

ESTABLISHING A MEAL METRIC, AND USE OF \$1=3 MEALS METRIC

Developing a “meals metric” for Canadian food banks – ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

Food Banks Canada and Farm Credit Canada have worked together to develop a ‘national meal metric’ that can easily be understood by Canadians. The purpose of creating this ‘meal metric’ was to develop a tool that Food Banks Canada can use when engaging in campaigns that are national in scope, meaning activations that occur in more than four provinces.

Examples include: Every Plate Full; Loblaw; and other cause-related marketing campaigns.

The metric was created using data from 72 food banks including Food Banks Canada.

Data included: HungerCount 2012; 2004 Statistics Canada Canadian Community Health Survey; Canada Revenue Agency and individual Food Bank websites/annual reports.

Key findings used for calculations include:

- Canadian food banks are able to acquire and share 3 lbs of food with each dollar they receive from donors (with a corresponding value of \$7.50 or \$2.50 per lb)
- The average Canadian eats approximately 453 grams (1 lb) of food per meal.

Calculations were then made into practical statements for the Canadian Food Bank Network:

Imperial	\$1 donated = 3 lbs of food that can be acquired and shared
Metric	\$1 donated= 1.36 kg of food that can be acquired and shared
Imperial	\$1 donated = 3 lbs of food = 3 meals for an individual
Metric	\$1 donated =1.36 kg of food = 3 meals for an individual
Imperial	\$1 donated = 3 lbs of food = 3 meals for an individual = \$7.50 worth of food (\$2.50 per lb)
Metric	\$1 donated = 1.36 kg of food = 3 meals for an individual = \$7.50 worth of food (\$5.51 per kg)

As a local food bank you may have and use your own meal metric based on your individual situation. The numbers presented above may not reflect all situations but are a valid reflection of the National Network, including Food Banks Canada national office.

As a reminder the use of \$1=3 meals can be used only for:

- National campaigns such as Every Plate Full, FCC, Walmart, Loblaws, and cause-related marketing campaigns that have a national scope.
- Conversion of food/consumer good poundage to meals 1 lb=1 meal

Information on calculations located on back of page.

Understanding what and how much an average Canadian eats in a given day

To know how many meals people are able to make with the food they receive from food banks, we first need to know what a meal looks like – specifically what foods it consists of, and how much those foods weigh. In 2004, Statistics Canada performed a “24 hour food recall” with a sample of Canadians in order to understand what/when they ate.

Thanks to this information, we know that the average Canadian meal weighs 448 grams – slightly less than one pound (i.e. the average of adult and youth meals, weighted based on the fact that 22% of Canadians are under the age of 18).

If the data is weighted to account for the fact that 37% of those receiving food from food banks are under age 18, the average meal then weighs 453 – again, approximately one pound.

1 average Canadian meal = 1 pound

1 average Canadian meal=453 g

Food Acquisition and Distribution

In terms of dollars-to-pounds, more than half of the food banks can acquire between 1 and 3 lbs per dollar of expense. 82% can acquire this much food per dollar of expense.

The 72 food banks included in the research distribute approximately 180 million lbs of food per year (i.e. 90% of all food estimated to be distributed by food banks in Canada – the specific figure is 179,858,378 lbs).

Total expenses of these organizations for the given fiscal year are \$57,988,596.

Therefore, the calculation for the national figure is as follows:

$179,858,378 \text{ lbs} / \$57,988,596 = 3.1 \text{ lbs per dollar of expenses.}$

\$1 donated = 3 lbs of food acquired and shared

\$1 donated = 1.36 kg