



FOOD DONATION MYTHS, BUSTED

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS NEED NOT PREVENT YOU FROM DONATING FOOD

Any size or type of food business can start a donation program – grocery, processing, foodservice, agriculture, or distribution. Community organizations distribute food as groceries or through meal programs and may even re-work, re-process, or re-package foods. Others use food as an educational, skill-building, or capacity building tool.

MYTHS ABOUT DONATING FOOD

MYTH	Nutrition doesn't matter
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people get much of their food from charitable sources. • Food recipients may be children, elderly, or have special dietary needs. • Many community food programs focus on providing healthy food (p.15).
MYTH	Discontinued, leftover seasonal/promo products, or cancelled orders
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organizations accept foods at or past the best before date (BBD). • Ask about policies and carefully assess items for spoilage (p.31; Date Stamps & Labels Fact Sheet).
MYTH	Donating food will harm your brand's reputation
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe food handling and attention to quality will protect your brand and people's health. • You can re-label products or donate food for use in cooking or processing to avoid revealing your brand identity (p.18).
MYTH	Donating food is a good way to deal with oversupply
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention is the first step in minimizing food waste (NZWC Food Loss and Waste Strategy). • When excess production or oversupply can't be avoided, safe and nutritious food should be made available to people who need it.
MYTH	Public health regulations don't apply to donated food
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety guidelines and regulations should be followed for all food (p.12; CL). • Contact public health to learn more and always follow safe food handling practices.
MYTH	If food can't be donated, it goes in the garbage
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If food doesn't meet safety, nutrition, or other quality requirements for human consumption, it can be turned into animal feed, biofuels, or compost (p.32). • Donation is one tool to prevent wasted food, but never donate food that is no longer safe and fresh or that is otherwise inedible (p.6).

MYTHS ABOUT RECIPIENTS OF DONATED FOOD

MYTH	Recipients are likely to sue if there is a problem with the food
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each province or territory has a law to protect businesses that donate food in good faith if they pay due diligence to food quality and safety (p.17). • There is no known case of anyone in Canada being sued over donated food (CL).
MYTH	People just want food - Quantity is more important than quality
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community food programs do more than just fill bellies. Like anyone, food recipients have nutritional needs and may have dietary restrictions. • Non-profit organizations incur the same costs as businesses to dispose of unused food and packaging waste.
MYTH	Organizations need donations, so they will pick up food whenever you call
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organizations have limited access to delivery trucks - particularly refrigerated trucks - and food storage facilities. They also need to schedule volunteers or staff to pick up and receive donations (p.10).
MYTH	People receiving donations should be happy with whatever they can get
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many community food programs offer choices so that clients can select foods they are able to store, prepare, and eat (p.15). • Donate with dignity - never donate food you wouldn't eat yourself.
MYTH	Food recipients don't have jobs
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people who rely on donated food are employed. Children, single parents, students, recent immigrants, and seniors are more at risk of food insecurity.
MYTH	Organizations will suffer if businesses reduce surplus and stop donating food
TRUTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community food programs that rely less on donated foods can use financial donations to buy exactly what they need, often at reduced cost. • This means more time to focus on programs rather than trying to use what comes their way.