 76°F