**COVID-19 FAQ FOR GROCERY STORES**

**RECEIVING AND FOOD PACKAGING**

**CAN COVID-19 BE SPREAD THROUGH FOOD?**

- Transmission of COVID-19 through food, food packages, or even food handlers has not been identified as a risk factor for this illness.
- Evidence suggests it may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces. CDC recommends cleaning followed by disinfection as a best practice for prevention of COVID-19.

**IS IT SAFE TO ACCEPT FOOD FROM COUNTRIES OR STATES IMPACTED BY COVID-19?**

- With decades of data related to influenza, another similar respiratory virus, there is no data to indicate that food distribution channels like grocery stores or distribution warehouses are transmission nodes.
- There is no history of a public health authority advising individuals to stop shopping for food at certain stores due to the risk of respiratory virus transmission.
- Currently, there is no data to suggest that accepting food from an area experiencing this illness is a risk factor for disease spread.

**SHOULD FOOD PACKAGES BE CLEANED BEFORE THEY ARE USED?**

- Continue routine operating procedures in evaluating the integrity of packaging as well as for any soil already in place.
- Follow risk management practices including hand hygiene regimens of washing coupled with sanitizing (using an alcohol-based sanitizer, per CDC’s guidance).

**IF WE WANT TO CLEAN AND DISINFECT, WHAT SHOULD BE USED?**

- CDC advises using compounds on the list of EPA recommended disinfectants which can be found at [go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19](go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19) (Note: This list is based on current data, but compounds are not yet validated for COVID-19.)
- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher than for everyday sanitation: five tablespoons bleach per gallon of water.


Contact: Nicole Arnold, PhD

arnoldni19@ecu.edu 252-744-1026

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