

Feeding America's *Foods to Encourage* Background

Despite numerous evaluation attempts from manufacturers, retailers and even nutrition experts, there has yet to be agreement on a consistent measure or definition for “nutritious.” As a result, in 2012 Feeding America convened an advisory board of external nutrition and health experts, as well as a network nutrition task force to explore the meaning of “nutritious” and related dietary needs of communities within the specific purview of food banking. One of the deliverables, the *Detailed Foods to Encourage (F2E)* framework, was designed to more accurately evaluate and describe the nutritional contributions of the food categories in network food banks’ inventories. This *Detailed F2E* framework serves as the Feeding America national office recommendation, not requirement, for network food banks. This is, in part, due to a lack of consistent inventory systems that allow for the tracking of foods at the specified level outlined in the *Detailed F2E*. However, food banks that have their own capacity of detailed tracking now have national recommendation guidelines to follow and compare against.

At the national level, Feeding America only tracks food banks’ inventory through a simplified framework of three broad categories, *Foods to Encourage (F2E)*, *Other Foods* and *Non Food*. *F2E* is Feeding America’s approach to estimate the nutritional contributions of food categories in food banks’ inventories. The product categories within *F2E* are ones that are more consistently inclusive of food items that meet the USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). For example, fruits, vegetables, protein, dairy and whole grains. Many also understand this to be a reflection of the USDA MyPlate image.

The *F2E* broad category consists of 13 product categories, including:

- Cereal,
- Dairy (30%),
- Fruits,
- Juice,
- Meat/Fish/Poultry,
- Non-Meat Protein,
- Pasta,
- Fresh Produce,
- Rice,
- Vegetables,
- Beverages (10% to reflect plain water),
- Mix (60%), and
- Salvage (39%)

Through many discussions, it was determined that for some product categories (where possible) Feeding America needed to drill down further, so that, for example, butter and sour cream are not in the same classification as milk or yogurt. Feeding America considers only percentages of certain product categories (i.e., 10% beverages, 30% dairy, etc.) to be actual *F2Es* because after a national review of detailed receipt donations not all food products in particular categories met the nutritional criteria. Feeding America applies these percentages across all food bank inventories.

Feeding America understands that at times healthful foods will be unaccounted for in the broad *Other Food* category, but within the current system constraints the identified *F2Es* are product categories we feel we can confidently capture and classify as meeting Feeding America's nutritional criteria. Product categories such as Meals/Soups/Entrée located in the *Other Food* broad category of the Feeding America inventory system, were found to be too diverse in their nutritional quality and lacked consistency so much so that Feeding America chose to not include them as part of the *F2E* listing. Until Feeding America and network members have a streamlined inventory system that can account for product on a more granule level, the current framework has proven to be a significant step in the right direction for tracking and goal-setting related to increasing access to more healthful foods.

Both the *Detailed Foods to Encourage* and broad category of *Foods to Encourage* are intended to send a positive message, focusing on specific food groups that are more widely accepted as contributing positively to good health – and align with USDA MyPlate.

Broad Categories of Feeding America’s Inventory System

Feeding America has 31 product categories that are tracked in the Quarterly Poundage Report (QPR) completed by all network food banks. Using data from the “Receipts by Category” in the QPR, the 31 product categories are divided into 3 broad categories: *Foods to Encourage*, *Other Food* and *Non Food*.

<i>Foods to Encourage</i>	<i>Other Food</i>	<i>Non Food</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverages (10% to reflect plain water)* • Cereal • Dairy (30%)* • Fruits • Juice • Meat/Fish/Poultry, Mix (60%)* • Non-Meat Protein • Pasta • Fresh Produce • Rice • Vegetables • Salvage (39%)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverage (90%)* • Bread/Bakery • Baby Food • Condiments • Dairy (70%)* • Desserts • Dough • Dressings • Grains • Meals/Soups/Entrees • Mix (40%)* • Non-Dairy Dairy • Nutritional Aid/Supplement • Prepared Foods • Snack • Salvage (61%)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning • Health and Beauty • Household Paper • Nonfood • Personal Paper • Pet
<p>*Feeding America allows only certain percentages of some product categories (e.g., 10% beverage, 30% dairy, etc.) to be categorized under the <i>F2E</i> broad category because after a national review of detailed receipt donations not all foods in particular product categories met the nutritional criteria. The remaining percentage for those said product categories (i.e., non-<i>F2E</i> products) is categorized under <i>Other Food</i>.</p>		

Foods to Encourage (F2E) Percentage Calculation

To calculate the % of *F2E* received through a particular food bank’s food inventory, Feeding America uses 31 product categories (that are reported in the Quarterly Poundage Report under “Receipts by Category”). The calculation for determining the percentage of *F2E* is outlined below.

1. Add up the product categories of the food bank’s inventory deemed *F2E*: (Cereal + Fruits + Juices + Meat/Fish/Poultry + Non-meat protein + Pasta + Produce + Rice + Vegetables + 10% of Beverage + 30% of Dairy + 60% of Mix + 39% of Salvage) = X
2. Divide the sum (X) of the above *F2E* product categories by the total number of *F2E* product categories calculated above (e.g., 0 thru 13 = Y) and *Other Food* product categories (e.g., 0 thru 16 = Z) utilized by the food bank. Exclude the *Non Food* category from the denominator.

$$\% \text{ F2E of food bank's } \underline{\text{food}} \text{ inventory} = X / (Y+Z)$$

Detailed Foods To Encourage

The *Detailed Foods to Encourage (F2E)* framework was designed to more accurately evaluate and describe the nutritional contributions of the food categories in food banks' inventories. This framework below serves as the Feeding America national office recommendation, not requirement, for network food banks. Below are the qualifications required for the product categories to be listed within our Foods to Encourage.

Foods must meet all criteria below to qualify. Criteria is based on per serving basis.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Fresh with nothing added
- 100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice
- Canned, Dried or Frozen with no partially hydrogenated oils that meet the criteria below:
 - **Sodium:** ≤230mgⁱ
 - **Total Sugar:** Fruit in lite syrup or 100% Juiceⁱⁱⁱ or ≤12gⁱⁱⁱ
 - **Sat Fat:** ≤ 2g^{iv}
 - **Trans Fat:** 0g

Grains

- 100% whole grain (Rolled Oats, Barley, Wild Rice)
- Bread & Pasta with “whole grain” listed as the first ingredient^v & with:
 - >10% DV^{vi} or ≥2.5g fiber
- Cereal with “whole grain” listed as the first ingredient^{vii} & >3g of dietary fiber
- Bread, Pasta & Cereal that meet the criteria below:
 - **Sodium:** ≤230mg
 - **Total Sugar:** Bread/Pasta ≤ 0g^{viii}
Cereal ≤ 12g^{ix}
 - **Sat Fat:** ≤ 2g
 - **Trans Fat:** 0g

Protein

- Eggs
- Nuts, Seeds, Beans and Lentils with nothing added
- Beans, Meat, Poultry and Seafood that meet criteria below:
 - **Sodium** ≤ 480mg^x
 - **Sat Fat:** ≤2g^{xi}
 - **Trans Fat:** 0g
- Nuts/Seeds responding spreads that meet the criteria below:
 - **Sodium:** ≤230mg
 - **Total Sugar:** <4g per 2T/1oz^{xii}
 - **Trans Fat:** 0g

Dairy

- Unflavored/Unsweetened low-fat (1%), or skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Flavored skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Unsweetened milk substitutes (e.g. Soy)
- Cheese that meets the criteria below:
 - **Sodium:** ≤ 480mg^{xiii}
 - **Sat Fat:** ≤3g | **Trans Fat:** 0g
- Flavored milk, milk substitutes, and yogurt, that meets the criteria below:
 - **Sodium:** ≤480mg^{xiii}
 - **Total Sugar:** ≤ 22g(milk^{xiv}) ≤ 30g(yogurt^{xv})
 - **Saturated Fat:** ≤ 3g
 - **Trans Fat:** 0g

Resources:

For more information, please visit the following links:

- I. HealthyFoodBankHub.org
- II. Add a widget to your website to provide easy access to healthy recipes:
<http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org/widget-creator/>
- III. Foods to Encourage Background Document:
<http://healthyfoodbankhub.feedingamerica.org/resource/foods-to-encourage-background/>

References

- i. Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Sodium Threshold for a Non-Entrée/Non Meal item not to exceed ≤ 230 mg per serving.
- ii. USDA Food and Nutrition Service Standard for School Lunches
- iii. CFBAI Category Specific Uniform Criteria
- iv. CFBAI Category Specific Uniform Criteria
- v. United States Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010
- vi. FDA 10. Appendix B: Additional Requirements for Nutrient Content Claims, 2009 Claim for at least “good source” of dietary fiber | RACC = Relative Amount Customarily Consumed
- vii. United States Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010
- viii. CFBAI Category Specific Uniform Criteria
- ix. CFBAI Category Specific Uniform Criteria
- x. Consistent with criteria for “healthy”, CFBAI
- xi. FDA/USDA Lean meat, fish, poultry
- xii. CFBAI Category Specific Uniform Criteria
- xiii. Alliance for a Healthier Generation sodium criteria for low-fat and non-fat dairy products
- xiv. IOM Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier youth
- xv. IOM Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier youth