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National Food Plan with Particular Reference to the Interrelationships of Federal, State, Local and Individual Responsibilities



The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has emphasized the Federal responsibilities for food as a resource which must be carried out in close cooperation with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, the food industry, industry generally, and the public.

In this statement particular attention is given to the interrelationships of these responsibilities during the period since plans for this period have been formulated to carry out.

Food Action in Immediate Post-Attack Period Should Supplement Existing Plans

The individual family should be prepared to feed itself in the event of a family fallout shelter for the initial few weeks period of any attack. However, the best prepared families will be able to sustain themselves after the initial weeks have been used, and some families will be able to sustain themselves before the initial weeks expire. Families and individuals will continue to stream through the available food outlet as soon as it is safe to be out and shop. Local state and Federal agencies will coordinate the rationing and mass feeding programs for the initial period of any attack.

It is emphasized that the USDA will rely heavily on the cooperation of farmers, food processors, and distributors and will utilize government authority when necessary to supplement existing plans for the food supply.

Whenever it appears that food supplies will be inadequate, the Federal Government will designate wholesale stocks for use as a buffer stock. In such cases, upon requirements, steps will be taken to increase the food supply by releasing additional food.

Even if communications with other Federal agencies are interrupted, the local office of USDA will have authority to take whatever action is necessary to insure the best utilization of Federal food supplies at wholesale, retail, and farm levels, together with the Federal Government's Commodity Credit Corporation.

If communications permit and the supply from the Federal Government is adequate, the USDA local office will receive the assistance from the Federal Government office. Through the USDA State Office, the Federal Government's national level may also be contacted for assistance.

USDA will make every effort to insure that the national food supply is adequate. In carrying out its Federal Government responsibilities, the national level will

or divert from a community which it needs to maintain at dietary levels. A possible exception would be a major production area for the military. A primary aim of the plan is to ensure that all people in all areas are fed as fully as possible in the event of an attack.

Even in the immediate post-attack period it is necessary to concentrate on the proper distribution of supplies which may be available in an attack. It is also important that essential food production and processing be continued at the highest level possible in order to meet the needs of the population.

There will be need to secure a plentiful food supply in order to conserve storable products and supplies for future use in those areas where perils of spoilage, contamination and other factors are likely to occur.

In all this activity full co-operation and close working relationships will be maintained between Federal, State and local government. Co-operation between USDA, the Office of Civil Defense, State Mobilization and other Federal agencies which have a major responsibility for the organization of personnel and services which are essential to the above program.

USDA will look to State and local government for assistance in obtaining such essential supporting items as transportation, fuel, storage, and manpower in the immediate post-attack period when such items may be obtained through Federal resources channels.

The plan just outlined is described more fully in the "National Food Plan" which is Annex 33 to the "National Plan for Civil Defense and Defense Mobilization". This plan will serve as a framework for the following preparedness steps which should be taken:

Preparedness Measures

A broad educational program will be carried out at Federal, State and local levels designed to educate the population on their relative responsibilities of the Federal, State and local government for food as they will apply to the above program.

State and local government should develop plans for the control of inventory and for the control of local food distribution in the immediate post-attack period, so as to control waste and insure the use of available food supplies. State and local government should encourage the maintaining of home and community food stocks and encourage mass-feeding which will be essential in the post-attack period.

Plans of USDA take into account the potential effect of the above which the Department has as a major food planning program in the event of an attack.

USDA will proceed to plan for emergency field organizations that full utilization can be made of the existing staff of the Department at State, county and community levels. Adequate authority will be delegated to appropriate officials at each level during the pre-emergency period.

Ability to assess the effects of natural food processing facilities is being developed. To assist in this and related work, a directory of all major food processing and storage facilities is being compiled. It should also be noted that FEMA is carrying out a disaster planning program for members of the military who are mobilized during a national emergency.

The food program is a dual purpose program which is preparing for defense against biological and chemical warfare, as well as in major and crops, and defense against natural disasters.

Total Food Supplies Will Be Adequate

Studies made by the USDA show that the overall supply of food will be adequate immediately following a major attack on the United States. The main problem will be to get the food distributed to the people and assure equitable distribution of supplies.

This is a principal reason why large food stocks are being advocated.

It is recognized, however, that families should have a few weeks supply, that public shelter areas be stocked with food, that some buildup of food stocks not produced in sufficient quantities in some States may be needed, and that the Government should be prepared to deal with food problems for some areas, such as Hawaii, Alaska, and other particularly vulnerable areas.

The Commodity Credit Corporation has a substantial amount of agricultural commodities but most of these stocks are not immediately available for use directly for food. On a temporary survival basis, however, these stocks can be used during any immediate emergency period to help the people who are survivors can live.

Commodity Credit Corporation also holds a large amount of grain using the criteria used in the case of privately owned stocks, and the facilities, but inventories of these commodities are not available for use for wheat and cereals are being stored.

Summary and Reference to Long-Range Problems

In summary, it is the belief of the Government that the United States is well

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USDA, State and local government, farmers, industrial producers, distributors and the public all have a role to play in the immediate post-attack period.

It will be necessary for all to cooperate fully if the needs of the people is to be accomplished successfully. This cooperation will be possible only if adequate plans are done in the pre-attack period and if these plans are fully understood by all concerned before an emergency occurs.

Readiness to carry out the emergency food program is enhanced somewhat by the fact that the country is very well stocked with a wide variety of many commodities and by the fact that the USDA has a large and experienced staff of personnel already working on the program with a long history of an emergency with little delay.

Although major emphasis will be placed on food production in the immediate post-attack period, the war efforts do not stop there. Production, processing and distribution of the longer range commodities will necessitate the continued cooperation and best efforts of the Federal, State and local governments; the industry, and the public. Plans are being developed to meet these needs.

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