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USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum

A Perspective on Food Security in the United States

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Today's Objectives

- ❑ Provide an overview of the extent of food insecurity in the United States
- ❑ Describe the Federal response to food insecurity and hunger in America

Data Source

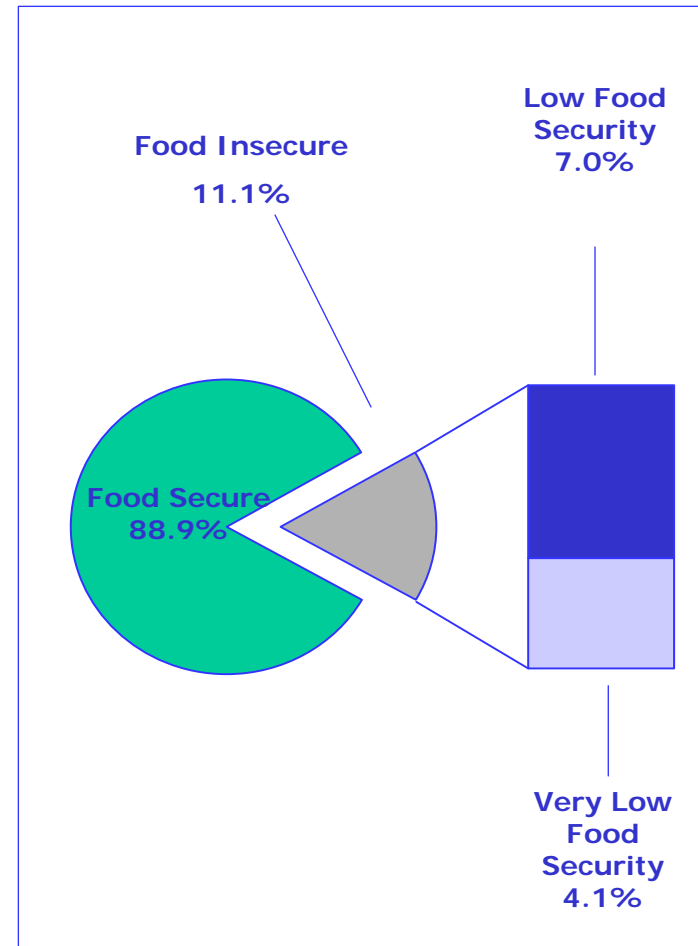
- ❑ **USDA has monitored the food security of the Nation since 1995.**
- ❑ **Most recent statistics based on the December 2007 Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey.**
- ❑ **Annual survey of about 45,000 households conducted by the Census Bureau.**
- ❑ **Households are classified based on the number of affirmative responses to 18 items known to characterize difficulty meeting basic food needs.**

Definitions

- ❑ Food Secure: All household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.
- ❑ Food Insecure: Household is uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet basic needs for all household members at some time during the year because they can not afford enough food.
- ❑ Very Low Food Security: Households in which the food intake of some household members is reduced and normal eating patterns disrupted because the household cannot afford enough food.

Most American Households Food Secure in 2007

- ❑ 104.1 million households (88.9%) were food secure throughout the year
- ❑ 13.0 million households (11.1%) were food insecure at some time during the year
- ❑ 4.7 million households (4.1%) experienced very low food security at some time during the year

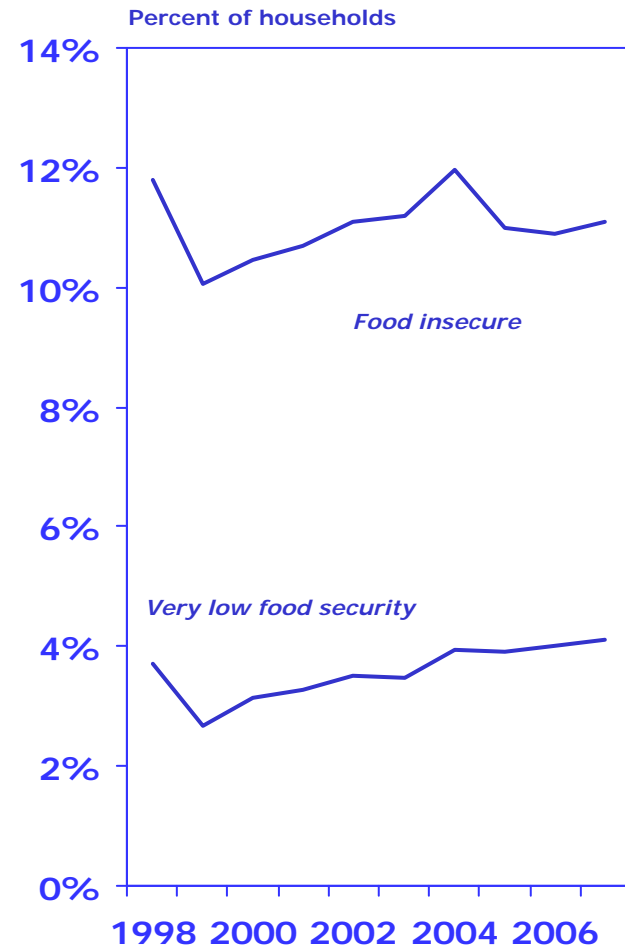


Children Often Protected From Hunger

- ❑ Households with children were nearly twice as likely as those without children to report food insecurity (15.8 vs. 8.7 percent).
- ❑ But in most households, children were protected from substantial reductions in food intake.
- ❑ Children experienced very low food security in 323,000 households (0.8 percent of households with children).

Little Change from 2005 to 2007

- ❑ Prevalence of food insecurity up slightly from 11.0 percent to 11.1 percent
- ❑ Prevalence of very low food security up slightly from 3.9 percent to 4.1 percent
- ❑ Prevalence of very low food security among children up from 0.7 percent to 0.8 percent



Food Insecurity Varies Among Household Types

Prevalence Lower Than Average

- Adults with no children (8.7%)
- Elderly (6.5%)

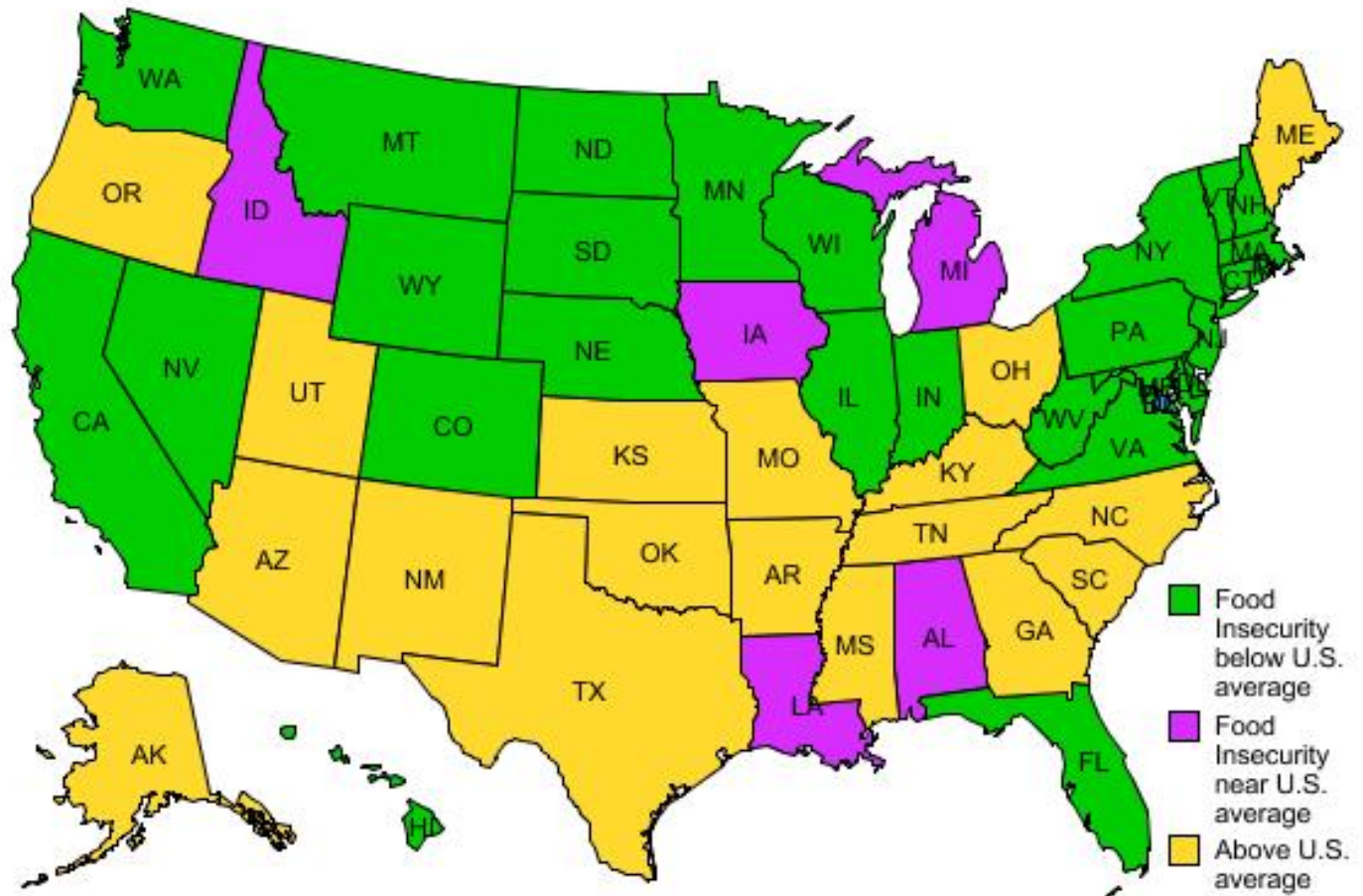
Prevalence Higher Than Average

- Income below poverty (37.7%)
- Single women with children (30.2%)
- Black (22.2%) or Hispanic (20.1%)

- Higher in South than in Northeast, with Midwest and West in between

Food Insecurity Varies by State

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2005-2007



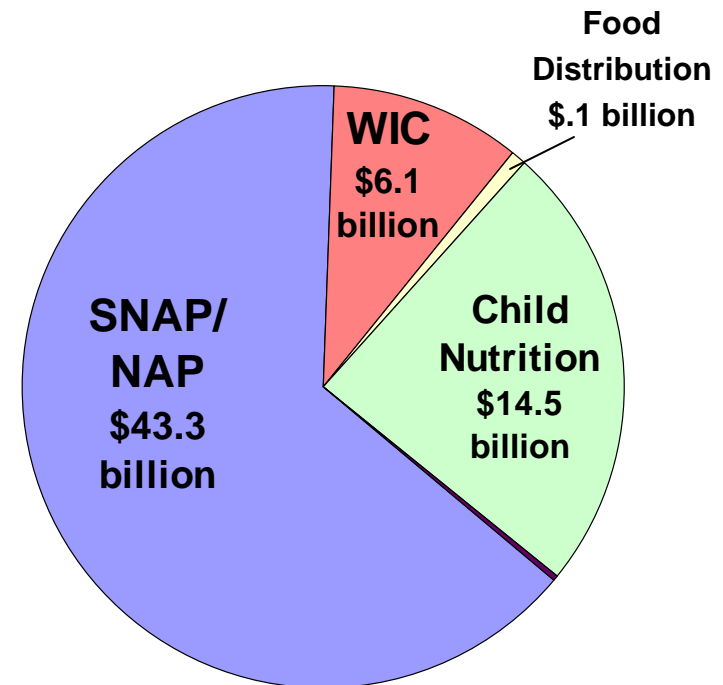
Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.

Food and Nutrition Service Mission

- ❑ To increase food security and reduce hunger
- ❑ in partnership with cooperating organizations
- ❑ by providing children and low-income people access to food, healthy diets and nutrition education
- ❑ in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.

America's Response to Hunger and Poor Nutrition

- ❑ 15 Federal nutrition assistance programs
- ❑ Serves more than 1 in 5 Americans over the course of a year
- ❑ Annual budget >\$60 billion in FY 2008; >\$70 billion in FY 2009

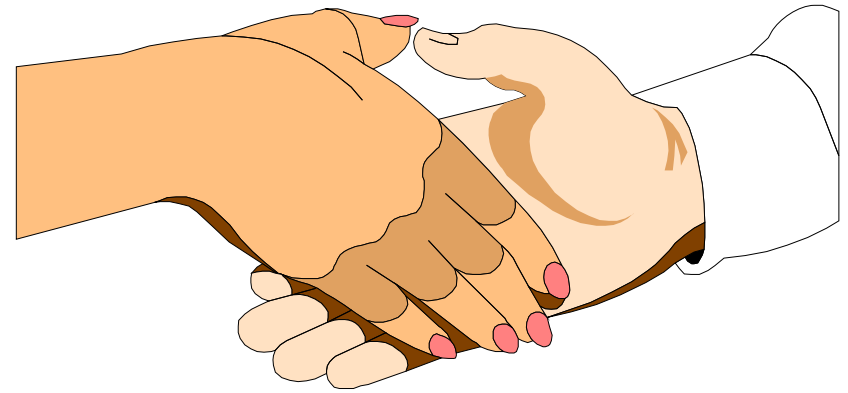


Major Nutrition Assistance Programs

- ❑ **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** serves more than 31 million people; benefits redeemed electronically in 165,000 food stores nationwide
- ❑ **The Child Nutrition Programs** provide food to 32 million children at schools, child care centers, and other away-from-home settings
- ❑ **WIC** meets the special nutrition and health needs of nearly 9 million at-risk pregnant women, infants, and young children
- ❑ **The Food Distribution Programs** deliver food to those in need through food packages for households or foods provided to food banks and congregate feeding programs

Nutrition Assistance Programs Operate Through Partnerships

- ❑ FNS agrees to provide funding to cover benefit costs and most administrative expenses
- ❑ State/local agencies agree to operate programs effectively and according to Federal standards



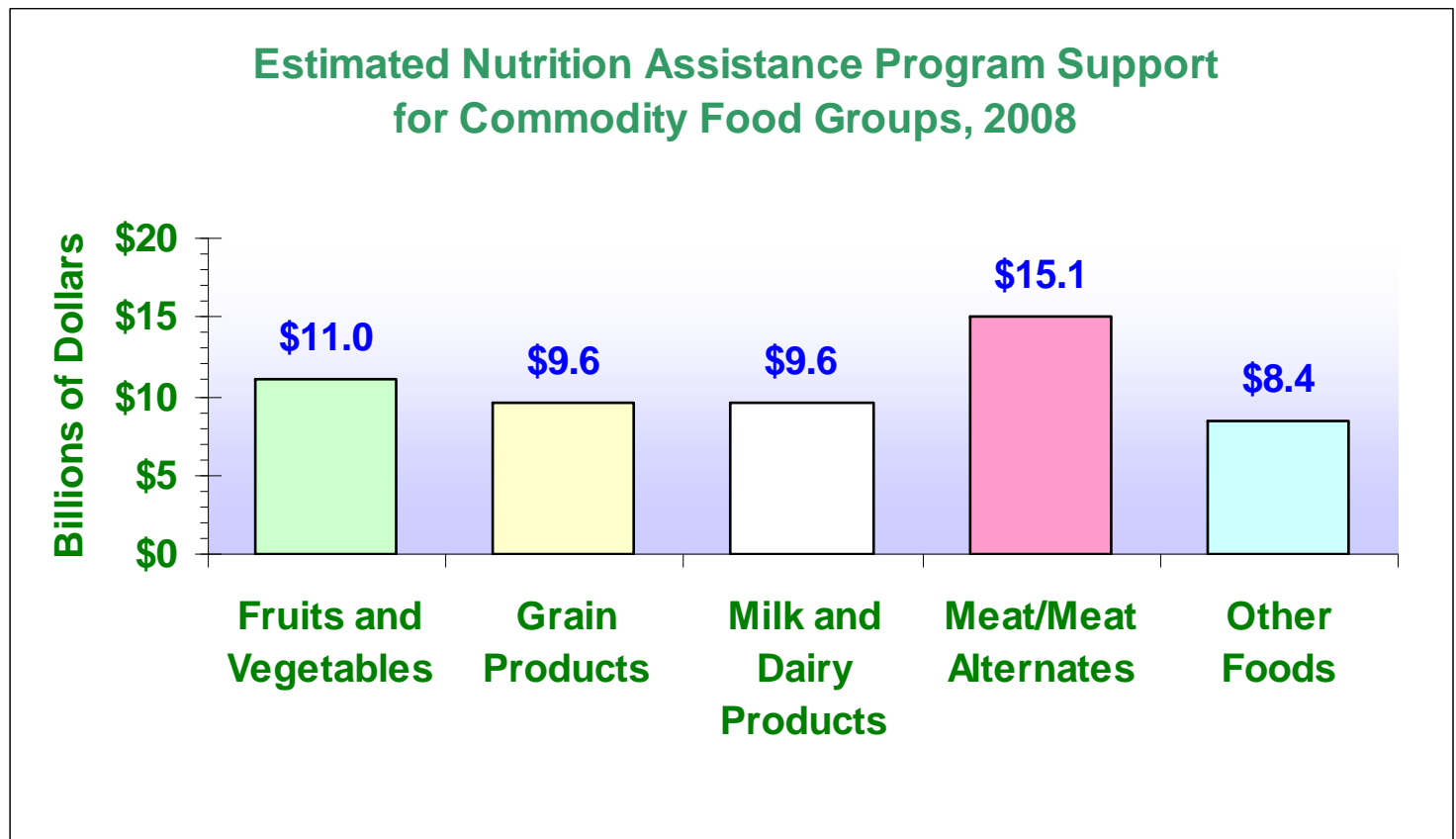
Program Accomplishments: Nutrition Outcomes

- ❑ Gap between nutrient intakes of lower and higher-income groups has virtually disappeared.
- ❑ SNAP increases household food expenditures and nutrient availability.
- ❑ WIC participation leads to better pregnancy outcomes – fewer infant deaths, fewer premature births, and increased birth weights.
- ❑ School meal participants consume more food energy and key vitamins and minerals.

Program Accomplishments: Other Program Outcomes

- ❑ **SNAP** benefits support working families.
- ❑ **WIC** provides access to health care for at-risk pregnant women, infants and young children, and enhances immunization rates among participants.
- ❑ **Meal reimbursements** to schools and child care facilities allow them to focus limited resources on education and care.
- ❑ **Commodity programs** attract recipients to community organizations and help leverage limited resources for other services, like job training and tutoring.

Programs Provide Significant Support for Food Markets



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

- Provides additional \$20.7 billion for nutrition assistance programs over next 5 years
- Temporarily increases maximum SNAP allotments by 13.6 percent (equivalent of \$80 per month for a family of four)
- Provides additional SNAP administrative funds to State agencies
- Supports equipment purchases for school cafeterias and WIC management information systems
- Additional funds for TEFAP commodities and administration

For More Information

Nutrition Assistance Programs

www.fns.usda.gov

Food Security in the United States

www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity