

# Food Security 101: What is food security and what does it have to do with food protection?

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# Outline



- Basics of food security
- Food insecurity in BC
- Trends in food security
- Food safety ↔ food security
- What can you do?



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# What is food security?

- *Security* refers to individual, household, community, national, or international food supply
- Quantity, Quality, Distribution
- Includes social, cultural, health, and technical aspects of food
- Sometimes refers to protection from bioterrorism, trade disruption, disasters, etc.



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# Food security includes **safety**

## FAO/WHO (World Food Summit 1996)

- “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”
- Availability, access, utilization, stability

## Community Food Security/BC Public Health Core Programs

- “situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows 2003)

## AAAAASS

- Accessible, adequate, appropriate, affordable, available, safe, sustainable



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Food Safety  
+ Accessibility  
+ Affordability  
+ Access  
+ Acceptability  
+ Adequacy  
+ Sustainability  
= Food Security



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# Food security continuum

## Short-term/ Relief

- Focus on individuals
- Emergency food aid
- e.g. food banks, soup kitchens

## Transitional

- Community development & capacity building
- e.g. farmers markets, community gardens

## System Redesign

- Policy change
- Local & sustainable food distribution systems
- e.g. coordinated food policies



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# Food insecurity in Canada

- 704,414 individuals assisted by food bank in March 2008 = 2.1% of national population
- 2004 CCHS data:
  - 9.2% of households are food insecure (2.7 million people; almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  million children)
  - 33.3% of Aboriginal households are food insecure
  - Food insecurity is associated with income



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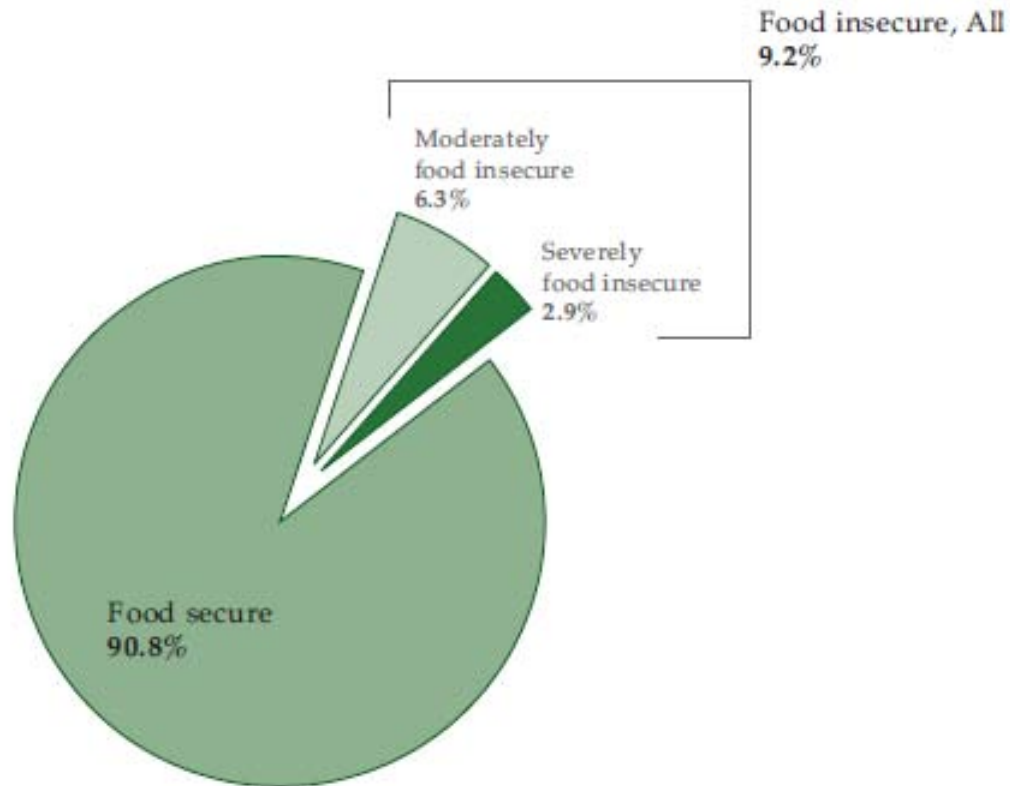
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# Food insecurity in Canada

**Figure 3.1** Income-related household food security status in Canada, 2004



Data source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2, 2004 – Share File, Household Weights



# Food insecurity in BC

- 78,101 British Columbians use food banks at least once a month in 2008
  - Up 2.1% over 2007 stats
  - 31.2% are children (78,101)
  - Many are employed (14.4%), on disability (22.5%), or social assistance (42.7%)
- 2004 CCHS data:
  - 10.4% of households are food insecure



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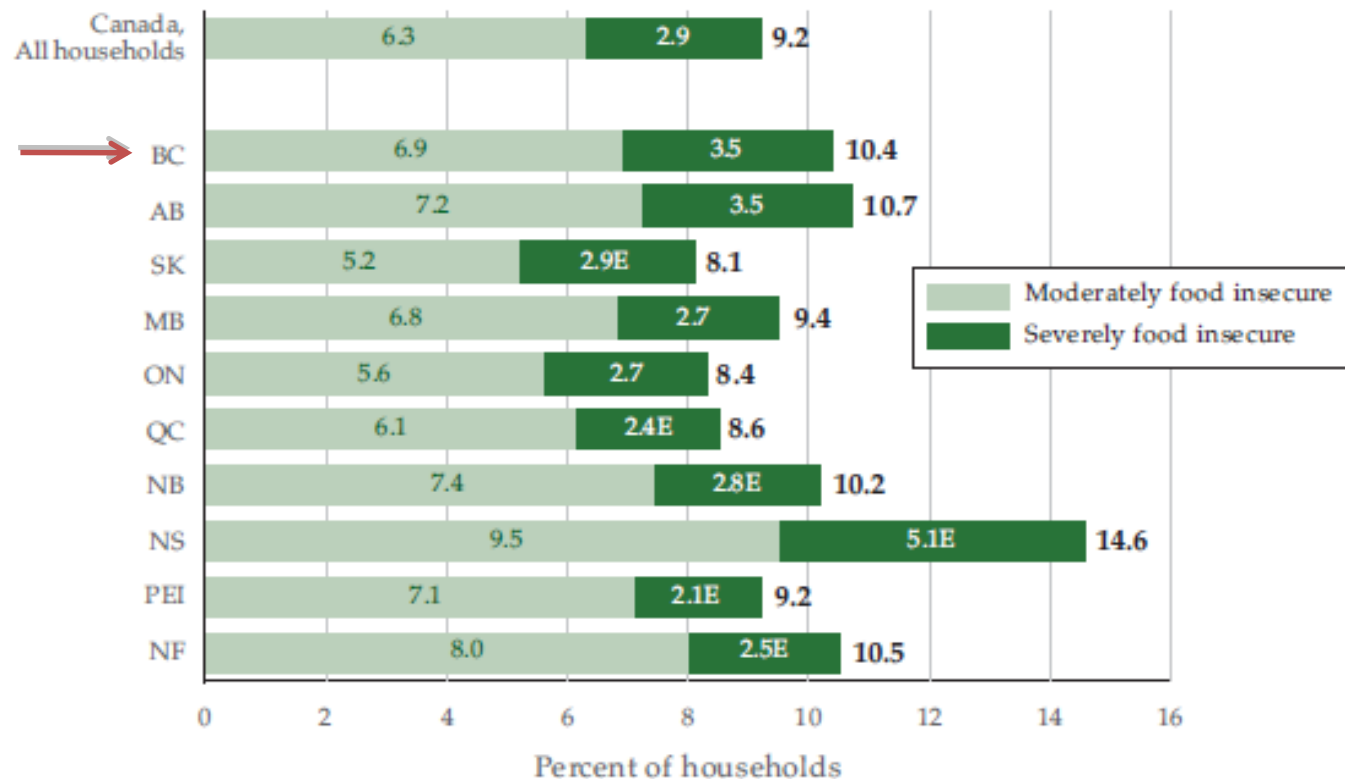
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# Food insecurity in BC

Figure 3.2 Income-related household food insecurity by province, 2004



Data source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2, 2004 – Share File, Household Weights

E Data with a coefficient of variation (CV) from 16.6% to 33.3%; interpret with caution

# Food security issues in BC

- Dependence on imports
- Declining agricultural land base & fish stocks
- Lack of efficient local distribution
- Food safety outbreaks: e. coli, avian influenza, BSE, salmonella
- Isolated communities
- Poverty
- Farmer attrition & lack of farm labour



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# Future food security challenges

- Climate change
- Increasing population
- Increasing demand/need for local food – need to minimize food miles
- BC geography and land base



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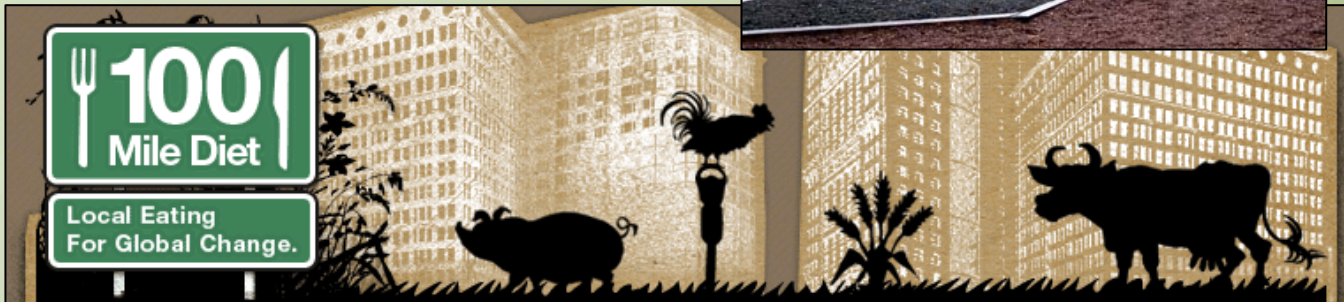


# Trends in food security



## Vancouver Farmers Markets

You Are What You Eat. Prepare to Meet Your Maker.



 **100**  
Mile Diet

Local Eating  
For Global Change.

# Food security policy & programs

- Community Food Action Initiative (CFAI)
- Canada's Action Plan for Food Security
- BC Core Programs in Public Health
  - Food safety
  - Food security
- Food policy councils
- 2005 PHO Report



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# Food Safety ↔ Food Security

- Earlier perspectives on food security focused on quantity, and later on quality (nutrition & safety).
- More recently, food security advocates take a community & social justice perspective, with added focus on local economic development, choice, relationships, ecology, sustainable farming, local sourcing, food miles, carbon footprint....



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# What does this mean for the food industry?

- Focus on small producers
- Relationship-based markets (vs brand-based)
- Processors may not have resources of large food companies, but small size offers opportunities to promote change and educate re food safety



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# Food security initiatives can be good for food safety

- Increased awareness of food – opportunity to increase awareness of food safety
- Growth in local food production and processing
- Focus on fresh and value-added foods



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## Food Security Continuum



**Short-term/  
Emergency**  
(e.g. Food  
banks)



**Capacity Building  
Initiatives**  
(e.g. farmers  
markets)



**Transforming the  
food system**  
(e.g. local food  
distribution)



**Minimize Risk of Foodborne Illness**



Adapted from PHSA



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# Possible tensions

- Small scale food processing
- Farmers markets – new safety guidelines
- BC Meat Inspection Regulations
- Urban agriculture
- Backyard chickens



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# What can food protection do to support food security?

- Common goals
- Awareness
- Communication
- Education
- Risk vs regulation
- More secure = safer

## Food safety:

Protect health by preventing foodborne illness

## Food security:

Protect health by preventing hunger and malnutrition

Help food providers understand where/how food safety risks occur. Work with food providers to understand their constraints and find ways to help them prevent foodborne illness in the context of their work.

Understand how a healthy, secure food environment can improve quality and safety.



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# Thank you!

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# Resources

- Agricultural Land Commission

<http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/index.htm>

- 2005 PHO Report

<http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/pho/pdf/phoannual2005.pdf>

- Food Secure Canada

<http://foodsecurecanada.org/>

- Core Programs in Public Health

<http://www.phabc.org/modules.php?name=Contentcore&pa=showpage&pid=150>

- Vancouver Food Policy Council

<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/>

- BC Food Systems Network

<http://www.fooddemocracy.org/>



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