**FOOD SECURITY**

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing ***"when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life".*** Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences. Household food security exists when all members, at all times, have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security incorporates a measure of resilience to future disruption or unavailability of critical food supply due to various risk factors including droughts, shipping disruptions, fuel shortages, economic instability, and wars.

* **Food stability:** Refers to the ability to obtain food over time.
* **Food access:** Refers to the affordability and allocation of food, as well as the preferences of individuals and households.
* **Food availability:** Relates to the supply of food through production, distribution, and exchange.
* **Utilization / Consumption of Food:**

**What is Food Security**

Two common definitions of food security come from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):

* Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO) Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations)
* Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum, (USDA) **United States Department of Agriculture**:

(1) The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods

(2) An assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

In 2006 it was reported that globally, the number of people who are overweight has surpassed the number who are undernourished - the world had more than one billion people who were overweight, and an estimated 800 million who were undernourished. Worldwide around 852 million people are chronically hungry due to extreme poverty, while up to 2 billion people lack food security intermittently due to varying degrees of poverty. 17,000 children die of hunger and malnutrition related diseases every day, which equals 6 million children who die of hunger every year.

In the United States of America there are approximately 2,000,000 farmers, less than 1% of the population. A direct relationship exists between food consumption levels and poverty. Families with the financial resources to escape extreme poverty rarely suffer from chronic hunger; while poor families not only suffer the most from chronic hunger, but are also the segment of the population most at risk during food shortages and famines.

**Things affecting food security today include:**

* *Global Water Crisis* - Water table reserves are falling in many countries (including Northern China, the US, and India) due to widespread over-pumping and irrigation.
* *Climate Change* - Rising global temperatures are beginning to have a ripple effect on crop yields, forest resources, water supplies and altering the balance of nature.
* *Land Degradation* - Intensive farming leads to a vicious cycle of exhaustion of soil fertility and decline of agricultural yields.
* *Greedy Land Deals* - Corporations and Governments buying rights to millions of acres of agricultural land in developing countries to secure their own long-term food supplies.
* **Food security** exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern.
* **Food insecurity**exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above.