



# Kentucky Kitchens

## Holiday Help for the Hungry

**A**s the holidays approach each year, our thoughts often turn to those in need. Holiday food drives are a traditional method for helping local food charities fill their pantries. The holidays are a good time to think about food security in our Kentucky communities. *How much do you know about hunger in your community?*

### WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

- ▶ *Food insecurity* means that a household has limited or uncertain access to enough safe, nutritious food for an active and healthy life. These households have reduced quality and variety in meals and may have irregular food intake.
- ▶ Hunger is the most severe level of food insecurity. It means insufficient or irregular food intake, resulting in periods of hunger, characterized by painful sensations resulting from lack of food.
- ▶ While 9.7% United States households are food insecure, only 8.4% Kentucky households are food insecure.
- ▶ Kentucky is ranked 33 among the states regarding food insecurity.

Having assured access to enough food at all times to lead an active, healthy life would define people who are *food secure*. There are three key elements that characterize food security:

- ▶ physical and economic access to food by individuals and households;
- ▶ sufficient availability of food; and
- ▶ full utilization of food in a balanced, safe, and sanitary manner.

**Gleaning** programs can help your community tackle the hunger issue that exists in the U.S. Gleaning consists of collecting surplus

produce from farmers or shippers and then allocating it through food banks or community-based organizations to those who need food.

**Food recovery** is the donation of unspoiled perishable food to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. Local and national programs frequently offer free pick-up and provide reusable containers to donors. To encourage food donations, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have enacted *Good Samaritan* laws that protect from liability those donors who take adequate measures to prevent food spoilage or contamination.

### WHAT IS THE USDA FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE?

The goals of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) *Food Security Initiative* are to help communities build stronger local food systems, reduce hunger and food insecurity, improve nutrition, and advance low-income families from poverty to self-sufficiency.

USDA is targeting the improvement of community food production and marketing by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally. Targeted goals include:

- ❶ Creating new—and enhancing existing—**local infrastructures** to reduce hunger and food insecurity.

- ② Increasing **economic and job security** by helping low-income people obtain living wage jobs and attain self-sufficiency.
- ③ Strengthening the **federal nutrition assistance safety net** by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as food stamps, school meals, and summer feeding.
- ④ Bolstering **supplemental food provided by nonprofit groups** by aiding food recovery, gleaning, and food donation programs.
- ⑤ Improving community **food production and marketing** by aiding projects that grow, process, and distribute food locally.

- ⑥ Boosting **education and awareness** by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety, and food security.
- ⑦ Improving **research, monitoring, and evaluation** efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

To halt hunger in your hometown, learn about your local food programs. Are there emergency food sources available? Are there holiday food drives? What government programs are offered? Can charitable and civic organizations in your community help? What role does the faith community play?



## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

*Begin by examining your community's food needs by thinking about the following:*

- ▶ Does your community or county have a farmer's market?
- ▶ Does your community have free or reduced fare transportation available to the farmer's market for limited resource families or senior citizens?
- ▶ Do you have a community garden that helps neighborhoods grow their own food?
- ▶ Does your school system offer a summer feeding program for children's meals?
- ▶ Does your school system offer a school breakfast program?
- ▶ Are there food recovery and gleaning projects that guarantee safe, wholesome excess food goes to feed the hungry?



Economic health is important to individual, family, and community health. As many families move off assistance and into the workforce, low wages and unstable employment leave many of them food-insecure. Work to strengthen your local food system by encouraging retailers to carry locally or Kentucky-produced foods.

To learn more about your food system, read *Food & Agriculture: Consumer Trends and Opportunities—An Overview* from your Extension office or on the web at

<<http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/AgriculturalEconomics/extpubs.html>>

## The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) serves free nutritious meals to any child



18 years of age or younger who comes to an approved site during summer months when the program is in session. Often, local school districts provide this service during summer

months in conjunction with school-sponsored activities.

The SFSP is sponsored by public and private nonprofit organizations who receive federal reimbursement for expenses related to feeding children during the summer.

To determine if an organization in your area is participating in the Summer Food Service Program, go to this website:

<http://www.kde.state.ky.us/odss/nutrition/summer/sponlist.htm>

Or, contact your local schools.

To learn more about the USDA Food Security Initiative in Kentucky, contact:

Community Food Security Liaisons ~

Bonnie Tanner/Pam Sigler

University of Kentucky CES

206 Scovell Hall

Lexington, KY 40546-0064

859-257-3887 [btanner@ca.uky.edu](mailto:btanner@ca.uky.edu)

859-257-3888 [psigler@ca.uky.edu](mailto:psigler@ca.uky.edu)

Field Gleaning/Food Recovery

Coordinator ~

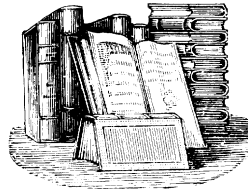
Troy Myers

Kentucky State FSA Office

771 Corporate Drive, Suite 100

Lexington, KY 40503-5478

859-224-7646



## References

1) *American Small Farm, Livelihood, Lifestyle, Tradition-Farming and Eating Are Local Activities*. Vol. 8, No. 5. May 1999.

2) USDA Food Security Initiative. 1999 (on-line) [http://www.reeusda.gov/food\\_security/foodshp.htm](http://www.reeusda.gov/food_security/foodshp.htm)

3) *The Bottom Line: Making Ends Meet in Rural Kentucky*. Zimmerman, Julie N. and Garkovich, Lori. Rural and Economic Development Programs, Rural Sociology, University of Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service. January 1998.

## Resources

America's Second Harvest  
116 S. Michigan Avenue #4  
Chicago, IL 60603

312-263-2303 <http://www.secondharvest.org>

America's Second Harvest is the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization. They distribute food to hungry Americans through a network of nearly 200 food banks.

Community Food Security Coalition

P.O. Box 209

Venice, CA 90294 <http://www.foodsecurity.org>

The Community Food Security Coalition believes in the need to protect and promote local family-based agriculture. They help develop farmers' markets and community supported agriculture in low-income communities.

## ABOUT THE KENTUCKY KITCHENS PROGRAM

*Kentucky Kitchens* is a program of the Family Life Committee of the Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association (KEHA). To learn more about the program, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service Office and ask for these fact sheets:

- ▶ *Kentucky Kitchens-Sharing Your Skills* (FN-JLT.133)
- ▶ *Kentucky Kitchen Kits* (FN-JLT.134)

**Janet Tietyen, Ph.D., R.D.,**  
**Extension Food & Nutrition Specialist and**  
**Lindsay Dowell, UK Dietetics Student**

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