



TRAINING TO-GO: Produce Quality Assurance

The Produce Quality Assurance plan includes processes and procedures put in place by CFB to ensure that CFB clients only receive acceptable, safe-to-eat produce.

Critical Limits

All members of the produce supply chain must differentiate acceptable from unacceptable produce. Acceptability is based on food safety and the presence of mold, decomposition, pests, or other contamination.

- Critical limits are the indicators used to determine if produce is acceptable or unacceptable to distribute to clients.
 - **30% Rule:** No more than 30% of produce can be unacceptable for it to be passed on to the next step, and the unacceptable produce must be able to be sorted out without contaminating the rest of the produce.
 - **Temperature:** CFB staff must monitor produce temperature according to AIB and other safety guidelines.
- **Example:** Mold found on produce is a critical limit that indicates that the produce is unacceptable to distribute.

Monitoring

Monitoring includes steps taken at each point in the produce distribution process to catch unacceptable produce before it moves to the next step. Two methods of monitoring are:

- **3 x 3 x 3 Check:** When inspecting produce, always:
 - Use the **3 Senses** (sight, smell, touch)
 - Check **3 Locations** (front, middle, back)
 - Check **3 Heights** (top, middle, bottom)
- **FEFO (First Expired, First Out):** Check expiration dates of acceptable produce and distribute produce in order of which expiration date is closest.

Produce Quality Takes All of Us

Produce quality can't be done by one team or department alone. Everyone involved in the produce journey plays a vital role in ensuring clients only receive acceptable produce.

There are many resources that can help with evaluating produce quality, including visual aids:

- Acceptable vs Unacceptable Produce Cards
- 3 x 3 x 3 Posters
- Always ask your supervisor and the rest of your team for assistance when needed.

Visit <https://www.communityfoodbank.org/produce-quality-assurance-program/> for visual aids and resources related to Produce Quality Assurance. Partners can request training and posters by emailing CFB program staff.

