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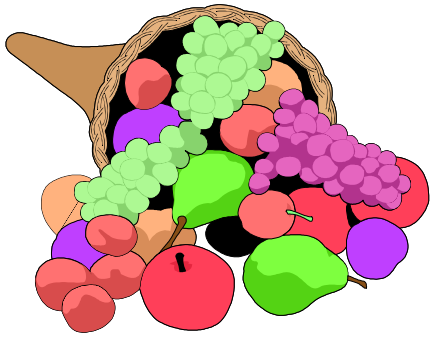

A Management Plan for Home Food Storage

Rebecca Low and Georgia C. Lauritzen

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Home food storage has been suggested for use during emergencies or disasters. Some families may store food as part of a prudent lifestyle. Whatever the reason, management is a vital part of any successful food storage program. Food is a perishable item even when it is preserved and requires appropriate care and use. Management of food storage will maximize nutritional quality and eliminate waste.

This workbook is intended to provide an easy way to analyze meal planning, food preparation and storage in the home. The exercise is based on the idea that one should store the foods which are regularly eaten and are part of individualized or family eating patterns. Working through the steps will also give an overall view of eating habits including information on nutritional values of meals, shopping techniques and food preparation skills.

This plan assumes there is adequate space to store moderate amounts of food in various forms and is based on a years planning time.

Store What You Use

- This list is not a perfect planner, but rather a tool to use in planning foods to “Store What You Use."
- These lists should reflect your lifestyle, needs, preferences and circumstances. It will not work if it is the storage list of a friend, or a list you feel others think you should have.
- This method will help you plan 80-90% of your years food storage using foods you eat most often. The remainder of a years storage will include foods eaten less frequently, short term seasonal foods, special meals, holidays, and long term basic storage to sustain life.
- Re-do the process as family needs change, or every few years, to maintain accuracy.
- This method usually does not take into account foods such as desserts and snacks, unless you plan them into the menu.

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Workbook Instructions

1. **Using the chart write a list of dishes frequently eaten, or a list of favorite meals. Studies show families will eat the same 10 main dish foods 80% of the time.**
   a. Create a list of 10 to 20 meals.
   b. Create a separate list for breakfast and lunch foods, as appropriate and if desired.
   c. As you begin this process you may not think of many foods. Post this list in a prominent place in your kitchen for the coming 2 weeks. Each time you think of a new food write it on the list. Ask the family for ideas and suggestions. Make the list reflect what your family typically eats and enjoys.

2. **Go back over the list and add foods needed to make the meal balanced.**
   a. Write these foods after the main dish item, see the sample.
   b. Add foods from the bread and cereal group, fruit group, vegetable group, milk and dairy group and meat group as needed.

3. **Break down each meal constructed in steps 1 and 2. In the columns to the right break the dish into specific foods. For example tuna noodle casserole would include tuna, noodles, cream soup, etc.**
   a. Write the category above the columns, for example: vegetables; fruits; meats; bread, cereals, grains, pasta; soups, sauces, mixes; dairy.
   b. In the spaces below the main categories, write the specific foods needed. For example under the vegetable category you may have listed peas, green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, etc.
   c. Write down the amount of the food needed for that particular dish for your family. Continue with all dishes listed.
   d. When completed, add the amount of foods in each column and total at the bottom of the page.

4. **Plan on preparing 80% of your meals from this storage planner. The remainder of a years meals and storage will include foods eaten less frequently, short term seasonal foods, special meals, holidays, and long term basic storage to sustain life such as beans, rice, wheat, etc.**
   a. Eighty percent of 365 days is 292. Divide the total number of dishes or meals in step #1 into 292. This is the number of times each year that you will prepare this dish.
   b. Multiply each food totaled in the columns in step #3d by the answer above. This will give you the amount of that food needed for 80-90% of a years supply of foods most often eaten.

5. **Place foods from planner onto an inventory list.**
   a. Group foods according to category. For example, use one page for freezer, and group together frozen vegetables, meats, etc. Use one for the shelf, and group together vegetables, fruits, canned meats, soups, pasta, etc.
   b. Inventory current food storage and pantry and compare to the amounts needed.
   c. Update inventory on a regular basis, monthly, every 6 months, yearly, etc.

6. **Shop for foods on the inventory list. Watch for good buys, buy in bulk, etc. Gradually increase the amount of food stored to equal the amount needed for 1 year.**
   a. Spend 80% of each food dollar on storage items, 20% will go toward fresh foods, special or seasonal foods.
   b. Date all foods going into storage.
   c. Place new foods to the back of the storage. Use old foods first.
   d. Add new purchased food amounts to inventory list.
   e. Update inventory on a regular basis, monthly, every 6 months, yearly, etc.

7. **Plan meals for the week from your created list of foods in step #1. Select foods to prepare the meal from your storage.**
   a. Keep a list of dishes from step #1 in a handy readily visible place.
   b. Move foods for the week, month, etc. from the storage to your smaller pantry.
   c. Use what you have on hand. Purchase fresh foods (milk, fresh vegetables, etc.) as needed.

Sample

Food Storage Planner	Meat, Poultry, Fish				Vegetables			Cereals			Soups		
	Canned Tuna	Frozen	Ground Beef	Kidney Beans	Tomatoes	Broccoli	Onions	Noodles	Spaghetti	Oatmeal	Cream	Tomato	Chicken noodle
Tuna noodle casserole, carrots	1 can							2 c			1		
Spaghetti, broccoli			1 lb		1 qt	1 pk	1		6 oz				

Food Storage Planner																										
Total																										
Total X 292 days = total for year (see #4)																										

Inventory

Pantry Storage

Food	Amount		Dates Storage Was Added or Subtracted																							
	Need	On Hand																								

Update inventory on a regular basis (every 6 months, yearly, etc.). Total all the additions and subtractions and compare to the amount needed annually.
Move the new amount on hand to a new inventory sheet and begin the process again.

Inventory

Frozen Storage

Food	Amount		Dates Storage Was Added or Subtracted																							
	Need	On Hand																								

Update inventory on a regular basis (every 6 months, yearly, etc.). Total all the additions and subtractions and compare to the amount needed annually.
Move the new amount on hand to a new inventory sheet and begin the process again.