



COMMUNITY FOOD NEWS

A newsletter for Rhode Island Community Food Bank member agencies.

Winter 2009

Agency Advisory Committee

Chairperson

Kristin Allen
Connecting for Children & Families

Board of Directors Liaisons

Bob McDonough
RICFB Board of Directors

Susan Santos

RICFB Board of Directors

Network Advisory Members

The following attended meetings in
Summer & Fall 2008:

Lorraine Burns

ST. TERESA OF AVILA

Liz O Dea

ST. FRANCIS FOOD CTR.

Bob MacDonald

EAST BAY CAP

Cathy Chappron

VIOLET HILL CLUB ASSOCIATION

Larry Coughlin

WESTBAY CAP MARKET PLACE

Susan Gustaitis

PEACEDALE JOHNNYCAKE CENTER

Father Gary Lemery

EDGEWOOD PAWTUXET FOOD
CLOSET

Connie Brochu

BV EMERGENCY FOOD CENTER

Ed Boger

HONORARY MEMBER

Pauline Perkins-Moye

NEWPORT RESIDENTS COUNCIL

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

BRUCE ZAREMBKA

MARKET REPORT & C O-OP

MICHAEL CERIO

CK STUDENT ARTICLE

MATT ADAMS

RECIPE CORNER

Food Market Report

The Food Bank is continuing to work on getting product at the lowest cost, while also increasing our donor stream. While we have been successful in bringing some new donors on board, there are a limited number of available donors throughout the state. Like us, food banks nation-wide are being forced to rely on more purchased product than ever before. To this end, we are working with other food banks throughout New England to leverage our purchasing dollars. Product categories that you may be interested in learning more about include:

Beef:

Most markets for beef are expected to bottom shortly. This will result in increased prices for all cuts of beef. Trimmings which impact the price of ground beef are up to 2% versus the same period last year. Additionally, the US inventory of cattle was at its lowest since 1959. While beef prices have remained stable during the past few months, we can expect to see increased prices in this area during the upcoming quarter. We have purchased ahead at current prices, which will allow our prices to remain steady for the next one to two months.

Poultry:

Chicken prices declined from their highs of 2007 and 2008 will begin to show a gain, as producers cut back production after suffering some of the worst financial times in years. A number of producers have gone out of business or suffered huge losses. For the time being there are still some good buys on leg quarters and boneless/skinless breasts remain steady for the time being.

Eggs:

Eggs prices remain stable versus last year. Prices on medium and large eggs should show only slight fluctuations during the next quarter.

Dairy:

This category covers milk, butter, margarine, and cream. The dairy herd remains strong which will result in downward pressures on milk and most dairy prices. Cheese is beginning to edge up as buyers build stock at the lower prices they took advantage of during the past two months.

Canned Fruits and Vegetables:

While producers cost for raw product have remained fairly flat from last year, we are beginning to see the cost of the tin cans passed along to the consumer. With tin prices up 22% since the beginning of the year, this packaging cost increase is too much for processors to swallow. This area (and canned meals) will show the largest increase this year.

Fresh Produce:

Produce prices are all over the board. This is based on the seasonality of some product and harsh weather conditions that have recently hit Florida. The biggest factor that we face in the Northeast is the cost of transporting fresh produce into the worst freight corridor in the country. Depending on the product and point of origin prices have increased 5% - 10%.

Canned Tuna

In general tuna is beginning to show signs of price increases.

Attention Emergency Providers!

We would like to remind our emergency provider partners (pantries, meal sites and shelters) that **membership renewals** were sent out several weeks ago to all agency directors. The renewals were due back to us by February 6th.

If you have not already returned yours, please send them as soon as possible to avoid inactive status.

The Food Bank is participating in a national hunger study conducted by Feeding America, Hunger in America 2009

This is the nation's largest of study of emergency food recipients and the private, charitable response to hunger. **The hunger study will consist of a survey to be completed by all of our member agencies as well as selective face to face client interviews throughout the state.**

Nationally, over 200 food banks and hundreds of agencies in thousands of communities throughout the U.S. are participating in this study. At the completion of the study, we will receive both a national and RI specific report based on the data collected in this state and across the nation. It will help shed light on the hunger problem and secure funding for the Food Bank, which will in turn help support our member agencies. The data collected from the study will also help inform the public and policy makers about hunger in our country. All data will be made available to our entire network of member agencies after the study's completion.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Food Bank's Annual Agency Conference will be on Saturday, May 16 from 9 am - 2 pm at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. The focus of this year's conference will be fundraising and other agency support!

The Food Bank Welcomes New Staff!

Please join us in welcoming the following new staff to the Food Bank:

Donna LaPlante x. 245
Distribution & Customer Service Supervisor

*Agencies may call Donna with questions, concerns or comments about products ordered or received; product date codes and general food safety questions; requests for special types of products; delivery issues or program eligibility inquiries; or general questions or concerns about food bank operations and customer service.

Kathy Correia x. 227
Annual Giving Coordinator

RI Foundation's Basic Human Needs Grant

If your organization provides direct food, clothing, housing, prescription or utility assistance to Rhode Islanders most in need, you might consider The Rhode Island Foundation's Basic Human Needs small grants program as a source of funding. This program plays an important role in the Foundation's connection to the community and understanding of socio-economic currents.

You can apply to the Basic Human Needs grants program any time throughout the year for up to \$5,000 to support direct assistance to the individuals and families you serve. Typically, organizations receive notification of a grant decision within a month of applying.

Visit www.rifoundation.org/nonprofits/grantopportunities or call Alex M^cCray, of The Rhode Island Foundation, at (401) 427-4025 for more information.

Important Statistic Report Reminder:

If your agency fills out monthly statistic reports for us, please be sure to fill out the report entirely. Often we get incomplete forms and need to call agencies to follow up. Currently, we process 165 reports each month! Be sure to fill in your agency name, number, contact person, phone, days of food (if applicable) and % of food sources. Thanks so much!

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Product Handling and Food Safety

Over the past several months, the Agency Services team has fielded some questions and concerns surrounding product handling and food safety issues from our agencies. We wanted to take this opportunity to remind all of our members about a few of our guidelines:

1. The Food Bank has **produce available** to all of its member agencies year round! Even if your agency does not have a cooler or freezer, you may get fresh produce. Just remember to use it in a time-sensitive manner.
2. Agencies that pick up their **food orders with a pick-up truck need to have a covering (such as a tarp) to tie down over their order**. This is important so that debris cannot get into the boxes during transportation and food will not be damaged in inclement weather (wet boxes spoil the food inside).
3. Because of food safety concerns, both the Food Bank and Feeding America cannot permit meal sites to provide **food to go meals** to their clients. Instead, we ask that you properly cool and freeze leftovers to use at another time.
4. Food Bank and other donated products are intended for **direct service purposes only**. This means that any food or non-food items in your pantry should only be given to registered clients and registered volunteer-clients.
5. If your agency gets **grapefruit juice** it is important to share this information with your clients regarding drug-food interactions:
 - a. A drug-food interaction happens when the food you eat or drink affects the ingredients in a medicine you are taking so the medicine can't work the way it should. Drug-food interactions can happen with both prescription and over-the-counter medicines, including antacids, vitamins and iron pills.
 - b. **Eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice can cause higher levels of some medicines in your body, making it more likely that you will have side effects from the medicine.**
 - c. Interactions can happen up to 3 days after eating or drinking grapefruit. This means you cannot drink grapefruit juice in the morning and take your medications later in the day to stop possible medicine interactions.
 - d. Only some medicines interact with grapefruit. Examples include medicines for:
 - i. High cholesterol
 - ii. High blood pressure
 - iii. Heart arrhythmia (when your heartbeat isn't normal)

If clients don't know if the medicine they are taking interacts with grapefruit, we urge them to ask their doctor or pharmacist.

(Grapefruit information adapted from www.familydoctor.org)



Community Kitchen Student Highlight

The Food Bank's Community Kitchen program is a life-changing opportunity with a goal to secure employment in the food service industry for graduates.

We wanted to share an inspiring story of a Community Kitchen student. Maura O'Hara graduated from our program in July 2005. As a mother of three, she had previously worked in fast food restaurants and had been looking to gain skills and experience in order to advance her career in food service. This desire led her to our program.

After graduation, Maura went on a number of job interviews before finding the full time position she was looking for. Maura found a job as a salad and dessert cook at Laurelmead, a retirement community on the East Side of Providence. Now, more than three years later, Maura is still with Laurelmead and has been promoted to sauté cook.

"When I started working at Laurelmead, I was making \$9.50 an hour, with benefits and it immediately started to make a huge difference in my life. Now I am making \$13 an hour, have been promoted, and love what I do. Community Kitchen gave me a lot more than kitchen skills; it gave me life lessons for the workplace".



Lightly Fried Calamari

Recipe provided by Matt Adams, Nutrition Education Coordinator

- 2 cups calamari, sliced into rings (use tubes and tentacles)
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- salt and pepper to taste
- vegetable oil, for frying
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup sliced mild banana pepper (optional)
- 3/4 cup large diced tomato (optional)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/4 cup chopped scallion (optional)

Clean squid and rinse well before dredging in flour. Season flour with salt and pepper. Coat calamari with flour until each ring separates easily from others. Put in sifter and shake off excess flour. Heat oil and fry calamari until golden brown. **DO NOT OVERCOOK!** Start with 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat. When butter is melted, add peppers and tomatoes. Deglaze with lemon juice. Add remaining butter and scallions. Toss. Add calamari and toss. Serve and enjoy!

Speaking of cooking...our next Community Kitchen class starts Feb. 23rd.

Interested applicants should call Marilyn for a pre-screening at 942-6325 x239.

Community Meetings for Agencies

Woonsocket Agencies in Action Forum: Wednesday, March 4th from 12:30 - 2 PM at Bryan s Food Center, 190 North Main St.

Shopping Smart Workshop: Monday, March 30th from 10 AM to 12 noon at the Food Bank.

Newport County Forum: Wednesday, April 8th from 12 - 2 PM at the Florence Gray Center, Newport.

Registration is required for all workshops, please call us today!

Agency Orientations

Orientations are required for any new staff or volunteers who will be ordering, shopping, or picking up food from the Food Bank. Orientations are also a good reference for anyone who would like to brush up on their Food Bank knowledge.

SCHEDULE:

February: Thursday, Feb. 12th from 9:30 AM -12 noon OR Wednesday, Feb. 25 from 5:30 - 8 PM

March: Thursday, March 5th from 9:30 AM -12 noon OR Thursday, March 19th from 5:30 - 8 PM

To register, or to find out when more Orientations are being held, call Agency Services at 942-6325.

Mission Statement

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank provides quality food to people facing hunger through our network of certified member agencies. We also provide leadership and information to promote citizen action, advance government nutrition assistance, and promote private efforts aimed at developing effective solutions toward the elimination of hunger in RI.