



What is the Issue?

American Samoa is a US territory currently dealing with an increased number of people suffering from obesity and chronic illnesses. In 2000, 62% of individuals, or 50% of families, from American Samoa had incomes below the national poverty level. The substantial rise in utility and food prices over the past years has significantly increased and this has affected the cost of living in American Samoa. Since the level of food insecurity has increased all over the world, the question is: What is the level of food insecurity in American Samoa?

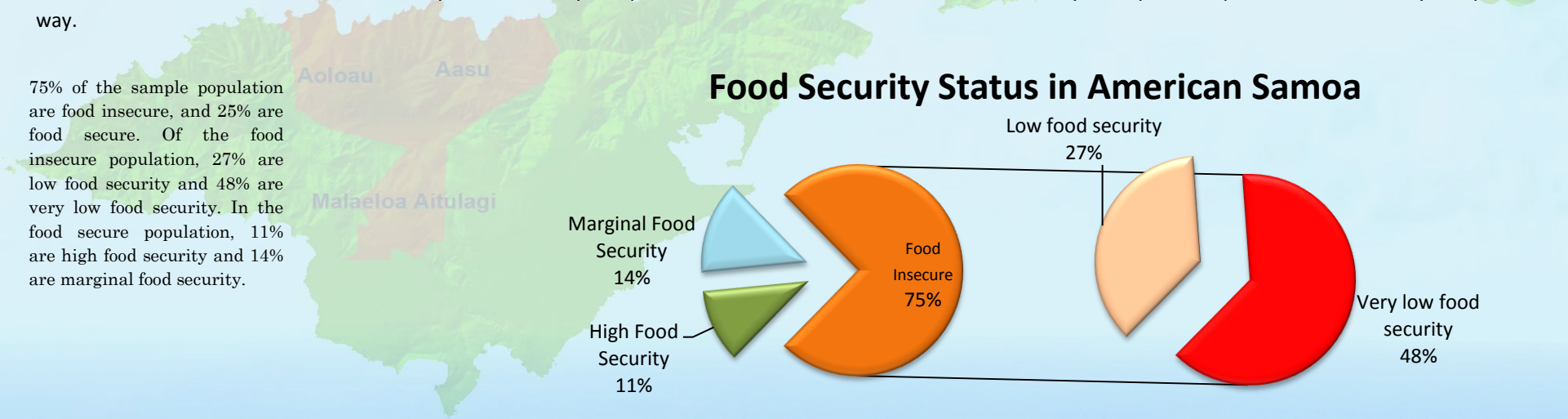
What is Food Security?

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”.

What is Food Insecurity?

When there is limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable way.

75% of the sample population are food insecure, and 25% are food secure. Of the food insecure population, 27% are low food security and 48% are very low food security. In the food secure population, 11% are high food security and 14% are marginal food security.



How was the study conducted?

- An 18-item food security measure developed by the USDA to assess Food Insecurity is known as the Household Food Security Survey (HFSS) module. It includes ten questions concerning the experiences of adults and eight concerning respondents' experiences of providing food to children in their households.
- The USDA Household Food Security Survey (HFSS) was translated into Samoan
- The Household Food Security Survey (HFSS) was distributed to the head of households in the Leasina County.
- Samples of households were drawn by counting every 3<sup>rd</sup> house in the villages. A total of 77 surveys were completed.

What did the Study Find?

- The overall results shows that 25% of the population are food secure and 75% are food insecure.
- Only 6% households did not have any children under the age of 19.
- Of the households without children, about 80% are food secured (40%-high food security/40%-marginal food security) and 20% are low food security. None were very low food security.

What are the levels of Food Security? (USDA)

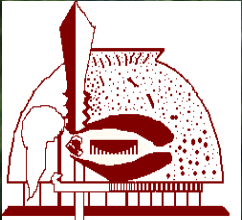
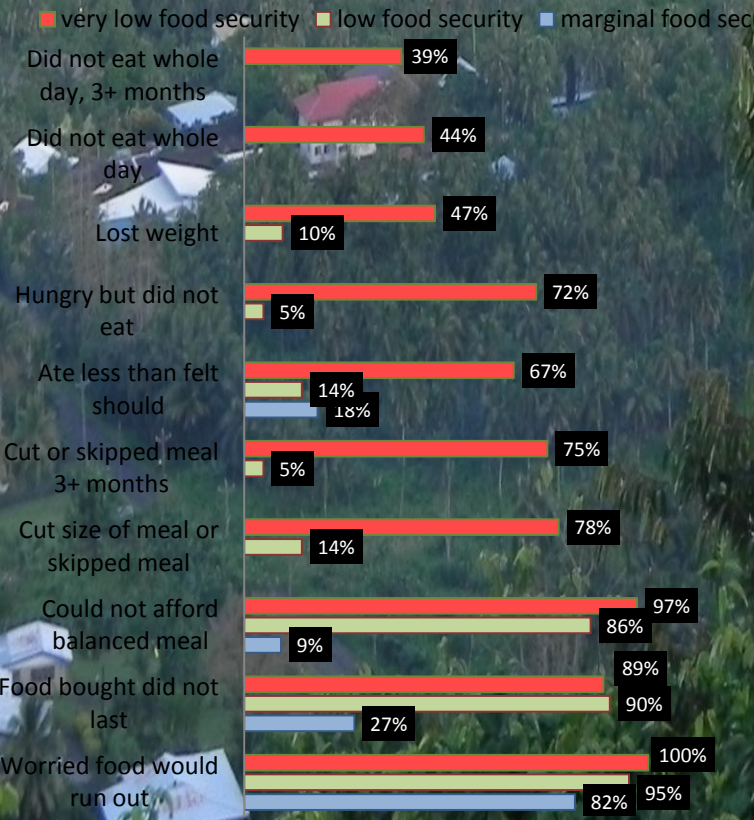
**High food security** – Households had no problems, or anxiety about, consistently accessing adequate food.

**Marginal food security** – Households had problems at times, or anxiety about, accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced.

**Low food security** – Households reduced the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted.

**Very low food security** – At times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.

Households reporting each indicator of food insecurity, by food security status



Questions used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Survey				
1	“We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more”	Often = 26%	Sometimes = 58%	Never True = 16%
2	“The food that we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.”	Often = 25%	Sometimes = 45%	Never True = 30%
3	“We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.”	Often = 20.8%	Sometimes = 50.6%	Never True = 28.6%
4	Did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 38%	No = 62%	
5	If yes to Question 4, how often did this happen?	Almost every month = 14%	Some months, not every months = 62%	1 or 2 months = 24%
6	Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 38%	No = 62%	
7	Were you ever hungry, but didn’t eat, because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 35%	No = 65%	
8	Did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 25%	No = 75%	
9	Did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 20%	No = 80%	
10	If yes to question 9, how often did this happen?	Almost every month = 9%	Some months, not every months = 49%	1 or 2 months = 42%
11	“We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food”	Often = 21%	Sometimes = 51%	Never True = 28%
12	“We couldn’t feed our children a balanced meal, because we couldn’t afford that”	Often = 24%	Sometimes = 41%	Never True = 35%
13	“The children were not eating enough because we just couldn’t afford enough food”	Often = 13%	Sometimes = 47%	Never True = 40%
14	Did you ever cut the size of any of the children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 37.5%	No = 62.5%	
15	Were the children ever hungry but you just couldn’t afford more food?	Yes = 32%	No = 68%	
16	Did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn’t enough money for food?	Yes = 32%	No = 68%	
17	If yes to question 16, how often did this happen?	Almost every month – 0	some months, not every months - 74%	1 or 2 months - 16%
18	Did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money?	Yes = 12.5%	No = 87.5%	