

The Post Rock Connection
Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column
Month of November 2021
By Ashley Svaty, Nutrition, Food Safety, and Health Agent

Donating to Food Banks and Pantries

The United States has an abundance of food, yet many people still suffer from food insecurity and use food assistance such as food pantries and soup kitchens. It is estimated that 30 to 40 percent of the U.S. food supply is wasted. Donations of safe and healthy food help provide nourishment to hungry families and also reduce food waste. When organizing or contributing to a non-perishable food drive, keep these tips in mind to enhance the health of your local community.

Before you donate, ask the food bank or pantry what is needed. They will know what their clients enjoy and what is needed at the time. Cash donations are greatly appreciated and might allow for discounted bulk purchases.

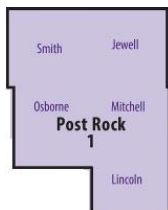
Donate nutritious non-perishable food that fits into the MyPlate model. Healthy canned fruit and vegetable options include fruit packed in 100% juice and vegetables canned with no salt added. Choose lean protein such as canned or dried beans, canned tuna or salmon, canned chicken, nuts or nut butters. Choose whole grains when donating pasta, crackers, oats, rice (brown) and granola bars. Non-perishable dairy items include nonfat milk, evaporated milk, and shelf-stable (UHT) milk. If you are wondering if your local site accepts fresh produce, contact them to confirm before donating.

Don't donate repackaged, expired or damaged food. Look at expiration dates and don't donate food that is past its "best by", "use by" or "sell by" dates. Only donate food that is in its original packages with the label intact. Don't donate home-canned or home-prepared foods. Because of the risk of botulism in improperly

canned foods and the large variation in the level of safety of the methods used by home canners, food banks and pantries should not accept home-canned items.

If you are organizing a food drive this holiday season, it's important to encourage people to donate safe and healthy foods that the food bank or pantry needs. Potential donors should be provided a list of suggested nutritious and safe items that suit those needs.

Ashley may be contacted at asvaty@ksu.edu or by calling the office in Lincoln 524-4432, Beloit 738-3597, Mankato 378-3174, Osborne 346-2521, or Smith Center 282-6823. Like "Post Rock Extension" on Facebook and follow us on twitter and Instagram. Our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu.



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