**Physical Preparation for Crisis, Part IIa: Food**

**This nation has been blessed in extraordinary ways**, not the least of which is its ability to produce seemingly **unlimited supplies of food** for its citizens and the world. However, as we have seen in the recent weather related calamities, **there are a number of scenarios that could cause regional food supplies to be suddenly compromised for either short or long term periods of time**. The list of things that could deplete or contaminate the food supply is great.

-**Natural disasters** (floods, droughts, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.)

-**Agricultural calamities** from pests, blight, etc.

-**Radioactive/environmental contamination** such as the Japan or Chernobyl nuclear accidents

-**Problems with the distribution system** (such as truckers strikes, fuel shortages, etc.)

-**Civil unrest**

As we now know, in any of these situations the **local food supply could be depleted in a matter of a few short days** and the only food available would be what each family physically had on hand. It is, therefore, prudent to store some food provision ahead of time. There are, however**, things that hinder us from taking such action.**

-**A knowledge deficit** **concerning how to store food**

-**Financial limitations**

-**The inertia of not knowing where to begin** **in putting together an action plan**

-**Not fully believing** **that the investment of time, money, and emotional energy will really pay off**. The mind reasons that preparation for crisis is a wasteful venture, especially since if there is no personal experience with crisis situations.

**We must develop a whole new mindset in order to effectively prepare to encounter crisis food shortages**.

**I Basic questions that need to be answered**

1. **What foods should be on hand?**
   1. Wheat, oats, other grains
   2. Powdered milk , dairy products and eggs
   3. Sweeteners; i.e., sugar, honey, molasses, syrup
   4. Cooking catalysts; i.e., salt, yeast, oil, baking powder, baking soda
   5. Fruits and vegetables
   6. Animal protein-Meat, fish and poultry
   7. Adjuncts-spices, condiments, pleasure foods
2. **What modes of food storage are there?**
   1. **Canned Foods**
      1. Can keep from 2-7 years.
      2. Can usually be eaten without further cooking.
      3. Fruits should be used within 2 years and other items 4 years.
      4. Some nutritional value lost in canning and decreases over time.
      5. Requires a lot of storage space.
      6. Initial cost is low.
      7. Loss of taste can occur because of processing.
      8. Home canning if done incorrectly is dangerous.
   2. **Freezing**
      1. Storage life can be ½ to 2 years.
      2. Susceptible to electric disruptions (a generator can keep items frozen if utilized 4 hours per day, however).
   3. **Dehydrated Foods**-prepared so that the moisture levels are only a few percent
      1. **Air dried**- dried by heated air
         1. Stores for 5- 10 years (in sealed cans).
         2. Easily stored (dry weight is as little as 10% of fresh weight)
         3. Rehydration may require hours of soaking in cold water or 15-30 minutes of cooking in hot water.
         4. Opened cans can remain useable 3-12 months after opening if air tight lids used to cover the opened can.
         5. Rehydrated foods should be treated as fresh and can be refrigerated for a short period of time before usefulness expires.
         6. Initial cost is high.
      2. **Freeze dried-**flash frozen at very cold temperatures
         1. Stores for 15+ years.
         2. Easily stored (dry weight as little as 10% of fresh weight) but take up more space than air dried foods.
         3. Can be rehydrated in less than 5 minutes without need for cooking.
         4. Opened cans remain useable for 1-3 months only if air tight lids are used to cover them.
         5. Rehydrated foods should be treated as fresh and can be refrigerated for a short period of time before usefulness expires.
         6. Retains natural fresh taste more than air dried.
         7. Initial cost is greater than other methods (costs about twice as much as air dried).
         8. Freeze drying is the only method of dehydrating meats, fish and poultry similar to fresh.
      3. **Bottom line**: Air dried foods cost half as much as freeze dried, take up 1/3 the space and last much longer after opening. Freeze dried foods are more convenient to prepare and have a greater shelf life.
   4. **MRE’s** (Meals Ready to Eat)- Food is placed in a 3 layer laminate pouch, the air is evacuated and the pouch sealed. The pouch is then heated/sterilized in a special oven.
      1. Shelf life is longer than canned foods.
      2. They are convenient. The food can be heated in the pouch in boiling water.
      3. Cost is high and comparable to freeze dried foods.
      4. The pouch is susceptible to puncture and rodent damage.
      5. Can be a good supplement to canned and dehydrated food storage.
   5. **Vacuum sealed**-Used in the storage of grains, legumes
      1. Shelf life of 15+ years
      2. Stored in sealed, air evacuated bags that are placed inside of sealed buckets
3. **How much food needs to be stored /for how many people /for how long?**
4. **Where will the food be stored**? Food is affected by heat, moisture, light, insects and rodents; therefore, food should be stored where the temperature remains below 70 degrees, where there is minimal moisture and light, and where there is protection from insects and rodents.
5. **How will the food be prepared if electricity is not available?**

In power outages there are several alternative ways to cook food. Propane gas grills, thermoses, kerosene stoves and appliances powered by generators are effective ways to cook food.

1. **How much money should be spent and how will it be allocated?**

Each family unit should analyze its available funds, pray and seek the Lord’s guidance as to how much money to allocate for emergency food stores. The Lord will give direction as to how to effectively utilize the available funds.

1. **Who will develop a system to keep account of, rotate and maintain levels of the food stored?** Food should be stored in an orderly way such that expiration dates are written on the containers and the containers are organized from oldest to newest. Food stored should be food that you like to eat and should be used on a regular basis and replaced with fresh supplies as it is used.
2. **Who will establish a plan to systematically check the food stored in order to make sure it hasn’t spoiled?** Examine the seals of the food container for a broken seal, a bulging lid, spurting liquids, visible mold or slimes are all signs of spoilage. Also, if there is suspicion that a seal has been broken, smell the item. Spoiled food smells acidic, cheesy putrid, sour, or like rotten eggs. Finally, the item can be tasted. If a normally bland food tastes sour or bitter it should be thrown out.

NEXT WEEK: **Strategy for storing food and determining amounts of food to store**

**II Strategy for Storing food and figuring amounts of food to store**

1. How much for how many for how long
2. Prepare storeage space
3. Determine foods you will store
   1. Foods you will eat
   2. Breakdown of food types and what you will purchase
      1. Wheat, oats, other grains
      2. Powdered milk , dairy products and eggs
      3. Sweeteners; i.e., sugar, honey, molasses, syrup
      4. Cooking catalysts; i.e., salt, yeast, oil, baking powder, baking soda
      5. Fruits and vegetables
      6. Animal protein-Meat, fish and poultry
      7. Adjuncts-spices, condiments, pleasure foods
   3. What you will purchase in each grouping; i.e., canned, dried, vacuum sealed, etc.
4. Begin a storage plan
   1. 1 week
   2. 1 month
   3. 6 months
   4. 1 year
5. Prepare an action plan on how you will utilize, rotate, and replenish your stores of food
6. Sources for ordering emergency food supplies

IV What is needed to Prepare Your food

V Growing food- Soil, Sunlight, Temp, planting and sowing seasons, water, nutrients (composting, etc.), tools, seeds, enemies (pests, animals, microbes)

VI Saving your grown food- canning, drying, root cellar, vacuum seal

VI Chart from Basic Preparedness pages 13-14