

# COVID-19 Pandemic Prompts FDA to Offer Guidance on Diverting Human Food to Animal Food Use

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The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shift in the supply of food and has left both restaurants and restaurant suppliers looking for means to repurpose their food inventory. Where food cannot be distributed for human consumption because of supply-chain or food quality issues, but otherwise remains safe for consumption by animals, the food should be repurposed and distributed as animal food.

In order to encourage and facilitate the safe distribution of food to animals, the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine has issued a [Fact Sheet](#) to guide restaurants and other suppliers of food.

- Food can be sent to animal food manufacturers or their suppliers or directly to farmers or animal caretakers.
- Animal specific toxicities must be accounted for. For example, the artificial sweetener xylitol is safe for humans, but can be toxic to dogs, although it may be safe for other species.
- If the food is adulterated or contaminated, a [diversion](#) or reconditioning request must be submitted.
- Caution is required for food containing meat. Several diseases can be spread through uncooked meat. In addition, any meat products fed to swine must comply with the [Swine Health Protection Act \(SHPA\)](#) and most mammalian protein is prohibited as food for ruminants, see [21 CFR 589.2000](#).
- While animal food does not have to meet the requirements of the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), it must have a statement of identity and list of ingredients.
- State governments may also impose [further regulation](#).

This Fact Sheet follows the FDA's [relaxation](#) of nutrition labeling requirements for human foods not originally intended for retail sale and signals a clear intent to aid the food industry in minimizing

disruption and loss of food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Keller and Heckman will continue to monitor and report on COVID-19 related developments that impact the food industry.

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