COVID-19 FAQ FOR FOOD BANKS
RECEIVING FOOD AND CLEANING

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.
- Currently, there is no data to suggest that accepting food from an area impacted by COVID-19 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 are already in place.
- Follow risk management practices including hand hygiene regimens of handwashing followed by hand sanitizer according to CDC guidelines.

HOW SHOULD CLEANING AND DISINFECTION BE HANDLED?
- Volunteers and staff should wash hands and use hand sanitizer regularly.
- Disinfect surfaces like railings, doorknobs, tables, baskets, etc on a regular basis.
- Use non-porous plastic tables that can be easily disinfected whenever possible.
- CDC is advising use of disinfectants on the EPA list, which can be found at: go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19. (Note: this list is based on current data, but compounds have not been validated for COVID-19)
- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation:
  - 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water

Stay Informed: ext.vt.edu/covid-19updates