



## Economic Impact Survey 2009: Food Bank Response

### *How current economic conditions are impacting the emergency food system served by Yuma Community Food Bank*

Feeding America is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, serving an estimated 25 million low-income Americans each year through its network of 205 food banks and their 63,000 charitable feeding agencies, including food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters.

The current recession and the rise in unemployment are having a profound effect on the nation's food banks. In early September 2009, Feeding America conducted a brief survey of food bank members to learn more about the challenges faced by food banks, their member agencies, and clients served. A total of 176 food banks participated in the survey. What we found was that 99% of all participating food banks reported increases in demand for emergency food assistance over the last year. The average increase in demand across the network from Summer 2008 to Summer 2009 was 30%. However, the increase in need for services over the last year varies across the nation, ranging from 5% in some areas to more than 150% in others. Local economic circumstances, such as plant closings, can have a significant impact on need but it is also clear that high unemployment across the nation – which reached 9.7% in August – is a critical factor in the rising need for emergency food.

It's becoming increasingly more difficult for many food banks and their agencies to meet the needs of their clients, especially when new clients arrive all the time. Despite the fact that the nation's food banks delivered 2.63 billion pounds of food between July 2008 and June 2009 – an increase of 21.4% over the prior year -- many are struggling to meet this increase in demand.

Here is a snapshot of what Yuma Community Food Bank has witnessed and reported over the past year in the community it serves.



Formerly named  
America's Second Harvest\*

<p><b>Local factors impacting changes in demand:</b></p>	<p>The Yuma Community Food Bank experiences a 50% increase from May through September based on many factors within the community such as; layoffs for the summer, school teachers off, children out of school and lack of federal feeding programs available to them. Electric bills increase, food bills increase and child care now increases. The difference over the past year is that Yuma began to see up to 30% increases in November of last year and the 50% increase started in March way before the average month each year. Yuma has had 40 businesses close since January, 9,000 laid off and more have lost their job completely. We now have 24% unemployment and the demand for food is at the highest level it ever has been during the President's tenure of 15 years.</p>
<p><b>Critical trends contributing to increased need for emergency food:</b></p>	<p>Unemployment Underemployment Cost of Food Mortgage/Rent Costs Cost of Fuel Inadequacy of SNAP Benefits (formerly Food Stamps) Cost of Health Care Summer Months Affecting Families With Children</p>
<p><b>Client trends include:</b></p>	<p>More requests from existing clients More first-time users More children More employed persons</p>
<p><b>The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to turn people away:</b></p>	<p>Never</p>
<p><b>The frequency with which the food bank or its agencies had to reduce the amount of food available per person or household:</b></p>	<p>Never</p>



**Additional Comments:**

*As stated above 40 businesses have closed from the Mom and Pop's to the big chains stores; construction is down and even the migrant workers have decreased access to the fields for jobs because land is not being used for crops with the lack of market prices.*

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**For further information, please contact:**

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