

ALASKA



FOOD COALITION

Volume Four, Number Two

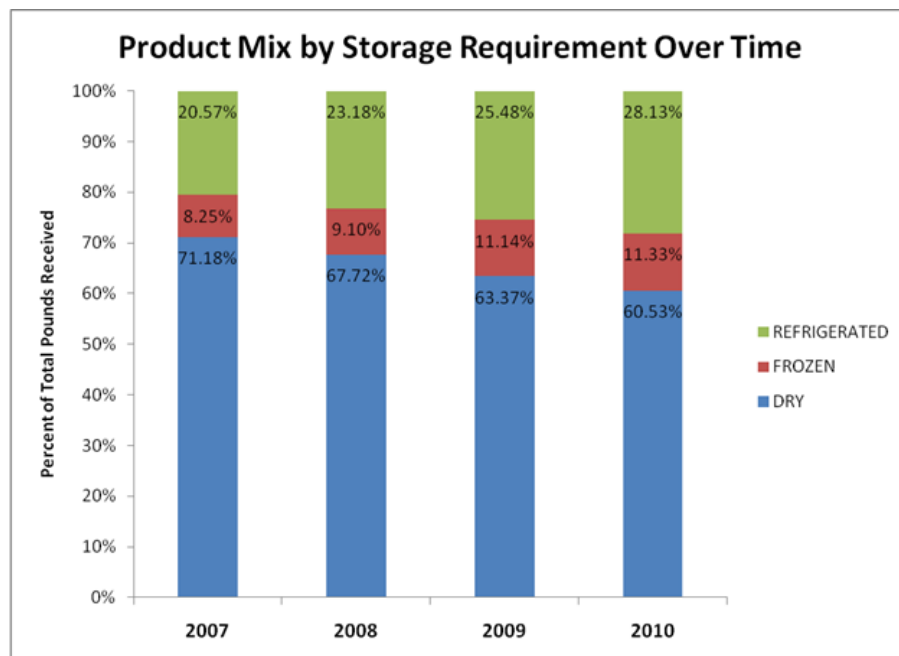
February 2011

“Produce programs reclaim more than 400 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables every year, a 25-fold increase since 1991”
- Susan H. Evans & Peter Clarke, ‘Disseminating Orphan Innovation’

Preparing for Changes in Your Product Mix

Trends in Product Mix

Twenty-five years ago, hungry people who came to food banks received a pre-packed bag of boxed and canned food. Today, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables make up an increasingly large portion of what is on the shelves of local food banks. Feeding America, the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity, tracks the amount and types of products moved in and out of each member warehouse or location during a calendar year. Data analyzed over the last four years shows an increase in refrigerated and frozen product mix. “Today, we are able to distribute more than 500 million pounds of fresh produce each year.” *President and CEO of Feeding America, Vicki Escarra, USA Today 1/31/11*



Data Courtesy of Feeding America

From Vermont to Alaska, food banks are increasing their supply of fresh and frozen produce. As consumers demand more fresh produce, the surplus product that stores donate to food banks is moving from canned, nonperishable items to fresh. Food banks are partnering with local supermarkets, farms and state prisons to help gather and distribute food. In 2005, Food Bank of Alaska received 250,318 pounds of fresh vegetables. In 2010 they received 378,846 pounds, a 51% increase. Food Bank of Alaska also saw an increase in frozen product:

<u>ITEM*</u>	<u>POUNDS/2005</u>	<u>POUNDS/2010</u>
Frozen Cheese	1,646	2,904
Frozen Meat (Includes Chicken)	153,101	283,708
Frozen Fish	3,664	5,523
Frozen Wild Game	365	1,864
Frozen Food (Variety)	74,225	125,004

*This does not include federal commodities such as TEFAP, CSFP and FDPIR.

Data Courtesy of Food Bank of Alaska

Storage is Key

Many non-profits that utilize food banks are not equipped to handle the increase in frozen or refrigerated foods. Handling fresh produce requires a change in operations; shortened shelf-life requires additional storage. Corporate and government grants are helping food pantries increase their capacity to store and ship refrigerated and frozen foods. AFC Mini Grants have been supporting anti-hunger organizations in Alaska since 2005, distributing over \$145,000 in 35 Alaska communities. A FY11 AFC Mini Grant awarded to the Glory Hole in Juneau helped cover the installation costs for a 7' x 15' x 7/7" walk-in freezer/refrigerator unit. By increasing their capacity to store more frozen food for a longer time, the Glory Hole will be better able to continue having food on hand for meal preparation and distribution through their food box program. Kodak Island Food Bank, another FY11 AFC Mini-Grant recipient, used their grant toward purchasing a refrigerator to store fresh fruits, vegetables, milk and juices. Requests for proposals for AFC FY12 Mini Grants will be posted in July.

RESOURCES

Disseminating Orphan Innovation by Susan H. Evans & Peter Clarke, Stanford Social Innovation Review
<http://blog.com.washington.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/SSIR-OrphanInnovations.pdf>

From Canned Goods to Fresh, Food Banks Adapt
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/10/us/10foodbank.html>

More food banks offer fresh fruits, vegetables
http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/food/2011-01-31-foodbank31_ST_N.htm

The Alaska Food Coalition is here to help. Copies of Alaska Food Coalition White Papers are available online: <http://www.alaskafood.org/whitepapers.shtml> for additional information, contact Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition Manager: afc@foodbankofalaska.org

NEXT MONTH: Healthy Hungry Free Kids Act and What it Means to Alaska