

Family Home Storage: A New Message

Check the expiration date on your ideas about home storage. You may need to throw some of them out.

As a single mother working for a law firm in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, Evelyn Jeffries struggled to find the time and the space necessary for home storage. Although she attended activities and meetings about food storage and tried to be obedient to prophetic counsel, like many Church members, she found it difficult to imagine what she could ever do with the hundreds of pounds of wheat she was told she needed to have for her and her daughter.

When a sister in her ward suggested a different approach, Sister Jeffries discovered the key to successful home storage: consistently and gradually increasing her food supply.

Setting aside a particular amount in her budget for home storage, she purchased a few extra items from the grocery store each week. She also purchased one basic food item like grains and beans from the Church home storage center each month.

Many years later, in October 2002, Sister Jeffries was impressed when President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) suggested that Church members adopt a simpler approach to home storage.

“We can begin ever so modestly,” President Hinckley



explained. “We can begin with a one week’s food supply and gradually build it to a month, and then to three months.”¹

Sister Jeffries notes that “the beauty of this system is its appropriateness for families just starting their storage programs, as well as for those living in small homes and apartments, where space is at a premium. President Hinckley clearly recognized that change and adaptation are needed so that all of us might benefit from the Lord’s inspired program.”

A New Approach

In the spirit of President Hinckley’s remarks, Church leaders decided to closely reexamine their approach to self-reliance, looking for ways to reinforce the concepts of home storage and financial preparedness. As a result, the Church published the pamphlet *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, outlining new guidelines for home preparedness that give Church members a simplified, four-step approach to building their home storage.

They are as follows:

1. Gradually build a small supply of food that is part of your normal, daily diet until it is sufficient for three months.
2. Store drinking water.



3. Establish a financial reserve by setting aside a little money each week, and gradually increase it to a reasonable amount.

4. Once families have achieved the first three objectives, they are counseled to expand their efforts, as circumstances allow, into a supply of long-term basic foods such as grains, legumes, and other staples.

Of the new guidelines, Presiding Bishop H. David Burton says, “Our objective was to establish a simple, inexpensive, and achievable program that would help people become self-reliant. We are confident that by introducing these few, simple steps we can, over time, have more success.”

Guideline 1: Build your three-month supply gradually.

Start small and do the best you can. Begin by purchasing a few extra items to add to your storage each week. Strive to build a one-week supply; then expand it to a one-month supply, then a three-month supply. By building your supply slowly, you can avoid financial strain and start down the path toward self-reliance.

The Lugo family of Valencia, Venezuela, learned that this new approach of starting small and being consistent can pay big dividends. After listening to general



conference, Brother Omar Lugo, a Church member in the Falcón Venezuela District, felt inspired to begin his own home storage. He discussed the matter with his family, and they agreed to follow the prophet’s counsel.

They began setting aside food, water, and money, a little at a time. At first the difference was hardly noticeable. But after a while the Lugos found that they had accumulated a substantial reserve. Several months after they began building their home storage, a worker’s strike in Venezuela put many local workers’ jobs in jeopardy. Brother Lugo was among those who eventually lost their jobs.

PROPHETIC COUNSEL ABOUT HOME STORAGE



“Many more people could ride out the storm-tossed waves in their economic lives if they had their . . . supply of food . . . and were debt-free. Today we find that many have followed this counsel in reverse: they have at least a year’s supply of debt and are food-free.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “That Noble Gift—Love at Home,” Church News, May 12, 2001, 7.



“Everyone who owns a home recognizes the need for fire insurance. We hope and pray that there will never be a fire. Nevertheless, we pay for insurance to cover such a catastrophe, should it occur. We ought to do the same with reference to family welfare.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “To Men of the Priesthood,” Liahona and Ensign, Nov. 2002, 58.



For a time his family lived on savings. Seven months later the Lugo family was relying exclusively on the food they had stored. It took nearly two years for Brother Lugo to find work again, but his family was able to survive the difficult challenges of unemployment. They had built their reserve gradually, and when adversity struck, they were prepared and the Lord blessed them.

Like the Lugo family, Church members will be blessed for their obedience to the First Presidency’s counsel as they gradually build home storage. “We ask that you be wise as you store food and water and build your savings,” the First Presidency explains. “Do not go to extremes; it is not prudent, for example, to go into debt to establish your food storage all at once.” Rather, they suggest a modest, consistent approach. “With careful planning, you can, over time, establish a home storage supply and a financial reserve.”²



In 1936 the Church welfare program began under the direction of the First Presidency. From left: David O. McKay (Second Counselor), Heber J. Grant (President), and J. Reuben Clark Jr. (First Counselor).

“In the day of plenty, prepare for the day of scarcity.”
First Presidency, “Message of the First Presidency,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 89.



Guideline 2: Store drinking water.

In times of need, having water to drink can be the difference between life and death—or at least between peace and anxiety. Just ask the Kawai family, members of the São Paulo Brazil Stake. They have been storing food and water for 20 years. Although their small apartment doesn’t have much room to spare, the Kawais decided to make home storage a priority.

Sister Kawai tells of one experience when that decision paid off. “I was in the hospital having just given birth when I learned that there was a problem with the city’s water pipes,” Sister Kawai explains. “Hundreds of thousands of people were without water. But I wasn’t concerned about going home. I had peace of mind knowing that my family would have water to drink.”

Guideline 3: Set aside a little money.

From the First Presidency comes this counsel: “We encourage you wherever you may live in the world to prepare for adversity by looking to the condition of your finances. We urge you to be modest in your expenditures. . . . Save a little



“Learn to sustain yourselves; lay up grain and flour, and save it against a day of scarcity.”

President Brigham Young (1801–77), Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 293.

BOTTOM LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID NEWMAN; BOTTOM RIGHT: BRIGHAM YOUNG, BY JOHN WILLARD CLAWSON

SHELF LIFE OF LONG-TERM STORAGE ITEMS

Research shows that these common longer-term food storage items, if they are properly packaged and stored at or below room temperature (75 degrees F; 24 degrees C), remain nutritious and edible much longer than previously thought. Even after long-term storage, these foods can help sustain life in an emergency.



FOOD	SHELF-LIFE ESTIMATE IN YEARS
WHEAT	30+
WHITE RICE	30+
CORN	30+
PINTO BEANS	30
DRIED APPLE SLICES	30
MACARONI	30
ROLLED OATS	30
POTATO FLAKES	30
POWDERED MILK	20

money regularly to gradually build a financial reserve.”³

In the April 2007 general conference Bishop Keith B. McMullin, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, reinforced this principle, exhorting Church members to “save some money, if only a few coins each week. This modest approach will soon enable them to have several months’ reserve.”⁴

By gradually building a financial reserve, we will be prepared for unforeseen trials and have an added measure of security and peace in our hearts.

Guideline 4: Where possible, gradually establish a longer-term supply.

“For longer-term needs,” explains the *All Is Safely Gathered In* pamphlet, “gradually build a supply of food that will last a long time and that you can use to stay alive, such as wheat, white rice, and beans.”⁵

Establishing long-term storage is easier than some might think. Dr. Oscar Pike and his colleagues in the Brigham Young University Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science have done several in-depth studies on long-term food storage. They discovered something surprising: properly packaged and stored low-moisture food retains much of its sensory (taste) quality and nutritional value for 20 to 30 or more years after being placed in

storage—much longer than previously supposed.

This means Church members can store certain foods long-term without the worry of regularly rotating the food. They can be confident that their supply will be there to keep them alive if they have nothing else to eat.

The Time to Begin Is Now

“Perhaps in the past accumulating a year’s supply of food may have been a little intimidating and even illegal in some places,” says Dennis Lifferth, managing director of Church Welfare Services. “But this new approach asks us to do the best we can, even if all we can do is to set aside a can or two each week. If the prophet asks us to do something, we can find a way to fulfill the commandment and receive the blessings.”

“This new program is within everyone’s grasp,” explains Bishop Burton. “The first step is to begin. The second is to continue. It doesn’t matter how fast we get there so much as that we begin and continue according to our abilities.” ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 58.
2. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage* (2007), 1.
3. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Finances* (2007), 1.
4. Keith B. McMullin, “Lay Up in Store,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2007, 53.
5. *All Is Safely Gathered In: Family Home Storage*, 2.