Inspect all stages of the food supply chain. Flood-water can affect all stages of the food chain from crops in fields and water sources to food processing facilities, restaurants and markets. Make sure to inspect them all.

Assess the type and extent of contamination and damage to food items that have been in contact with flood-water. Pay special attention to signs that flood-water has mixed with raw sewage, oil or other chemical agents, or been exposed to dead animals. Clearly label contaminated food items as unsafe for human consumption.

Check the condition of donated food. Reject food unfit for human consumption.

Inform food vendors and suppliers about food safety.

Advise on what food may be used or sold and what needs to be discarded. Undamaged food in metal cans without leaks or bulges can be kept. However, if food smells bad or looks different (for example, slimy or mouldy), it is not safe to consume. This can include:

- Meat, fruits, vegetables and rice that have been in contact with flood-water.
- Food stored in permeable packaging such as cardboard, plastic wrap, foil, screw-topped jars or bottles that have been in contact with flood-water, even if the contents seem dry.
- Items that cannot be effectively cleaned such as cardboard juice or milk boxes and food containers with screw tops, snap lids, pull tops or crimped caps.

Discard contaminated food to prevent further contamination. Ensure that contaminated food is discarded or made inaccessible to the public. Document the location of disposed food and keep a record of it.

Emphasize that food and drinking water may be scarce and should not be unnecessarily discarded. Salvaged food should be cleaned and sanitized and labelled appropriately before sale.

For more information, please visit The Five Keys to Safer Food Programme recommended by the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-safe-food-handling
Promote sanitation of salvaged food, food preparation facilities and cookware.

- Purify water for drinking and food preparation. Boil or use purifying tablets or a solution of four drops of unscented household bleach with no additives (5% hydrochloric acid) per litre of water. Wait at least 30 minutes before using or serving boiled or purified water.

- Clean recovered food, including undamaged and unopened canned and bottled goods, with sterilized or chlorinated water. Sanitize food preparation facilities and cookware.

- Use strainers to collect food scraps and leftovers, which could be the source of contamination. Discard waste several times a day.

Instruct food suppliers and vendors to keep safe food protected.

All food and drinks must be stored in cool and dry places, away from sources of contamination such as flood-water, moisture and direct sunlight.

Inform the public about good food hygiene practices.

Inform food handlers and consumers about the five keys to safer food:

1. Keep clean
2. Separate raw and cooked food
3. Cook thoroughly
4. Keep food at safe temperatures
5. Use safe water and raw ingredients

Advise mothers to maintain exclusive breastfeeding of infants under six months. Do not give them water or other fluids which may contain deadly bacteria that could infect them.

For more information, please visit The Five Keys to Safer Food Programme recommended by the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/activities/promoting-safe-food-handling