Food Security and Obesity: Public Policy Issues
Food Security:
Access by all people, at all times to sufficient food for an active healthy life.
There has been a recognized phenomena that food insecurity seems linked with obesity
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Highest rates of Obesity in groups with highest rate of poverty and lowest education
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High energy density and high palatability of sweets and fats are associated with higher energy intakes.
Poverty and food insecurity are associated with lower food expenditures, low fruit and vegetable consumption and lower quality of diets.
Low cost diets are high-fat, and energy dense much like the diets of low-income groups.
Prudent diets of lean meat, fish, fresh vegetables and fruit are less affordable
The association between poverty and obesity may be mediated in part by the low-cost of energy dense food and reinforced by the high palatability of sugar and fat.
More and more Americans are becoming obese while consuming more fats and sugars and spending a lower percentage of income on food.
Obese, defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher.
An estimated 30 percent of U.S. adults aged 20 years and older - over 60 million people - are obese
An estimated 65 percent of U.S. adults aged 20 years and older are either overweight or obese, defined as having a BMI of 25 or higher.
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http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/calc-bmi.htm

That’s the website to calculate YOUR BMI
Obesity* Trends Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 2003

(*BMI ≥ 30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5’ 4” person)
Obesity = Health Problems

30-60 million people in overweight-obese categories =

MAJOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM
Food Security and Obesity: Public Policy Issues

Food Insecurity may lead to obesity
The prevalence of food insecurity was 11.2 percent in 2003.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger was 3.5 percent.
What policies do we have in place to remedy food insecurity
Federal food assistance, substantial

- USDA FNS
- Food Action Research Center (FRAC)
  - www.frac.org
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- What policies do we have to promote food security?
Community Food Security Movement

Community Food Security is defined as a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and builds social capital.
A CFS approach seeks to build up a community's food resources to meet its own needs.
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Broad range of issues affecting the food system
- Community development
- Food environment/ Food access
- Farmland destruction/Suburban sprawl
- Loss of food producing farmers
- Rural community disintegration
- Air, land and water pollution by non-sustainable practices
Community Food Security Projects:
- Farm to school
- Community gardens
- School gardens/farms
- Youth farm stands
- Food policy councils
- Immigrant farmers
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Policy Issues:
- Public space for farmer’s markets
- School Food service regulations
- Assessment of community food assets
- Transportation to food outlets
- Food dollar voting
- Processing of food on-farm
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Ways Extension involved
Food Stamp nutrition education
EFNEP
Health Dep’t partnerships
Catalyzing community food production
Organizing food security assessments

Proposal in 2005 is to cut the program by 3 million

Extension can educate on the role Food Stamps plays in relieving food insecurity
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The National School Lunch Program children to receive a nutritious lunch local farmers receive a market?
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Economic resources

- Voting with food dollars
- Promoting self sufficiency
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- Together we can build a local, self-sustaining, just, nutritious food supply

- Eating is a moral act
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