

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE USAID/FFP FOOD BASKET: PRODUCT UPGRADES AND INNOVATIONS, PROCESSES FOR MODIFYING THE FOOD BASKET AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARTNERS

Summary of a Report from the Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR) Project

INTRODUCTION

FAQR was tasked with recommending updates and potential improvements to the “**food basket**”—a term used to describe the mix of products available for procurement and use in USAID/FFP programs. The USAID/FFP food aid programs benefit millions of people around the world, and **the food aid environment of high demand and limited funding** necessitates that the **products used are as efficient as possible**. Thus, the food basket should **contain a diverse range of cost-effective products** suited to meet the nutritional needs of recipients, and **these products should be programmed as intended**.

IMPROVING THE FOOD AID BASKET: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The report summarizes what was learned about the food basket; it reviews broad product procurement trends, potential product improvements, how product changes are made, and how that information is communicated to partners. It concludes by offering several discoveries regarding:

1. Upgrades that USAID/FFP can make to existing products.
2. Cutting-edge research on product formulation/nutrition science and updates to food standards that should guide product development.
3. A process for incorporating additional products into the food basket.
4. Strategies for communicating food basket updates and changes to partners.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

FAQR concluded that the findings of this report should be incorporated into USAID/FFP’s overall mandate through four overarching activities:



Implement advanced data systems for tracking and sharing food aid information.



Institutionalize a new product approval process.



Modify the product mix to meet evolving global standards and program needs.



Continue to host meetings and activities around the food basket.

NEXT STEPS: HIGH URGENCY ACTIONS

The report highlighted 12 recommended actions that are important and should be pursued by USAID/FFP within the next 6 months. The 5 low resource actions should be addressed first as a top priority.

1. Hold an regular **Food Aid Basket roundtable** to review the full menu of products, nutrient content, technical guidance, and effectiveness/cost-effectiveness information. [Low resource]
2. **Develop a training series** on the basket content, how principles partners should select foods, and use of food aid decision-making tools. [Low resource]
3. **Re-issue** the A20 paste pouch, A28 rice bar, and A29 wheat bar product specifications. [Low resource]
4. Ensure regular updates of nutritional content information for all food aid products in the USDA Nutrient Database to **maintain accurate, detailed information**. [Low resource]
5. Reach out to **additional food manufacturers** to explore their ability to supply high-demand SNF products. [Low resource]
6. Continue working toward an **online system for proposing novel products/product updates**. [High resource]
7. Implement a **web-based dashboard for agency use** that visually represents important procurement trends and product use analysis in real-time. [High resource]
8. Establish a single **USAID/FFP landing website** and **partner management system**. [High resource]
9. Institute a **process to review and accept novel products** in the food aid product mix. [High resource]
10. Host **regular conference on food assistance programming**, at which USAID/FFP should hold workshops for product usage reporting and program assessment. [High resource]
11. **Finalize the development of HEB 2.0**, so that it can be programmed as soon as possible. [High resource]
12. Work with manufacturers to **optimize the nutrient content and product shelf life of RUSF**, making it appropriate for emergency response. [High resource]

FULL REPORT:

Caiafa, Kristine; Walton, Shelley; Rogers, Beatrice Lorge; Webb, Patrick. 2019. Improvements to the USAID/FFP food basket: product upgrades and innovations, processes for modifying the food basket, and communications with partners. Report to USAID. Boston, MA: Tufts University. ([View Here](#))

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