Food Security in Bahamas

“Food insecurity deaths during the past 20 years outnumber war deaths by a factor of at least 5 to 1. Estimates suggest an additional hundred million people could be pushed below the poverty line with the recent food price increases, adding to the roughly one billion people who already live day in and day out in chronic hunger. Such hunger is most pronounced in rural areas of Africa and Asia, and especially in regions prone to drought or located in fragile or degraded environments.

The recent rapid rise in global food prices and the attending food riots and shortages throughout much of the developing world emphasize both the deep interconnectedness of today’s global food markets, and the fragility of past successes in reducing global hunger and poverty. FSE researchers are attempting to put the causes and consequences of the crisis on both an empirical footing and in the proper policy context, with the goal of helping inform both short- and long-run interventions that could stabilize prices at levels acceptable to both producers and consumers in poor countries”.

What is Food Security?

“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”. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences. In many countries, health problems related to dietary excess are an ever increasing threat, In fact, malnutrition and foodborne diarrhea are become double burden”

http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/

Food Security is built on three pillars:

**Food Availability**: Sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
**Food Access:** Having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

**Food Use:** Appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water use and sanitation for everyone.

Additionally, Food Security is one of the outcomes of a planned and agreed sustainable national development strategic plan; an strategy which combines: planned economic growth, specific government policies for the alleviation of problems such as poverty and malnutrition, domestic and foreign aid and investments, programs that encourage “people empowerment”, an ever increasing knowledge in nutrition, and an increasing knowledge in food production techniques from planting, harvesting, cooking and marketing. Such strategy in
Food Security must involve multiple stakeholders and institutions.

Food insecurity is linked to general and micronutrient malnutrition, poverty, low women empowerment levels and low skilled workers and wages, because these are major negative symptoms that serve as driven factors of increased food insecurity. These symptoms have been taken also as value references, to create policies and programs to target food insecurity around the world, especially in rural and semi-urban communities. By improving these social aspects, along with education and policymaking, Food Security becomes more feasible in a given country.

Accurate Food security policies and programs in The Bahamas will lead to sustainable economic development, environmental protection, improved trade and therefore to better living standards. Still The Bahamas is lacking meaningful and reliable Food Security Programs that guarantees the Bahamian
population to have access to nutritious food in the regular daily bases or even in worst situations, such as food shortages.

Bahamas relies basically on food imports, an old economic model that does not brings development, Food Security or economic prosperity to the Bahamian citizens, as prices are higher and more volatile every day and the revenue goes towards the foreign sellers in most cases.

Supporting local products and promoting Bahamian agribusiness and products will benefit greatly the network of business relationships among the islands, as the tourism industry will bring steadily new consumers; food prices will be more affordable as the hassle of transportation is avoided; fuller distribution centers could be easily located in more farms throughout the islands and more nutritious value for each dollar spent will be obtained.

Food security is one of the major challenges facing nations such as Bahamas at the beginning of
the 21st century. In the Bahamas, there are markets to be strengthened that could be potentially used as channels to achieve food security and economic revenue; additionally, there are policy adjustments and special programs that could give long lasting effect to food security progress in the Bahamas in the near future:

a. The delicious native Hot Peppers, Pineapple, Sweet Potato, Coconut Palm, Small Ruminants and others opportunities that could be produced in Bahamian lands through multiple sustainable initiatives such as Backyard Gardening, Aquaponics and sustainable farming in combination with better organized fisheries.

b. Financial, educational and technical support to small and larger scale farmers, easier land acquisition for farming, credits and grants for agriculture, support for
entrepreneurship initiatives, creation of partnerships for investments, are all necessities in the Bahamas for agricultural and trade development. A comprehensive policy component is the most important tool for positive changes towards food security in Bahamas.

c. People in Bahamas also most realize the importance of participation in programs aimed to their own empowerment and betterment. Learning how to work the soil, how to improve their lifestyle and therefore, to guarantee the origin of their next nutritious meal. Food insecurity raises in the world, due to soil, water and air depletion and pollution, exponential human population growth; global warming and price volatility affects all sectors of societies, especially the most vulnerable.
Managing resources effectively in Bahamas requires the preservation of the delicate balance between addressing the needs of people affected by deeper nutritional needs and the island’s ecosystems. Conservation and Food Security in the Bahamas, requires planning and the participation of all stakeholders, where productivity involves resources stewardship.

Food Security in The Bahamas is estimated to be between 3-6 weeks. The goal of the government and other sustainable food production institutions (programs) should be to innovate in ways to balance the needs of the environment with the needs of the most vulnerable people so that The Bahamas can be more self-sufficient without damaging its amazingly beautiful resources. The Bahamas relies heavily on imported, processed goods to support the country’s nutritional needs, expensive and unhealthy food in many cases. Trying to address this problem by working on sustainable, self-sufficient food systems
that provide local, healthy, and replenishable food products must be a gold rule in the Bahamas and other Caribbean’ food insecure nations. Supporting farming enterprises, science and technology workforce development, is the answer for the 21st century food production, and the social and economic challenges in the Bahamas.

The Interamerican Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) is committed to the progress of the Bahamian agriculture, which will prosper the entire nation. Expertise, networking opportunities, tailored planning and entrepreneurship support are few of the principles and values of our institution.

Follow these links for further information about Food Security:
