



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE  
STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS  
OF EMERGENCY  
FEEDING PROGRAMS

## Ask the Expert:

### A Historical Perspective on Food Banks

Written by Crystal Looney, Undergraduate Student in Professional Writing, Purdue University

Food banks have been relieving hunger in the US for more than 35 years. The food bank concept was born when founder, John Van Hengel, met a desperate mother at his local soup kitchen. The woman shared that she regularly sifted through trash in search of food. She suggested that someone should open a place where food could be provided to those in need, rather than thrown away.

In the late 1960's, the nation's first food bank, St. Mary's Food Bank, opened in Phoenix, AZ. In its first year of business the bank distributed 275,000 pounds of food, showing the great need for emergency foods. The presence of food banks grew but experienced a great increase after the passage of the 1976 Tax Reform Act which gave incentive to companies who donated their products. As a result, there were food banks established in 18 cities across the country by 1977. In 1979, Second Harvest was created, the national organization for food banks, later renamed America's Second Harvest, the Nation's Food Bank Network. The name was revised again in 2008 to Feeding America, a name that reflected the organization's true mission. Today, Feeding America is the largest hunger-relief organization in the US, feeding 46 million people at risk of hunger, including 12 million children and 7 million seniors.

Unfortunately, food banks continually struggle to meet emergency food demands. Staff and volunteers are regularly trying to answer the question "How can food banks better serve the emergency food needs and promote long term access to food in the areas they serve?"

One way food pantries are answering this question is by shifting to a newer model of operation called client choice. Rather than the traditional food bank model of distributing pre-packaged bags of groceries, client-choice pantries allow visitors to select items according to their needs. The client-focused model can reduce food waste, promote cultural awareness, and preserve client dignity.

In addition to allowing client-choice, food pantries are also providing educational workshops for the community. Nutritionists and cooking experts help clients learn the basics of maintaining a healthy diet within a limited budget.

Food banks have come a long way and are still growing and adapting. Communities can look forward to new solutions that not only fight hunger but also improve diet and health and reduce food waste.

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Sources: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/our-history/>  
<https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Social-Innovation-Scan-of-Food-Banks-V3.0-FINAL-clean.pdf>

## Food Safety: What is a GMO?

Written by Clara Vasquez-Mejia, Food Scientist B.Sc, M.Sc



Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) can be defined as organisms (i.e., plants, animals or microorganisms) with genetic materials that have been altered in a way that does not occur naturally in the environment. Examples of genetically modified traits in crops include herbicide tolerance in soybeans, insect resistance in corn, and modified fatty acid composition in canola. Genetic modification has increased the amount of crops produced, reduced costs and use of pesticides, and created a more nutritious crop of higher quality.

In the US, regulation and risk-assessment of GMOs is conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 1997, the FDA created a process for GM crop developers to get guidance on keeping new plant varieties safe by testing for toxicity and allergens.

Ongoing discussions of the ethics of using GMOs include how they are related to allergies, the ethics of moving genes from one type of crop to another, and other concerns. Currently available GM foods have passed safety tests and are not likely to present any risks for humans.



Sources: [1] World Health Organization (2015). Frequently asked questions on genetically modified foods. [http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas\\_work/food-technology/faq-genetically-modified-food/en/](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/areas_work/food-technology/faq-genetically-modified-food/en/)

[2] Phillips, T. (2008) Genetically modified organisms (GMOs): Transgenic crops and recombinant DNA technology. *Nature Education* 1(1):213. <https://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/genetically-modified-organisms-gmos-transgenic-crops-and-732>

[3] US Food and Drug Administration. (2016). How FDA regulates food from genetically engineered plants. Updated October 13, 2015. <https://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/GEPlants/ucm461831.htm>

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## Controlling Sodium Intake

Written by Sanjna Vinze, College of Health and Human Sciences, Purdue University

About 75 million American adults have high blood pressure, and only 54% of them have the condition controlled. Hypertension or high blood pressure is caused by an increased blood volume and resistance to blood flow in the arteries which makes the heart work a lot harder. Risk factors for developing high blood pressure include genetics, poor diet, and lack of exercise. Having high blood pressure can increase the risk of stroke, heart attack, kidney failure and congestive heart failure. Most Americans get way more salt than they need so eating less salt is one practical way to help manage blood pressure.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that Americans consume less than 2,300 milligrams (1 teaspoon) of sodium per day but most Americans are getting over 3,400 milligrams! Sodium may be hidden in foods. Some foods that are canned or in a ready-to-eat form may contain high amounts of sodium. Follow these tips to reduce sodium intake:

- 1) Cook from scratch when you can
- 2) Choose products that are sodium free or low sodium
- 3) Rinse canned foods to wash off sodium, this can reduce salt by almost 40%!
- 4) Substitute spices and herbs to flavor instead of salt

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/salt/index.htm>



## Apple Rose Tarts

By Jianqi Zhang, Dietetics, Purdue University

### Ingredients (4 servings)

- **1 apple**
- **3 tablespoons water**
- **1 sheet of puff pastry or dough**
- **1/4 cup cream cheese (may substitute with jam or peanut butter)**
  - **1 teaspoon lemon juice**



### Directions:

1. Remove the core and thinly slice the apple.
2. Combine the apple slices with lemon juice and water in a bowl and microwave 3 minutes. Cool the bowl in ice water. Pat dry the apple slices and set aside.
3. Roll out the puff pastry and cut into 4 even strips.
4. Spread cream cheese onto the puff pastry strips.
5. Arrange the apple slices vertically on half of each puff pastry and sprinkle cinnamon on top.
6. Fold the puff pastry lengthwise on top of the apple slices and roll up. Place the apple pastry rolls into greased muffin tins.
7. Bake for 40 minutes at 375 degrees F.

### Nutrition Information (1 serving)

Calories: 340

Fat: 7g

Carbs: 43g

Protein: 2g

\*Nutrition information will vary based on type of filling

Underlining denotes TEFAP commodity ingredients

Recipe Source: <https://www.tastemade.com/videos/apple-cream-cheese-rose-tarts>  
Photos: [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org)



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This newsletter is edited by Ashlyn Burns, Yibin Liu, PhD and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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## In the News: The 2017 Tax Bill

IN THE NEWS

**Written by Ashlyn Burns, Master of Public Health Student, Purdue University**

The Tax Jobs and Cuts Act of 2017 was signed into law on December 22, 2017. While the tax bill has a wide range of different implications that will affect many Americans in different ways, there are a few key changes worth noting in regards to food banks and food bank funding.

The main difference under the new tax reform is the standard deduction amounts that individuals and married couples are allowed to claim on their taxes. Single filers may now claim a standard deduction of \$12,000, while married couples may claim a standard deduction of \$24,000. These numbers are nearly double the previous amounts allowed.

The reason that this change may impact food bank funding is because there may be more Americans filing their taxes under the standard deduction instead of itemizing their returns. Charitable donations to food banks and other organizations are often tax-deductible. However, individuals and married couples will only see a tax incentive for their charitable donations if they itemize their taxes. Now that more taxpayers will be inclined to claim the standardized deduction, there is less incentive for them to make donations.

There is no guarantee that this will lead to less funding received in terms of donations, but it is a possibility that food banks should be aware of so that they can be prepared to seek alternative methods for fundraising and seeking donations.

Source: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1>