



Being Poor and Eating Well - Try It!

*Executive Summary of the Provincial Food Cost Survey
conducted by the CFSJ in July 2012*

Number of food chains included: Superstore, Sobeys and CO-OP

Number of stores surveyed: 31 stores (10 Superstores, 10 Sobeys, 10 CO-OPs and one Save Easy).

Number of food items surveyed: the 67 food items identified by Health Canada as part of the nutritious food basket.

Average food price increase between July 2011 and July 2012:

3.33%, an increase which is above the 5.74 % food price hike observed in 2011 and an increase which is twice as rapid as the current inflation rate.

Relevant observations made regarding five food groups:

- **Protein-rich foods:** a price increase in 15 out of the 19 items (Examples: sliced ham: 40.3%; chicken legs 28.7%; pork chops 14.2%).
- **Fruit:** a price increase in 7 out of the 11 items (Examples: grapes 30.6%; apple juice 20%; fresh apple 4.2%).
- **Vegetables:** a price increase in 11 out of the 20 items (Examples: frozen peas: 23.2%; broccoli 13.4%; frozen mixed vegetables 11.3%).
- **Cereal-based products:** a price increase in 5 out of the 13 items (Examples: hamburger roll 8.1%; rice (long-grain) 6.7%; bran flake 2.5%).
- **Fats and oil:** a price increase in 2 out of the 4 items: salad dressing 11.8% and vegetable oil (canola) 5.4%).

July 2012 average cost for a nutritious food basket with 67 items in the three major New Brunswick grocery stores

- CO-OP: 2012 \$257 (lowest in price)
- Sobeys: 2012 \$276 (intermediate in price)
- Superstore: 2012 \$288 highest in price)

Monthly cost of a nutritious diet for four types of households in 2012

- Couple with two children: **\$827.45** per month (\$9,927 per year)
- Single mom with one child: **\$464.43** per month (\$5,573 per year)
- Single man: **\$323.15** per month (\$3,878 per year)
- Senior woman: **\$215.66** per month (\$2,588 per year)

Annual income for three household types

- Single earner, working full time and all year at minimum wage: **\$20,800 per year;**
- Single mother with one child social and relying on assistance: approximately **\$ 17,000 per year;**
- Social assistance recipient living alone and classified in the transitional program: **\$ 6,444 per year.**
- Senior receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement: approximately **\$15,455 per year**

Food banks usage in 2011

There were 18, 712 individual users - 34.4 % were children, 16.4% were working or receiving employment insurance, 65.6% were on social assistance and 6% were receiving a pension.

Recommendations from the Common Front for Social Justice

1. That the Department of Social Development implement right away a Food Supplement Program of \$50 per household for people living on social assistance.
2. That the Department of Social Development ask for more money in the next provincial budget so as to be able to increase substantially the basic rate for all citizens on social assistance.
3. That the Department of Social Development complete its work on the changes to the policies which would allow social welfare recipients to keep more earned income as they transition to work.
4. That the Department of Social Development increase social assistance rates, including a new regime more appropriate for persons with disabilities.
5. That the Department of Social Development publish the report on N.B. food banks conducted in 2010 and implement the recommendations that would reduce food insecurity.
6. That the Commissioner of Human Rights, in cooperation with other provincial Departments, develop a strong public awareness campaign on the need to reduce poverty (CFSJ suggests a campaign to combat myths against poor people), as this is critical to the success of the poverty reduction strategy.
7. That the Minister of Finance raise the personal income tax of N.B.'s high income earners as recommended by CFSJ in January 2012 in order to make more funds available to people living in poverty and, by this process, reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor.
8. That the Minimum Wage Commission recommends a gradual increase of the present minimum wage and it's indexing in order that workers don't lose their purchasing power.
9. That the three major food store chains (Superstore, Sobeys and CO-OP) develop a policy of healthy food promotion in their flyers, put more nutritious foods on sale and display and them more prominently.
10. That the three major foods store chains make a concerted effort to buy New Brunswick or Maritime products in order to help local farmers and local economies.

11. That leaders in the electronic and printed media encourage the promotion of good nutritional habits as well as the concept of food security in N.B.