

IMCPA

Food Security

Short Term Guidelines - Immediate adoption



CONTINENTAL FARM
CONTINENTAL FARM
Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture

Introduction

If the situation in some countries gets really bad and chaotic, food security is a primary concern. In times of crisis a household is advised to build a stock of food and go on purchasing whatever is available so he can maintain the regular offering of bhoga to the Supreme Lord. We learn this just by tradition and experiences of many of our ancestors. Within the Vaishnava Tradition we hear Rupa Goswami suggesting to keep 25% aside for emergency times. Similarly, in times of uncertainty, IMCPA is suggesting that each yatra adopt this food security mechanism within your temple and offer education to the congregation. Considering the gravity of the moment it seems extremely important to take action and many governments are actively working on this point.

For the different Yatras, the food security committee inspired by the Ministry of Cow Protection and Agriculture, is suggesting directions for developing a food security system

which can be implemented immediately in each Yatra. This will be done by proposing two action plans, namely,

- ❑ 1- short term guidelines (STG), this is the object of this document.
- ❑ 2- medium-long term guidelines (LMTG) gradually produced by the committee.

“According to the Vedic culture, one is rich if he possesses a large stock of food grain and a very large number of animals. Dhānyena dhanavān gavayā dhanavān: one is rich if he possesses food grain, cows and bulls. [CC Adi 14.55 Purport]”

Short term guideline,

- ❑ 1- short term guidelines (STG), this is the object of this document.
- ❑ 2- medium-long term guidelines (LMTG) gradually produced by the committee.
- ❑ List down all existing temples with the number of residents and members that need to be maintained by the temple.
- ❑ The temple should have a stock of a few major items like grains and pulses. This list is based on emergency situations and it only allows for simple food habits. Temples are free to make adjustments according to the standard of food they serve to their residents. We propose to have 4 to 6 months of food requirement in stock. Depending on the number of residents we can roughly calculate the required amount of stock for food grain and essential items.
- ❑ Perishables like fruits, vegetables and milk items can be optional.
- ❑ Educate the congregation about the need to build their own food security system and have realistic expectations towards the temple.
- ❑ Now each temple should procure the quantity calculated immediately from the market. Before buying from the market it can be checked if the nearby ISKCON farm has any of the items. In case temples do not have funds to do this some of the options below can be taken.
 - ❑ a) A loan can be given to them.
 - ❑ b) Some temples can volunteer to support them by paying their food security bill.

Considerations about managing the food stock

Storing food is a must and rotation of that storage is also a must. It is understood that many grains will get weevils if they are stored above three months. In that case they need to be repacked into airtight storage drums along with appropriate organic tablets to ward off infestation. Also whole turmeric root, neem leaves, red chilli and or cloves will definitely help. These are very basic guidelines each temple can define the way to better deal with the stock.

The need to educate the congregation about food security

In many regions of India and temperate countries the storage of food is a tradition for different reasons. There is a need for the temple to educate communities about food security because in times of crisis clear expectations are essential. Each family must take care of storing essential food for the family to survive for at least for 6 months. And depending on the local situation, this food supply, also should not be in one spot, for the same reason mentioned below. Of course people should be taught about how to store, what kind of food etc. It all depends on the local situation.

Decentralized food storage

With the government losing control over some areas, which is starting to happen in Brazil and other places where slums exist, then having centralized food storage will be very dangerous and unproductive. Anytime someone armed can come and grab all the food. Also, if those times are coming, then travel, communication and disperse of food to the devotees will be a very difficult, if a possible job at all. Therefore it is suggested through this document that our policy for food storage should be primarily a decentralized one.

This kind of decentralized approach is very much in line with Srila Prabhupada's vision of local production/consumption. It is most practical because it relieves ISKCON authorities from financial involvement, dispersing food, from dangers to attract gangs by having food banks in the temple farms. It also very naturally puts responsibility for material

arrangements on the shoulders of grihastha. They may solve this problem according to their level of expectations and money.

This kind of policy gives ISKCON temples/clergy a natural role of preachers of Krsna consciousness, the role which is especially in need during these commotions. It also relieves ISKCON authorities from the sticky and unpleasant role of someone who makes decisions on distribution of food to congregations (who gets what and how much?).

Thus temples shall store food only for temple dependent devotees, and provide congregation members with the knowledge about how to do it for themselves.

Study case 1 from Ahmedabad

Eg. Short-term plan for ISKCON Ahmedabad (50 residents) requirement per resident

Food Category	Per resident/ Month (kg or L)	Total amount 4 or 6 months	Total Amount by category
Grains		4 months	1200
Wheat	3	600	
Rice	3	600	
Legumes / Dal			400
Dal 1	2	400	
Sugars			200
Sugar	1	50	
Fat and oils			
Oil	1		200
Cooking specials			
Salt	0.25		50
Species (3 varieties)	.2		40
Total			2090

Study case 2 - Jaipur

Background

Previously we had Govinda's Restaurant, Guesthouse and Gift Shop running and this was giving good alternative incomes. Also the Hundi Box and Sunday Feast sponsors were adding to that.

As well as that we have developed a monthly donor base under different heads such as Goshalla (continues now), Deities (continues now), and Food for Life (continues now and has increased 100 times)

Our monthly expense was Rs 12 Lac but since the lock down Govindas, Guesthouse, Giftshop staff and some security, cleaning labour and daily labour have been reduced. Also our collectors are not going out and our 15 bhakti vriksha programs have gone online so we are saving on petrol. Presently our monthly overhead is around 5.5 lac, with reduced food and electricity accounted for. The shortfall is being covered by donations.

Previously donations were coming from our collectors and still they are maintaining collections online but now many of our congregation have stepped forward and are soliciting monthly donations online and this is growing.

Now presently we are supporting devotees:

Pujaris	brahmacaris	full time	6
	There are three grihastha families that do free seva, no support.		
Deity cooks	brahmacari	full time	1
	grihastha	full time	1 (+3 dependants)
Devotee cook	brahmacaris	full time	4
Office	accountant	full time	1
	back office	full time	1
Collectors	grihasthas	full time	10 (+13 dependants)

Temple President	grihastha	full time	1 (4 dependants)
New Bhaktas	bramacaris	full time	4
Students	youth boys	Part time	2
Security	night guard	full time	1
Guesthouse Security	night guard	full time	1
Total of 53 dependent devotees, women, children and staff.			

Food security

We have created a Central Store that purchases everything in bulk and supplies to each department. All goods, not only food. Here we have kept a 5 months supply of basic food items, we have planned to keep 12 months but this situation has come as we were building up.

We calculated the number for potential people that we needed to support in case of such an emergency and it has worked out about as we expected. We had thought many would leave and go home so calculated for 60 devotees, now in actual case it is 53.

We then looked at our monthly food bill needs from our accounts department, divided that by the then number of dependants and multiplied by the actual case today. That gave us the monthly requirement of each item. We then began approaching vendors, donors and farmers for donations in kind of these items.

Main staples that are must. All grains are whole, split grains storage time is shorter.

Wheat.	Yellow Mung Dal.	Rice.
Arahar Dal.	Chick Pea.	
Cold pressed Peanut Oil.	Cold pressed Sesame Oil.	Cold pressed Mustard Oil.
Salt	Sugar	Ghee
Coriander Seeds	Cumin Seeds	Tumeric powder
Ginger powder	Hing	Garam Masala
Mango powder	Red Chilli powder	Black pepper
Cloves	Elaichi	Bay Leaf
Vinegar	Mustard seed	Black salt
Peanuts		

Other Items.

Flat rice	Puffed rice	Yeast
Tooth paste	Soap	Basic medicine cabinet.
Brushes and brooms.	Washing powder	Pasta packets
Liquid Cleaner	Pot scrubbers	Floor cleaner

These are the basics but the list goes on. We also have maintenance items that we have stored.

Diesel	Petrol	LPG Gas
Screws	Nails	Electric wire
PVC pipes	Pump parts	Essential Tools
Lighters	Candles	Pens
Paper	Ink refills	Grinder blades
Cement	Sand	Stone
Ropes	Tarpaulins	Torches (some solar)
Bleach (unscented for purify water)	Gardening tools	Hose pipes.

the list goes on and we need to add to this more.

We have created a Central Store that purchases everything in bulk and supplies to each department.

The things we knew and now realise in another situation.

Electricity is a must. 25 kilowatts solar plant required. Lights, fans and refrigeration for deities and devotees. To power our water pump because although we have enough water for cooking and drinking it is 580 feet underground and if there is no electricity we have no water. Also a wheat grinder is a very important equipment to have.

Plans for alternative cooking. Presently we are fully under LPG Gas. We need to develop a Biomass Gas plant for alternative cooking gas. At the same time we realise this is not stand alone and we will need materials ready such as fire bricks and chimney to convert our kitchen into wood fired rocket stoves. (plan is on the drawing board)

Lastly if we plan for a longer period and a situation where essential services like transport and electricity are out then we must plan for growing our own and a certain level of self sufficiency. First on the list is a Seed Bank. High quality heirloom seeds are needed so that they can be saved and used as growing seed for the next crop. Storage of seed is also not simple and requires proper research and systems. Humidity, temperature, oxygen all play a major part of long term storage.