

Glossary

Annuals – plants that are planted each year and last for one season

Bar Graph – a method of displaying survey information. Bars for each one of the response categories can be displayed. The height of the bar reflects the proportion of total respondents for each answer

Close-ended questions – a question in which the subject's responses are limited to given alternatives

Community – an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location

Consuming – a step in the food system, it can mean the act of actually eating something or just the act of purchasing it. A consumer is a person who can go to the store, select which product they want and purchase it.

Dietary Guidelines <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/> (Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000, 5th edition) – Since 1980 and every five years since then, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have jointly published the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee consisting of prominent experts in nutrition and health reviews current scientific and medical knowledge and recommend to the Secretaries revisions to the Guidelines. The Committees produces reports of their recommendations and rationale to the Secretaries. The Departments then review, edit and publish the revised Guidelines,. The Dietary Guidelines provide the basis for Federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities. Specifically, the Guidelines provide advice for healthy Americans ages 2 years and above about food choices that promote health and prevent disease.

Disposing, composting and recycling – the step in the food system that follow consumption in the home or at a restaurant. This food can go into the garbage or can be added to a compost pile and turned into a valuable, rich fertilizing material to add to a home garden or a farmer's field. Food packages may also have different fates with different environmental impacts. All food packages, of course, can be thrown away and added to the solid waste accumulated by a community. However, many food packages can be recycled. Food packing materials such as paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, glass and tin can be recycled depending on the services provided by the community.

Distribution - the process of dividing up, spreading out, and delivering food to various places. Farm products can be taken from their original sources and delivered to supermarkets, other food stores, or farmers' markets for sale as a whole fresh product - like many fruits and vegetables. Alternatively, farm products can be transported to a site where they will be transformed in some way, combined with other ingredients, made into food products, packaged and then distributed through a number of marketing channels. Most of what we find in grocery stores today has been transported great distances and has undergone some degree of processing. We currently transport food by truck, train, boat, and plane. A few foods (tomatoes and bananas primarily) that will be transported a significant distance are usually harvested before full ripeness so that they will withstand the bumps along the way.

Externality - exists when costs or benefits generated by an agent (say a farmer, or a truck driver) that does not register as a cost or benefit to that agent or end-user. The pollution generated by transporting food is not paid for by the trucking company in the price of the fuel, or by the consumer in the price of the food. The beekeeper is not compensated for the benefit his/her bees provide to a neighboring orchard in the form of pollination. These costs and benefits are "externalized" and not paid for directly at the grocery store register.

Food Guide - a nutrition education tool that graphically represents how recommendations on nutrient intake are translated into recommendations on food intake. Foods are clustered into groups that are similar in nutrient composition. A food guide provides recommendations on what food groups to choose from and the number of servings of food from each group in order to get a nutritionally adequate and wholesome diet. The USDA Food Pyramid (<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/Fpyr/pyramid.html>) is the federal food guide that helps consumers implement the Dietary Guidelines (see above). There are other food guides, including one for the Northeast. <<http://www.nutrition.cornell.edu/foodguide/>>.

Food Group - the grouping of foods that are similar in nutrient composition. On the USDA Food Guide Pyramid there are 6 primary food groups: Bread, cereal, pasta, tortillas, whole grains; Vegetables; Fruits; Dry beans, nuts, eggs, poultry, fish, meats; Milk, yogurt, cheese; and Fats, oils, sweets.

Food Labels - the label on a food package that provides information about its manufacturer and its nutritional content. The Food and Drug

Administration regulates the information that is allowed on labels for foods marketed in the U.S. <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flg-toc.html>

Food Miles – the distance food travels from where it is grown or raised to where it is ultimately purchased by the consumer.

Food Production - involves many of the activities that take place on a farm, at an orchard, in bodies of water, or in greenhouses and fish-farm tanks to produce our food. Food production depends on the "input" of several resources, both natural (soil, water, climate, seeds, and human labor) and human-made (machinery, fuel, fertilizers, pesticides). A farmer owns or rents land to plant crops, or tend animals. The inputs required vary depending on what is being grown or raised and the type of agricultural system that is in place. For example, many of the pesticides and fertilizers common in most of our agriculture are not allowed in organic agriculture.

Food System - the interdependent parts of the system that provides food to a community. This includes the growing, harvesting, storing, transporting, processing, packaging, marketing, retailing, and consuming of the product. Some or all of these steps in the food system may be within the community but they also may be part of the global or regional system instead.

Growing - the process of preparing the soil, planting, maintaining the food item to be harvested. There are a variety of ways to grow products depending on the culture and climate. Large corporate farms may use chemically manufactured pesticides to maintain their crop while a local farmer may use other plants as pesticides.

Growing Season – the period of time between when a seed or a start is planted and the when it is harvested.

Harvesting – the process of reaping a food product from the earth. A variety of harvesting methods are used across the world from hand picking to large machinery that can harvest large portions at once.

Harvest Calendar – a calendar that indicates the period of the year when crops are being harvested. Many harvest calendars also provide information about when a crop is available from local harvest. This period is usually quite a bit longer than the harvest period. For example, see the New York State Harvest Calendar <http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/HarvestCalendar.html>.

Health claims - claims about the relationship between a nutrient or food and a disease or health-related condition, such as calcium and osteoporosis, and fat and cancer.

Input – something introduced into a system or expended in its operation to attain a result or output.

Interviewer Effects or Interviewer Bias – effects on the respondent's answers in an interview that are produced by characteristics of the interviewer (including the interviewer's attitudes or physical characteristics like sex or race).

Marketing - labels and pictures on the boxes and containers in which food is packaged. A large portion of the money used to buy the products goes to the development of attractive images to encourage the consumer to choose one product over another. The marketing step researches what people are attracted to and finds ways to show the consumers their products by television, newspaper, and magazine advertisements.

Natural Resources – something from the earth that we can use to perform or create something we need or want. Most people know that oil and gas are natural resources, but soil, water and air are also natural resources required to produce food.

Open-ended questions – a type of question on an interview that does not limit the respondent's response to any pre-selected alternatives.

Output – something that is produced by a system. Outputs can be desirable products, such as crops from a farm system, or undesirable, such as nitrogen run-off from fertilizers used on a farm.

Packaging – the step in the food system in which food is put into containers that will be presented to the consumers. The packagers receive the food from the processors or the farms and put them in paper, foil, plastic, cans, etc. for distribution to stores and markets.

Perennials – plants that will bear fruit for several years before needing to be replaced with new plantings

Pie Chart – a circle that is divided into portions (pieces) that represent the different possible responses to a question. The circle, or the whole pie, represents all the people who responded to the question. The pieces reflect how many of that total responded to the possible answers.

Population – the total number of individuals occupying an area or making up a whole. A designated part of a universe from which a sample

is drawn; also, the aggregation of people or other research subjects to which one wishes to generalize his or her research.

Processing - the step in the food system that involves everything done to change the food form from its original, such as, cutting, freezing, boiling, canning, etc. A food can be prepared in a variety of ways for a variety of uses. For example, a processing plant may receive apples to process into applesauce or apple juice.

Response Rate – the number of completed interviews or questionnaires divided by the number of eligible respondents in the sample.

Retailing – the step in which food is transported to market. This may be at a family owned grocery store or a franchised supermarket.

Sample - a small group of people selected in order to find out something about the entire population. The sample is usually selected randomly, so that it is more likely to be representative of the population

Serving size - the basis for reporting each food's nutrient content. It is uniform and reflects the amounts of a food people actually eat.

Shelf life – the amount of time a food will maintain quality at room temperature

Storing - keeping food items in a climate controlled environment until it is used. For example, this is done with apples in the northeast in order for local apples to be available throughout the winter months. Some foods are more perishable so they cannot be stored for a long period of time while potatoes can be kept for many months.

Subject – someone who agrees to participate in a study.

Survey Research – the research strategy where one collects data from all or part of a population to assess the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of naturally occurring variables.

System - an interdependent group of items that form a unified whole. A system is a group of interacting, interrelated, and oftentimes interdependent elements that function together as a complex, unified whole. A core concept is that a change in one element of a system has an impact, either directly or indirectly, on one or more additional elements in that system. Systems theory provides a holistic perspective for examining the boundaries of a related set (or sets) of elements, delineating subsystems, considering relationships among subsystems, and exploring the tendency toward a stable state of equilibrium (Sobal et

al, 1998). Systems theory rejects the idea that components of any system should be, indeed can be, treated or considered in isolation from other related components or elements of the system. The focus is on relationships or processes at various levels within a system (Buckley, 1967).

Transporting - the step in the food system that brings the food product from the producing farm or storage facility to the processing facility or right to the market if it is to be sold fresh. This can be by air, truck, train or barge. In the instance of a farm stand, the farmer may bring the food up to the stand by tractor thereby significantly reducing the transportation involved.

U.S. Census Bureau - a part of the government that conducts surveys to determine the population number and the aspects of that population in the United States.