



Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service is committed to improving and protecting the health of the communities in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes districts.

Position Statement – Food Security

As a basic human right all New Zealanders should have sufficient access to healthy food that is affordable and safe to eat.

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service supports and advocates for the collective responsibility of the central and local government, agriculture and the food industry, and community groups to address and to improve affordable access to healthy, safe, and nutritious food.

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “*when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.*”

Food security is built on three pillars:

1. **Food availability:** sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis
2. **Food access:** having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet
3. **Food use:** appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

A New Zealand national nutrition survey in 2008 indicated that only three out of five households were classified as almost or fully food secure. Households in neighbourhoods with higher levels of deprivation were less likely to be almost or fully food secure, as were Māori and Pacific households. A survey of the Bay of Plenty and Lakes population in 2012 indicated that food security is a local issue with 27% of the total population and 38% of Maori going without fresh fruit and vegetables due to cost.

Activities that can have an impact on improving food security range from short-term relief, such as school breakfast programmes, to local government policies, such as urban edible planting, and national policies on nutrition, food prices, income, and agriculture.

Food insecurity in the developed world is not a new phenomenon; however, approaching food security from a cross-sectoral and policy level is fairly new in New Zealand. There is strong evidence to support the formation of collaborative groups, typically referred to as Food Policy Councils, to undertake research, strategies and activities to improve food security. Membership on a Food Policy Council should include local representatives from public health, local government, Iwi, education, growers, manufacturers, distributors, food sellers, waste management operators and the community.

Toi Te Ora - Public Health Service advocates and supports:

- Access to affordable healthy, safe and nutritious food
- The establishment of local Food Policy Councils
- That food security issues (as well as water and sanitation services) are considered in local government policies and activities
- Local research on the access and impact of the local food environment on food security

- Contingency planning for civil emergencies to ensure availability of adequate and safe food and water
- Initiatives that promote safe and nutritious food gathering and preparation (including of wild foods and kaimoana)
- Initiatives to make fresh food and vegetables more affordable
- Initiatives that promote nutritionally adequate dietary intake
- Breastfeeding friendly environments.

References and further information

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