



67% of households in Garden Hill eat country food.

GARDEN HILL FIRST NATION: Household Food Survey Shows Food Prices are Unaffordable

Shauna Zahariuk, Mariah Mailman and Shirley Thompson
Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba
s_thompson@cc.umanitoba.ca



A Garden Hill resident said, "produce is sparse and store-bought food is often spoiled [by the time we get it]".

The largest store near Garden Hill is on Stevenson Island. It costs approximately \$8 by water taxi (roundtrip) to get there if you don't own your own boat.

BACKGROUND

Garden Hill is concerned about the high cost of and lack of access to healthy food. This study found that people living in the north have problems obtaining proper nutrition because they have limited access to healthy food, such as fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, and dairy products. Lack of healthy food access contributes to health problems such as diabetes and obesity.

OBJECTIVES

This study asked:

- Do household members run out of food before they get money to buy more?
- Could household members afford to eat balanced meals?
- What would people like to see in their community to improve access to healthy food?
- What are the barriers to eating healthy in this community?

METHODS

A door to door household food security survey and interviews were conducted in 2009 by Shauna Zahariuk and 41 households out of the 436 households in the community were surveyed (Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, 2008. 2006 Census Profile, Garden Hill First Nation, IRI). All people interviewed were 18 years and older. The survey findings were analyzed by Statistical Products and Survey Solution (SPSS). Open-ended qualitative interviews were conducted in order to get a holistic understanding of the problem and the solutions. Participatory video was undertaken to record community engagement and your stories.

FINDINGS

Country food is central to people in Garden Hill and made up 10% to 90% of total foods consumed. The survey revealed that 67% of households either hunted or fished, or received country food from relatives. The survey also showed that 73% of households had a freezer to store country foods, garden produce and store-bought foods. Freshness, variety, and affordability were recurring themes concerning store-bought produce. High costs of foods was the largest barrier to eating healthy (71%), and then freshness of produce (10%). Many people expressed that produce was often wilted or rotten either at purchase time or shortly thereafter. The survey suggests that the community would like to see an all-season road (20%), which could aid in reducing the costs of foods as people could drive to larger communities and goods could be transported to the community via road. 20% of households identified the need for lower prices of healthy foods so that people can afford them, and 12% said that more stores are needed in Garden Hill.

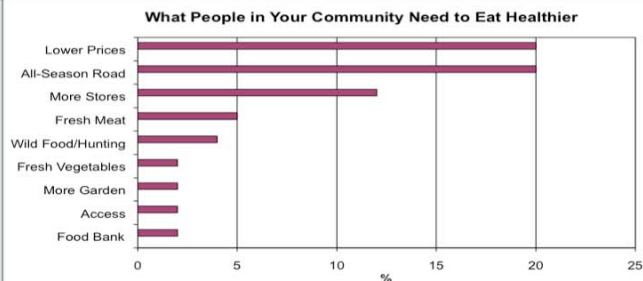


Figure 1. Number one priority of what people said they wanted in their community

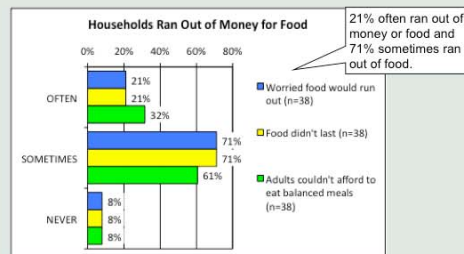


Figure 2. Households worried money would run out (blue), money did run out (yellow), and they couldn't afford balanced meals (green).

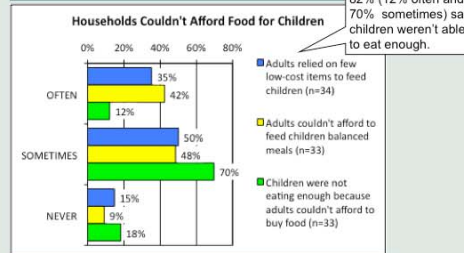


Figure 3. Households with children relied on a few low-cost food items (blue), couldn't afford balanced meals (yellow), and weren't able to eat enough (green). Of the households interviewed, 15% did not have children under 18 years.

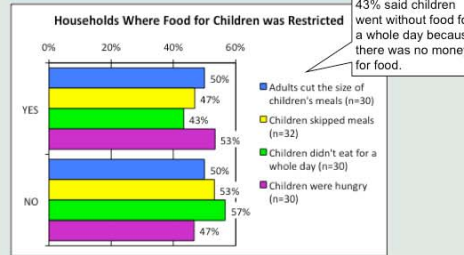


Figure 4. Households where children's meals were small (blue), skipped (yellow), children didn't eat for a whole day (green), and children were hungry but there was no money for food (purple).

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

The survey revealed that:

- 92% of people ran out of food and had no money to buy more (21% of households often ran out of food and 71% sometimes).
- Five out of every ten households (53%) reported children were hungry, because there was not enough money for food. Similarly, 50% of children's meals were smaller than they wanted, because there wasn't enough food (Figure 4).
- Four children out of every ten households (43%) of children did not eat for a full day, and almost half (47%) of children's meals were skipped because there wasn't enough money for food (Figure 4); additionally, children's meals were often skipped (25%) and sometimes skipped (75%) (total 100%) on a monthly basis.
- Almost nine out of ten households (85% total with 35% often and 42% sometimes) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost foods to feed their children (Figure 3).
- Almost all households (93% total with 32% often and 61% sometimes) could not afford to purchase healthy foods (Figure 2).

PROGRAMS AND CONTACTS

Programs are by request, to help actions in communities. Contact for help and supplies:

1. Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI) is funded by the Manitoba Government. NHFI funds the Bayline Regional Roundtable (BRRT), Four Arrows Regional Health Authority and Manitoba Food Matters to increase access to healthy food and to support food projects. Contacts: Jennell Majeran, Manager (204-677-6677, jennell.majeran@gov.mb.ca) and Jessica Paley (204-945-0569, jessica.paley@gov.mb.ca).
2. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) provides gardening support to communities to give workshops on gardening and chicken production. Contact: Brian Hunt (204-856-9255, Fax: 204-745-5690, brian.hunt@gov.mb.ca).
3. Frontier School Division provides Veggie Adventure school activities and greenhouse and gardening expertise for northern climates. Contact: Chuck Stensgard (204-473-2332, chuckstensgard@hotmail.com).
4. Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI) provides some funding for traditional activities, gardening and healthy snacks. Contact: Oberon Munroe, Garden Hill Health Authority (204-465-2343).
5. Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA) provides a freezer revolving loan program, works with schools and assists with gardening, including providing some seeds and loaning gardening tools and rototiller. Contact Larry Wood at lwood553@yahoo.ca or Byron Beardy (204-457-2810 or 947-2397, Fax: 204-982-3359, feather204@shaw.ca or farha@mts.net).
6. Apply for Green Team grants that are 100% government funded to employ youth to start community gardens, market gardens or help with household gardening. Fill out the application form at: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/youth/employers/hometown.html>.
7. Look at the participatory video called "Growing Hope in Northern Manitoba" at Video Trailer (8 minutes): <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~thompson4/Video.html>. Full length video (22 minutes): <http://www.vimeo.com/8114019>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research Regional Partnerships Program (CIHR-RPP). We thank to the community of Garden Hill, Linda Manookeisick, Larry Wood, Byron Beardy, Mark Dourn, Four Arrows Regional Health Authority, and Island Lake Lodge.