



Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States:: An Assessment of the Measure

Panel to Review U.S Department of Agriculture's Measurement of Food Insecurity and Hunger, Committee on National Statistics, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council

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The United States is viewed by the world as a country with plenty of food, yet not all households in America are food secure, meaning access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. A proportion of the population experiences food insecurity at some time in a given year because of food deprivation and lack of access to food due to economic resource constraints. Still, food insecurity in the United States is not of the same intensity as in some developing countries. Since 1995 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has annually published statistics on the extent of food insecurity and food insecurity with hunger in U.S. households. These estimates are based on a survey measure developed by the U.S. Food Security Measurement Project, an ongoing collaboration among federal agencies, academic researchers, and private organizations. USDA requested the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academies to convene a panel of experts to undertake a two-year study in two phases to review at this 10-year mark the concepts and methodology for measuring food insecurity and hunger and the uses of the measure. In Phase 2 of the study the panel was to consider in more depth the issues raised in Phase 1 relating to the concepts and methods used to measure food security and make recommendations as appropriate. The Committee on National Statistics appointed a panel of 10 experts to examine the above issues. In order to provide timely guidance to USDA, the panel issued an interim Phase 1 report, *Measuring Food Insecurity and Hunger: Phase 1 Report*. That report presented the panel's preliminary assessments of the food security concepts and definitions; the appropriateness of identifying hunger as a severe range of food insecurity in such a survey-based measurement method; questions for measuring these concepts; and the appropriateness of a household survey for regularly monitoring food security in the U.S. population. It provided interim guidance for the continued production of the food security estimates. This final report primarily focuses on the Phase 2 charge. The major findings and conclusions based on the panel's review and deliberations are summarized.

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