

A large crowd of riot police in riot gear, including helmets and shields, is shown in a city street. The scene is chaotic and suggests a state of civil unrest or a protest. The number '232' and the word 'POLICE' are visible in the background.

FOOD BUBBLE

How to Survive the Coming Food Shortage

by Survival Joe



FOOD STORAGE



SURVIVAL GARDENING



FORAGING



BACKYARD CHICKENS



SURVIVAL FISHING



SURVIVAL HUNTING & TRAPPING

About the Author



Survival Joe (Jacobs) is a suburban father of three, living in Colorado, who has taken a special interest in family preparedness. "I'm just a regular dad," says Joe Jacobs, "who can't ignore the fact that a disaster is bound to happen." It could be a natural disaster. It could be economical collapse. It could be war. Doesn't matter. You have three choices: You don't think about it. You get scared. Or you get prepared." Read more about Survival Joe and his views on family preparedness at www.survivaljoe.net/about.

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Chapter 1: Only Nine Meals From Mayhem

Few North Americans realize how easily we could find ourselves suffering a life-threatening food shortage. Unlike developing countries where food shortages are a way of life, we have enjoyed the illusion of perpetual security in our ever growing "food bubble."

Thinking food will always be there – one way or another – has made us overly complacent.

Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the Food Bubble is getting ready to pop. It's not a matter of if it will pop, but when and in how many ways. As I'll show you in chapter two, our food supply system is exceedingly complex and very fragile.

For example: We now live in a time where lettuce grown in Salinas Valley California is shipped 4,800 km (3,000 miles) to consumers in Washington, D.C. Furthermore, 39% of our fruit comes from other countries – including bananas, which travel 4,339 km (2,690 miles) from Ecuador.¹

There are also little or no warehouse storage areas at a local level. Modern grocers use a "just-in-time" stocking system, replenishing shelves as they empty.

In a crisis situation – anything from civil unrest to a natural disaster to a collapse of the electrical system – these complex supply lines would quickly breakdown and possibly cease to exist altogether.

Our dependency on large supermarkets (instead of traditional, small, locally run grocers) and corporate agriculture (instead of local family farms) may provide lower prices, but it makes us exceptionally vulnerable to any kind of disruption.

Empty Supermarket Shelves Quickly Bring Chaos

If the supermarket shelves went empty for a few days, everybody would be okay. Most people have enough food in their home to feed their family for at least three days. A few people might be able to scrounge up enough to last seven days.



The thought that the United States, Canada, England or any other developed nation could suffer even a temporary food shortage (no less a prolonged food crisis) seems unthinkable to most people. Of course, that's what the government prefers. If the population at large realized how fragile our food supply systems are – there would be widespread panic.

¹ USDA Economic Research Service. "Import share of food disappearance for selected foods, selected years." Web site July 2003 <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/datasystem.asp>

But within three days, many families would be eating light – possibly even going hungry. And while we might shed a few pounds during a food crisis, I doubt Americans would appreciate being forced to fast.

We need look no further than the UK fuel protests of September 2000 for a modern example of how fragile the food distribution system is. Here's how it happened...

First, truckers blockaded the oil refineries in protest of unfair taxation. This caused a panic among consumers; massive lines formed as people tried to fill up their gas tanks before the gas ran out.

This panic buying rapidly depleted on-hand fuel reserves. Within days there was a fuel crisis. But the fuel crisis was only the first domino to fall.

Without fuel... food could not be delivered to supermarkets.

In the absence of regular deliveries, local food supplies began to dwindle rapidly. Supermarket bosses warned government officials that there were just three days of food left.

"We were, in effect, nine meals from anarchy," writes British Journalist, Andrew Simms. "Suddenly, the apocalyptic visions of novelists and film-makers seemed less preposterous. Civilisation's veneer may be much thinner than we like to think."²

One little protest – and British citizens were three days from hunger. If a protest can set off a chain of events like this, just imagine what a *real* fuel shortage could do. And as I illustrate in chapter 2, there are many other reasons why our supermarkets shelves would go bear – fuel or no fuel.



Do You Have Enough Food for an Emergency?

A small percentage of the population is prepared for a long-term food shortage. They have non-perishables stored away for such emergencies. Some have done this on purpose; others have accidentally prepared by making a lot of discount bulk purchases at Costco and Sam's Club.

A hundred years, people knew the future was uncertain. In 1900, 86% of the world's population lived in rural areas.³ Many would have a surplus of grains, beans and other foods to get them through hard times.

Either way, it's wise to have extra food on hand. Now, I'm assuming you're a smart survivalist and have begun to stock up or have already stocked up on at least a month's supply of food.

² Simms, Andrew. *Nine meals from anarchy*. Guardian News and Media Limited. January 11, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jan/11/nine-meals-anarchy-sustainable-system>

³ Human Population: Urbanization. Population Reference Bureau. Washington, DC <http://www.prb.org/Educators/TeachersGuides/HumanPopulation/Urbanization.aspx>

Don't stop there.

I'll be writing more about this in my upcoming ebook, ***Food Crisis 1: Emergency Food Storage Basics for the Average Joe*** (see www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis1). Food storage is important. Most people know this at some level (even if they don't do it). But there is something equally as important for survival...

That's why I decided to write ***Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage*** (soon to be available at www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2) because I think there is a greater need for preparedness planning for a long-term food shortage.

I'll cover long-term preparedness strategies in just a moment. But first, I want to emphasize the importance of short-term food storage.

You Need NINE Months of Non-Perishable Food Stored Away

Ideally, you want enough food to feed your family for NINE MONTHS. For some parts of the world three months might be fine. It largely depends on how long your winters last. If disaster strikes in September, you may need to wait nine months to a year before any new food could be grown and harvested. I go into much more detail about this in ***Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage*** (www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2)

Some canned food is a good idea. It's easy to prepare and may be a good idea for the first few days of a disaster while you get yourself together. But canned food takes up a lot of storage space, has a lower nutritional value and is expensive.

What's better than canned food? Dried food. Items like dried beans, rice, pasta, wheat berries, oats, raisins, dates, dried figs, protein powders, powdered milk, powdered eggs, dried vegetables, etc. These foods are compact, nutritious and low cost. (Not to mention, they'd be easier to transport if you had to move or go on the run.)

You may also want to store away dehydrated, freeze dried, ready made meals. These are also compact and require less preparation. The downfall is that they tend to cost more, taste like a strange cross between astronaut and hospital food and have less nutritional value than basic dried ingredients (although dehydrated foods are often healthier than canned foods).

No question, food storage is critical. I'm going to go into great detail on how to store a one-year supply of food in your home in ***Food Crisis 1: Emergency Food Storage Basics for the Average Joe*** (www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis1)

But food storage isn't enough – as I'll explain in chapter 2. Keep reading to find out why...

Chapter 2: Why Food Storage Isn't Enough

Food storage is critical. It offers a short-term and absolutely necessary "band-aid." But it isn't enough.

Yes, when the "wound" isn't too deep a band-aid is all you need. In many crisis situations having a few months of food stored away may be more than sufficient. It keeps you and your family alive until life gets back to normal (or at least gets back to providing you with food).

But there are many situations where even a one-year supply of food is not enough. In these situations, no amount of food storage would offer a practical solution.

I'm talking about crisis situations that last for years, decades or possibly for centuries. In a way, you shouldn't even think of them as "disaster situations." They'll seem like that at first. In the end, they are paradigm shifts that usher in a whole new way of life.

Here are some examples of what I'm talking about...

Monoculture Famines

The fact there is more food growing on the planet than ever before may come at price. Much of modern agricultural is brilliant and lifesaving. And much of it is very controversial. To a large degree we have sacrificed quality for quantity.

"Back in the day" farmers would rotate a variety of different crops in small patches. Your average farm would grow almost everything you needed to survive. And several different varieties of each in case one variety fell to disease.

Modern industrial agricultural, however, uses "monocultures" where large areas of land are used to grow the exact same crop, year after year. This is cheaper to produce on a large scale thanks to farm mechanization and the ability to ship food long distances.

In effect, we've traded sustainability and security for cost savings. Since 1900 we've lost 75% of crops' genetic diversity.⁴ Many scientists predict this lack of genetic diversity will lead to out-of-control disease. Just like the world witnessed in 1845 in Ireland when 20% of their



A typical farm, before the industrial revolution, would grow many varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains. Today, most farms (as illustrated above) are devoted to growing only one crop, and one crop only.

⁴ Shand, Hope. Bio-meltdown (modern monoculture and factory farming sweeping away crop and domestic livestock diversity, putting future food production at risk). New International Magazine. 1997 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com>

population died because they only grew the "lumper" potato variety (which fell to the "potato" blight disease).⁵

Today such a blight would more easily spread across the world. All you need is one little spore to attach itself to a traveler's clothing. In 14 hours it could travel from the Midwest of China to the Midwest of America and trigger a devastating global famine.

Sound like science fiction?

Today an international body of scientists is fretting over how to stop the ug99 fungus. Ug99 only attacks wheat. But it does a really good job. It's already moving through Africa. "If this stuff gets into the Western Hemisphere, God help us," says Brian Steffenson, a cereal disease expert at the University of Minnesota.⁶

If ug99 makes its way to America, the U.S. Department of Agricultural predicts an estimated loss of 40 to 50 percent of the nation's supply of wheat (and possibly barley).⁷ A shocking statistic when you consider that about 22% to 33% of the world's calories come from wheat.

If we were no longer able to grow wheat (or at least our current strain of wheat) it could take years to switch our farms over to a new crop. This is just one example of how mass-producing only very limited varieties of crops has put us in a very unstable position. It's provided only a temporary and very false sense of security.

We hear about the banking bubble, the mortgage bubble, the real estate bubble... you rarely hear about the modern agricultural bubble.

It's getting ready to pop.

Superweeds

"Ubiquitous use of the weed killer Roundup over time has spawned herbicide-resistant superweeds," writes Clay Dillow in an article for POPSCI, "much as heavy use of antibiotics over past decades has bred drug-resistant germs and bacteria."⁸

In other words, decades of spraying our fields with chemicals to kill off the weeds has only made the weeds stronger. Soon, no matter how much toxic chemicals we dump on our food supply, the weeds may win the battle.



Looks pretty, but when unwanted plants grow amongst crops they suck up nutrients, spread pathogens and consume water.

⁵ The Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s. Catharina Japikse, EPA Journal - Fall 1994. www.victoryseeds.com/news/irish_famine.html

⁶ Koerner, Brendan. *Red Menace: Stop the Ug99 Fungus Before Its Spores Bring Starvation*. Wired Magazine. February 22, 2010. www.wired.com/magazine/2010/02/ff_ug99_fungus

⁷ *Plant Protection and Quarantine: Questions and Answers: Ug99—Black Stem Rust*. APHIS Fact Sheet. U.S. Department of Agricultural: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. April 2010.

⁸ Dillow, Clay. *After Years of Herbicide Use, Roundup-Resistant Superweeds Are Evolving to Invade U.S. Fields*. POPSCI. www.popsci.com/science/article/2010-05/roundup-resistant-superweeds-invade-us-fields

Total Collapse of the Electrical Grid

You may think electricity and food are two totally different matters. Not in today's world.

When someone is checking out at the supermarket, the cashier scans the barcode on their bag of pasta. This isn't just to add the item to your receipt. The store's database notes that another bag of pasta has been sold and adds it to the next shipping order. This results in an entire chain of telecommunications that essentially determines how much more pasta is produced.

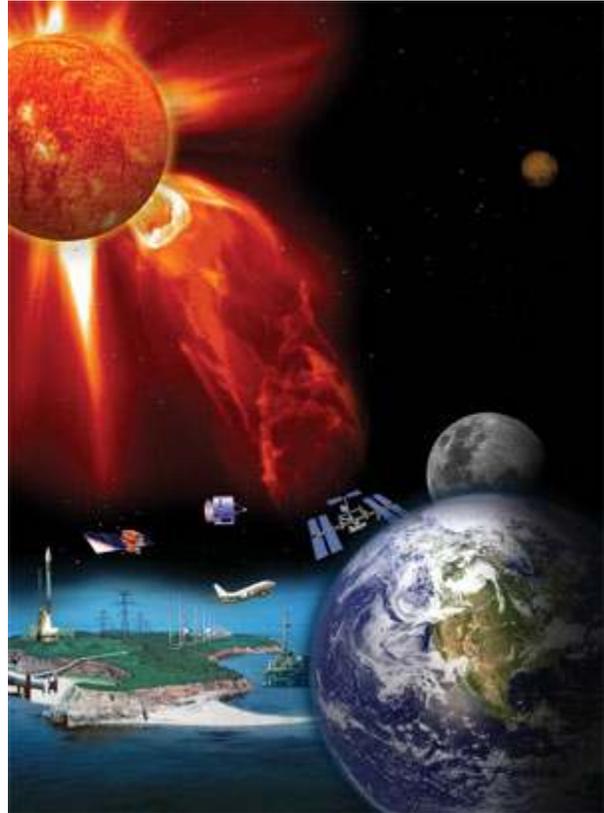
Impressive. Yes. Completely dependent on electricity. Absolutely. And that's only a little example. If the power grid goes down – so do the supermarkets.

And there are many reasons the grid could go down. One very real threat is a solar flare storm.

In 1850 solar flares hit the earth and knocked out telegraph lines.¹⁰ In today's technologically dependent society, another solar flare storm could knock out our entire electrical grid.

This could make it impossible for our complex food supply lines to operate.

A NASA funded 132-page report by the National Academy of Sciences entitled *Severe Space Weather Events—Understanding Societal and Economic Impacts* says a



"The sun is waking up from a deep slumber," says Richard Fisher, head of NASA's Heliophysics department, "and in the next few years we expect to see much higher levels of solar activity. At the same time, our technological society has developed an unprecedented sensitivity to solar storms."⁹

⁹ Philips, Dr. Tony. *As the Sun Awakens, NASA Keeps a Wary Eye on Space Weather*. NASA Science. June 4, 2010. http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2010/04jun_swef

¹⁰ From the Chicago Tribune, August 29, 1959: "The Superintendent of the Canadian Telegraph Company's line telegraphs as follows in relation to the effect of the Aurora Borealis last night: '...so completely were the wires under the influence of the Aurora Borealis, that it was found utterly impossible to communicate between the telegraph stations, and the line had to be closed.' The same difficulty prevailed as far South as Washington." Singular Effect of the Aurora Borealis on the Telegraph Wires. Chicago Tribune, August 29, 1959 <http://www.solarstorms.org/SS1859.html>

solar flare storm could hit anytime (and that we are, indeed, "overdue").¹¹ If such an event happened, it could take up to three years to get the power grid back online.



A typical pig "farm." How long can our bacon put up with this type of cruelty?

Livestock Collapse

It started in Germany. Dr. Shiv Chopra, former senior scientific advisor for Health Canada, speaks of what industrial farms feed to their livestock:

*So they picked up slaughterhouse waste and they ground it up. They picked up dogs and cats – road kill as well – and ground it all up. They start to feed animals back to animals that we people eat. All the animals that people ate were herbivores. We didn't eat carnivore animals. We didn't eat birds that prey on other birds.*¹²

In other words, we are feeding our cows, goats, pigs, chickens and other edible barnyard pals other animals that they would normally not eat in nature. This is an

unnatural diet that makes the animals sick and dependent on antibiotics.

Animals are also put in cramped, unsanitary living conditions. Cows are fed grains instead of grass. They are pumped full of artificial hormones to increase milk production. Livestock is given high doses of antibiotics to fight off infection.

To make matters worse, we are eliminating varieties of livestock just like we have been with plants. Since 1900, Europe has less than 50 percent of its livestock breeds remaining, with 43% of those listed as endangered.¹³

It's only a matter of time before it all collapses and meat, dairy and eggs will be very hard to come by.

¹¹ *Severe Space Weather – Social and Economic Impacts*. NASA. January 21, 2009. http://science.nasa.gov/science-news/science-at-nasa/2009/21jan_severespaceweather/

¹² Chopra, Shiv. *Looming Before Us: Corporate Threats to Your Food Supply*. Mercola.com. January 23, 2010. <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2010/01/23/Looming-Before-Us-Corporate-Threats-to-Your-Food-Supply.aspx>

¹³ *Shand, Hope. Bio-meltdown (modern monoculture and factory farming sweeping away crop and domestic livestock diversity, putting future food production at risk)*. New International Magazine. 1997 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Bio-meltdown+%28modern+monoculture+and+factory+farming+sweeping+away+...-a030492188>

Oil Shortage

As oil-producing countries move away from the dollar, it could mean a steep rise in oil prices for North Americans.¹⁴ Even if the petrodollar system continues for a few years, we may still be looking at oil shortages and peak oil scenarios.

This would make the mass-produced, mass-distributed food system untenable. We use petroleum not only to ship our food, but also to power farm machinery, and even to make pesticides and fertilizers. It could take many years (or decades) for Americans to put alternative energy into widespread use.

"Many major cities in the U.S. have a limited supply of food on hand," says Halweil author of *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*. "That makes those cities highly vulnerable to anything that suddenly restricts transportation, such as oil shortages..."¹⁵

\$2 Million for a Loaf of Bread

The current "economics" of many governments (especially the US) wherein they print money to prop up their economy only decreases the value of the currency, making food more expensive.

In December 2008, CNN reported "After the \$100 million note began circulating on Thursday, the price of a loaf of bread soared from 2 million to 35 million Zimbabwean dollars."¹⁶

As with Zimbabwe (and Argentina, Germany and so many other countries) the same could happen in America, Canada, England, Australia, Japan, China... In the last year alone, the price of vegetables in the



Real or faked, an oil shortage would be detrimental to the world's ability to feed its six billion inhabitants.



The above banknote for 50 million marks was common currency in Germany between 1921 and 1923 when the country suffered hyperinflation.

¹⁴ "A beginning has been made with Iran selling its oil in euros," says researcher Shebonti Ray Dadwal of the Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, "and Russia having announced in 2008 that it would be selling some petroleum products in rubles as a prelude to switching from dollar-based oil sales. When that happens, the implications for the US and indeed the global power balance will be immense." (*The beginning of the end of the dollar era?* IDSA Comment. October 14, 2009.

http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/Thebeginningoftheendofthedollarera_SRDadwal_141009

¹⁵ Lazaroff, Cat. *Food Travels Far to Reach Your Table*. Environment News Service. November 21, 2002. <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/nov2002/2002-11-21-06.asp>

¹⁶ *Hyperinflation forces Zimbabwe to print \$200 million notes*. CNN. December 7, 2008.

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/12/06/zimbabwe.currency/index.html>

US has gone up 56.1%. Eggs are up 33.6%. Beef is up 10.9%.¹⁷

And as we have seen with Zimbabwe, hyperinflation doesn't go away overnight. It could take years, if not decades, to return to sound currency.

Personal Financial Crisis

39,680,000 citizens are living off food stamps, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (as of February 2010). That's up 22.4% from one year ago. That means more than one out of every eight people you meet can't make enough money to feed themselves.

As more jobs disappear this could happen to anybody.

If you can't afford to buy food, food storage will not be enough. Eventually you will run out.

You may need another way to obtain food that doesn't involve money.

The simplest way is to grow it yourself as I explain in ***Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage*** (www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2)



During the first food stamp program orange stamps could buy any food while blue stamps could only buy foods that were in surplus.

Yellowstone is Overdue



The Yellowstone Caldera. It looks pretty. It was formed by three super eruptions so hot they didn't form the traditional volcanic mountain peak but instead flattened (melted) the land. With pressure building for 640,000 years, you are looking at a supervolcano that could explode at any moment.

While an earthquake or hurricane may make a certain area unable to produce food, survivors can always relocate or import food. But what about a large scale disaster?

A very real possibility that could affect the entire planet is the eruption of a super volcano.

Fortunately there only a few in the world. Unfortunately, one of the most likely to erupt is sitting in the middle of the United States in Yellowstone National Park. Since 1923, magma filling the reservoir underneath Yellowstone has already raised the park 74 centimeters (2 ½ feet) in the last 87 years.

When it erupts (which it will some day) it is expected to destroy everything within a 1,000

¹⁷ U.S. Food Inflation Spiraling Out of Control. National Inflation Association. April 22, 2010. <http://www.inflation.us/foodinflationspiralingoutofcontrol.html>

miles radius. Geological records indicated past eruptions have taken place every 600,000 years.¹⁸ That's over a half-million years of pressure building. The last one happened 640,000 years ago. We're 40,000 years overdue.

But whether it's the supervolcano in America, or the one in Indonesia, or New Zealand or Japan, the effects would devastate the world. The ash would block out the sun causing an extended winter period that could last a year or longer.

Sound like science fiction? It's not. The explosion of ordinary volcanoes almost always have unpleasant side effects. For instance, the March 2010 eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland disrupted air travel for days. And past eruptions of Laki have actually changed weather patterns.

Iceland's Laki volcano erupted in 1783, freeing gases that turned into smog. The smog floated across the Jet Stream, changing weather patterns. Many died from gas poisoning in the British Isles. Crop production fell in western Europe. Famine spread. Some even linked the eruption, which helped fuel famine, to the French Revolution. Painters in the 18th century illustrated fiery sunsets in their works.

The winter of 1784 was also one of the longest and coldest on record in North America. New England reported a record stretch of below-zero temperatures and New Jersey reported record snow accumulation. The Mississippi River also reportedly froze in New Orleans.¹⁹

If this was the results of an ordinary volcano, just imagine what a supervolcano might do. It would take a long time for mass food production to return. Possibly years, decades or centuries. But with a lot of luck, a good location and some simple preparedness techniques, you could survive the aftermath and continue producing your own food locally.

By the way, the explosion of Yellow Stone National Park was depicted in the 2005 BBC docudrama *End Day* (along with four other doomsday scenarios). Curiously, the Yellow Stone explosion was edited out when the program aired in the United States on the *National Geographic Channel*.²⁰

¹⁸ Newhall and Daniel Dzurisin. *Historical Unrest at Large Calderas of the World: U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1855*. 1988,

¹⁹ Iceland volcanoes could have world consequences. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35988484/>

²⁰ *End Day*. Wikipedia. February 16, 2007. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/End_Day

Epidemics: The Aftermath Is Deadlier Than the Disease

Many survivalists agree that the greatest concern during an epidemic is not surviving exposure to the disease itself. Your greatest concern should be how to survive the inevitable collapse of infrastructure that results when large portions of the population are sick or have died.

During the Bubonic plague of the 14th century, Paul Bugl, researcher at the University of Hanford, writes: "Agriculture came to a virtual standstill as farmers fled or died in their fields. Consequently, food shortages compounded the problems of society. Governments ground to a halt as bureaucrats died. No civil authority remained and crime was rampant... Plague attacked merchants and peasants with equal voracity."²²

So even if you're in great health don't expect your neighbours' immune system to be as strong. Don't expect the police to be working at full capacity. Don't expect farmers to be in their fields. Don't expect that enough truckers will be available to drive your steak dinner over three states to your local supermarket.

The 2007 annual report of the World Health Organization says that infectious diseases are spreading faster than ever before – with new varieties emerging every year.²³

Many scientists believe vaccines may be contributing to the problem more than helping (by lowering people's immune system's natural defenses).

The fact that we have 2.1 billion airline passengers each year spreading diseases quickly to other countries doesn't help either.



Influenza ward at Camp Funston, Kansas, where the Spanish influenza began. "In the winter of 1918," writes John M. Barry in *The Great Influenza*, "history's most lethal influenza virus erupted in an army camp in Kansas, moved east with American troops, then exploded... It killed more people in twenty-four weeks than AIDS has killed in twenty-four years, more in a year than the Black Death killed in a century."²¹

²¹ Barry, John M. *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague In History*. New York: Penguin Group, 2004

²² History of Epidemics and Plagues (October 2001), Hartford University Course Notes: AUCT 140, Epidemics and AIDS, Spring 2009. <http://uhavax.hartford.edu/bugl/histepi.htm>

²³ *Who warns of global epidemic risk*. BBC News. August 23, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/6959583.stm>

Food Storage Doesn't Last Forever

While nine month's worth of food storage would be invaluable for any of the above disaster situations – it wouldn't last long enough.

To store away enough food to last nine months for a family of five is an expensive, time consuming and mammoth feat. I know. I have a family of five.

And even then, you need to be ready to feed more than just your immediate family. I live in range of many relatives, including my parents and my in-laws. In a disaster situation, I'm not going to let them starve to death.

So to have enough food to last nine months is difficult enough. And in any of the scenarios that I've described in this chapter you can see that nine months of food would only keep us alive for just that – nine months.

All you need is for one of the above scenarios to pan out and the way we urbanites obtain food will cease to exist. You must remember that our way of life is nothing more than an experiment. Mankind has only been at the industrial revolution for about a century. For the rest of recorded history, life was very different.

Once it collapses, our current food system may never return. While food storage will help us stay alive through the transition period – we need sustainable alternatives.

The next chapter lists the pros and cons of many such alternatives for attaining food. Some of them I recommend you include in your long-term survival strategies. Others I would leave as an absolute last resort.



To store away enough food to last nine months for a family of five is an expensive, time consuming and mammoth feat. I know. I have a family of five.

Chapter 3: The Problem With Storing More Than a Year's Worth of Food

Before I dive into alternative ways to keep your family fed, many people wonder why they simply can't stock up on enough food for decades. Here are the reasons why I don't think it's wise (or even possible) for most people...

Dried Goods Are No Good After a Year

Most dried foods won't last longer than a year. You may be able to push it and keep them around for two years.

Grains, beans, dried fruits, nuts and seeds usually start to become a little too dry after a year has past. You end up having to use a lot of fuel to cook them. They'll also require a lot of pre-soaking.

Technically, of course, most dried foods have a shelf life of anywhere from five to fifty years. In other words, they won't rot or disintegrate. But two things are lost: nutrition and flavor. At best you end up with some empty calories that may do more harm than good.

It seems God designed food to only be stored for about one year – until the next growing season.



Most naturally dried foods won't maintain their nutrition or flavor much longer than a year.

Storage Problems

Now, there are foods that have been dehydrated or freeze-dried that do offer a 15-year shelf life – retaining both flavor and nutrients. But many of these dehydrated foods come with a few caveats.

- You need to maintain a cool storage temperature, something you may not be able to achieve in summer months without air conditioning or a cold cellar
- You also need to ensure that rodents will not get at your stores (put your pet cat to practical use!).
- And you need to make sure you have enough room to store all of this food. Many companies offer to store your orders for you in their temperature-controlled warehouses. This is fine for some disaster situations. It's just hard to guarantee that if the world collapses there'll be a courier service to send you your food when you need it.

Dietary and Nutritional Issues Of Canned and Dehydrated Foods

The U.S. Army apparently has proven that canned food won't taste much different, and is still safe to eat, after 46 years on the shelf. The USDA, however, says you only have 2-5 years before canned food becomes nutritionally empty.²⁴

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): "The heating process during canning destroys from one-third to one-half of vitamins A and C, riboflavin, and thiamin. For every year the food is stored, canned food loses an additional 5 to 20% of these vitamins."

Upon examining the ingredients of many suppliers who claim to be offering super nutritious ready to eat meals you'll find many questionable ingredients (including MSG) and preservatives that you may not want to spend the next 15 years of your life eating.

Because meat spoils easily, most ready-made-meals are made with textured vegetable protein (TVP), a derivative of the soy bean industry. It's been observed that wild animals will not touch TVP even when faced with starvation. And if wild animals won't touch it, should you? Many health complications have already been reported from eating TVP. Just imagine how harmful it would be to eat it three times a day.

Also, you rarely have much control over what type of foods go into these meals-ready-to-eat (MREs). If you have any allergies – say, to potatoes or milk – you may not be able to eat them three times a day.

Lastly, most of these long-term food stuffs have been precooked – unlike when you rely on dried foods, which are stored raw. (Not that I have anything against cooked food – it just seems like common sense that you don't want to be eating five-year-old leftovers on a daily basis.)

Cooked or not, I simply can't believe that food can stay "alive" for that long and contain any quality or nutrition. Of course, it's better than nothing. I just think there are better alternatives. We were meant to eat fresh food.



Meals, ready to eat (MRE) are lightweight just-add-water food rations that have replaced canned food in the U.S. military. MREs have earned the following nicknames from troops: "Meal Rejected by Everyone," "Meal Ready to Excrete" and (thanks to their constipating effect) "Meal Requiring Enemas."

²⁴ *Shelf Life of Canned Foods*, Master Food Preservers & Safety Advisors, Washington State University, March 1997 <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/family/facts/shelflif.htm>

You Won't Want to Rotate 'Em

Fifthly, you probably don't want to rotate these dehydrated meals. By rotation, I refer to where you eat and replenish your supply during good times, so you don't have paid goods sitting in your cellar – never knowing if they'll ever get eaten. (Rotation is easy enough with regular dried goods like rice, flour, beans, etc.)

Even the higher quality dehydrated foods taste like a cross between hospital food, an airline entrée and something served on a NASA shuttle craft. Not so yummy. Do you really want to be rotating these meals – eating them each day for the rest of your life while you wait for a disaster that may never come?

So whatever dehydrated foods you purchase are going to be an extra expense. Per person cost, a one year's worth of dehydrated meals is about \$1,500. (And the serving sizes are pretty small!)

So for a family of five you'd only have to put out \$7,500 every fifteen years to have a one-year supply of dehydrated foods. I'm not against this at all if you can afford it or prefer it. (Or you may just want to have some ready to hand out to people who come knocking on your door.)

But would you want to buy a 15-year supply? Fifteen years of eating microwave dinners (without the microwave) would certainly be a doomsday situation.

The bottom line: Canned and dehydrated foods offer an interim solution at best.

A Good Idea – But Not to Be Relied Upon

Now, I'm not trying to steer you away from purchasing dehydrated foods. I think having some on hand (even a few \$1500 caseloads) is a good idea. You should mix up your food storage supplies. Some "real" food like beans, rice and dried fruits and vegetables. Some canned food. And some dehydrated food. I go into great detail about how to do all of this in ***Food Crisis 1: Emergency Food Storage Basics for the Average Joe*** (www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis1).

But it's not a long-term solution for a long-term crisis.

In the next chapter I'll list the pros and cons of various alternatives to food storage to keep you alive during a long-term food crisis.



Unless you enjoy eating this type of food – you really won't want to rotate your dehydrated food stores.

Chapter 4: Various Alternatives for Surviving a Long-Term Food Crisis

So food storage alone may not be enough. I think I've driven that point home in the last two chapters. So what are your alternatives? In this chapter I list quite a number. Many of which I recommend. A few I recommend only as a last resort.

Foraging

If you know what you're doing (a big IF) you can probably find plenty of sustenance in the woods and country around your town or city. Of course, if you live in the middle of a thriving metropolis this becomes more difficult. And whatever you do find may be polluted with heavy metals and chemicals.

Pine cones can provide you with pine nuts. And the pine needles can be boiled and made into a tea. Various barks of trees are edible (though slightly laxative). Dandelions make good additions to salads. You can chew grass to extract the juices (just make sure to spit out the fiber).

It would not be a bad idea to purchase books or courses on wild edible plants. You can have outings with your family and start identifying and collecting what there is to eat in your area. Do it for fun now and later it may help keep you alive.

But, obviously, this isn't going to provide a feast. There will either be far too much competition or too little available. Plus, most wild edibles don't provide a lot of calories, just valuable vitamins and minerals, which means you may still be hungry and undernourished.

In spite of their vitamin and mineral content, wild edibles are no guarantee of health. The citizens of Greece during and after Nazi occupation were very knowledgeable about wild edible plants. They consumed large amounts of wild cabbage, grapes, acorns and various greens. Yet the population still suffered widespread vitamin deficiency. Nine out of ten babies died at birth.²⁶



Les Stroud, in his reality TV series *Survivorman*, manages to find many nutrient-rich edibles by foraging about in nature. But, as he admits in one episode, "I've been grazing like a horse and I'm starting to get very lethargic. I sit down and I don't want to get back up again."²⁵

²⁵ *Survivorman 3: Best of Compilation*. Discovery Channel Website. <http://www.yourdiscovery.com/video/shows/survivorman/?cc=US>

²⁶ Tomkinson, John L. *Athens Under the Nazis: The Occupation (1941-1944)*. Anagnosis Books. <http://www.anagnosis.gr/index.php?la=eng&pageID=225>

So while wild plants offer food, you do not want to rely upon them. It would also involve a lot of traveling and possibly a nomadic lifestyle. In times of crisis and civil unrest you generally want to stay close to home, to protect your belongings and your family.



Hunting and Trapping

Now even if you have taken vows at your local tofu shack never to eat a living creature you may be very interested in learning to trap.

Why? Because learning how to trap has a two-fold benefit: It provides an extra source of protein and helps you protect your valuable garden.

Just think how life could be like in an urban situation after a food collapse. All the raccoons, squirrels, rabbits and rodents who live off human trash will suddenly be without. Plus, most people will probably let their dogs and cats go wild. So being able to protect your garden (even if you don't want to eat the critters) maybe a high priority.

Hunting on the other hand may be more difficult. Much like seeking out wild plants for food, seeking out wild animals may be even more challenging. A lot, also, depends on where you live. If you live out in the country, this may offer a good source of food. If you live in a city, what little game there is will have serious competition.

Hunting is also not something you learn overnight. Personally, I have no experience in the matter – though have considered buying a rifle and getting some practice.

But it could take several years to become adept enough at hunting that it would provide a reliable way to feed your family. You may even need to consider getting a bow and arrow, in case bullets become hard to come by.

Trapping is most likely an easier art to master, but you need to get the equipment and the training now, not later. There are many simple traps and snares you can set up in your backyard to catch birds, squirrels, dogs, cats and, yes, even... rats.



Fishing

If you live close to enough of water, fish could become a staple in your diet – as it has been for many cultures. Of course, it is a skill that is not acquired overnight.

And a diet solely of fish would present problems. You need essential minerals and vitamins, found in fruits and vegetables, to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Fish alone won't cut it.

The main concern I would have with fish is the amount of heavy metal poisoning – namely mercury – most fish suffer from. Unless you live in Northern Quebec or Alaska, I can't help but

think the fish would be too contaminated to eat on a daily basis.

But adding some fish to your diet – at least a few times a week – will probably give some welcome variety and extra security.

Feasting on Rats

Hunting skills or not, most people can catch rats. Simply lay rat traps around your home and collect your dinner in the morning. Peel off the skin and remove the guts. Then put a stick through the furless corpse and roast until it's quite, quite done.

As repulsive as eating rats may sound, they are quite safe (if cooked thoroughly) and are actually a staple amongst many peoples in Southeast Asia. African slaves in the American South supplemented their meager rations with rats they hunted in the woods.²⁸ It was even a much enjoyed dish of the traditional people of the Hawaii Islands.

Nonetheless, whether you're a vegetarian or not, I think most folk living in North America and Europe will agree that catching, skinning, roasting and eating rats is an absolute last resort.



In 2008 the price of rat meat went up 400% in Cambodia as inflation made regular meat too expensive for the poorer population. Made into spicy dishes with garlic, rat sold for approximately \$1.28/kg.²⁷

Government Assistance

I'd rather rely on rat meat and pine needles than government assistance. Despite FEMA being aware of the potential threat Hurricane Katrina posed to New Orleans, it took days for them to deliver basic supplies like... *water*.

And I can only imagine that whatever food rations arrive during a crisis are of the lowest quality – full of preservatives, chemical flavoring and sugar.

Sure, it's better than nothing. At least I think it is. Some studies have shown people would live longer just drinking water for breakfast than consuming the ingredients of some popular breakfast cereals. So who knows if it is better than nothing?

Furthermore, most shelters would be located in some central location. You would not have time to return to your home each day. You would live there. Probably in very open areas, with no privacy, sleeping on the floor.

²⁷ Penh, Phnom. *Rat meat in demand as inflation bites*. Reuters. August 27, 2008. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSBKK27922820080828>

²⁸ Otto, John Solomon; Augustus Marion Burns III. *Black Folks, and Poor Buckras: Archeological Evidence of Slave and Overseer Living Conditions on an Antebellum Plantation*. Journal of Black Studies, December 1983. Vol. 14, No. 2. pp. 185-200

It might also be required that you and your family are injected with mercury-containing vaccines.

Between the low-quality food, the overcrowding, the forced vaccinations and the lack of proper sanitation, you can understand why I'd rather find some other way to keep my family fed.

Of course, the "superdome" situation wouldn't last forever. You'd eventually be upgraded to a tent-city setup – with the same low quality food.

"People were shocked at the scale of social breakdown when Hurricane Katrina revealed a long-term, creeping erosion of civic resilience," writes Andrew Simms of Guardian.co.uk, "Are we just waking up to the fact that several wrong turns have left our essential supplies much more vulnerable than they need to be?"²⁹



No, this is not a third-world country. It's the type of "living" conditions the people of New Orleans endured while taking shelter in the city's Superdome. Is this the type of government assistance you want to put up with if you can't supply your own food?

Chickens Eggs



You could easily meet a third of your family's daily protein needs with a few hens at your service. According to one chicken cage vendor in England, Londoners buy an average of 1,000 chicken cages for urban use a year.³⁰

Chicken eggs are a great way to get a daily source of protein for you and your family.

And if the grid collapses you don't need to worry about refrigerating them. Despite the fact that Americans store their eggs in refrigerators, it is totally unnecessary. The shells keep the yolk quite airtight. They won't go bad. In Europe, for example, eggs are commonly sold off the shelf – not out of a fridge.

In fact, cooling eggs only masks foul odors (not prevents) when they go bad. Room temperature is the ideal storing temperature for eggs.

Relatively easy to raise, chickens will eat just about anything. Though, they do best with some grain included in their diets, they benefit from feasting off weeds and parts of foods that are not edible by humans (e.g. water melon rind).

²⁹ Simms, Andrew. Nine meals from anarchy. Guardian News and Media Limited. January 11, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jan/11/nine-meals-anarchy-sustainable-system>

³⁰ *Urban Chickens*. YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4cT1sTsaZo&NR=1>

Raising chickens in my own backyard is something I've always wanted to do (crisis or not). Not only do you get a great source of protein (I mean, really, how many beans can you eat, day after day?) but chicken manure provides excellent fertilizer for the garden.

Unfortunately, most cities have bylaws against people raising chickens in their backyards. Of course, in a post-disaster situation, such laws would likely not be enforced.

Of course, you can always seek out the eggs of wild birds in nests. Up until the people of the island of St. Kilda were evacuated by the Scottish government in 1930, they would climb the 1,200 foot crags to harvest the eggs of gannets.³¹ Apparently, all bird eggs are safe to eat (though I recommend you cook them).

Forced to Eat Your Neighbor?

In 1846, a group of pioneers, known as the Donner Party, set out by wagon train for California. A series of mishaps delayed their journey. They ended up spending the winter snowbound in the Sierra Nevada.

Some of the Donner Party resorted to eating the bodies of those who had already succumbed to starvation or sickness. One of the survivors, only four years old at the time, remembers the day they had "cooked the arm of Samuel Shoemaker" (a 25-year old member of their party).

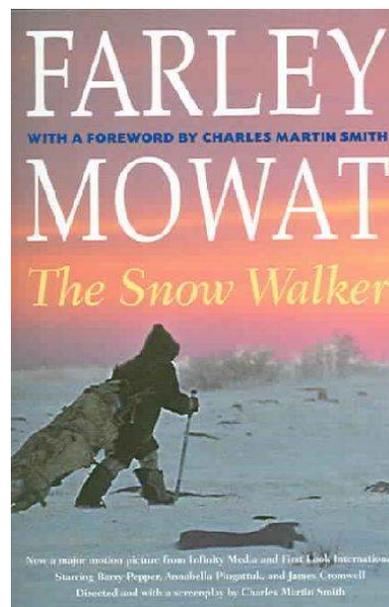
I hope, if this option ever makes it on your list – it is way at the bottom. Of course, if you have no other means of attaining food, and people around you are dying (please don't kill them), it can be a very real and horrific survival possibility.

I leave cannibalism near the end of this chapter in hopes that it will propel you to action. Prepare your family now so that if a food shortage comes you can adopt simple and reliable survival methods. Stick to solutions that will not only feed your family, but will also relieve hunger in your community.

I can think of nothing better to turn a doomsday situation into a paradise than...

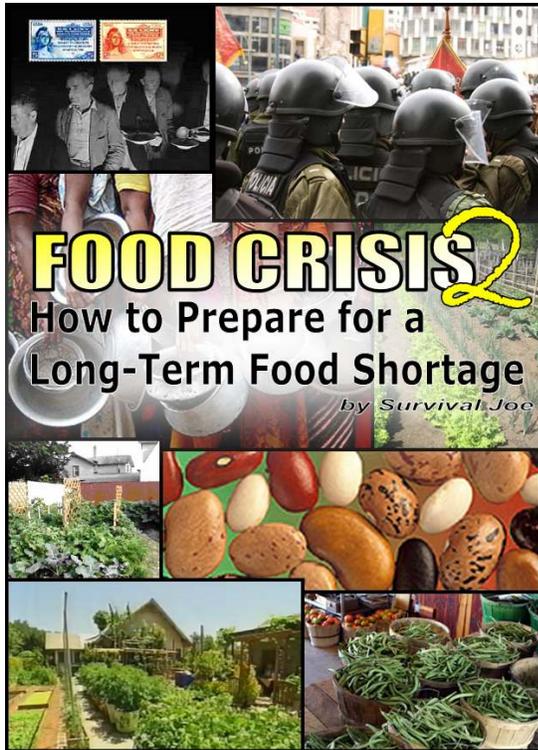
Survival Gardening

How to perpetually feed you and your family, even if the food system collapses completely with no hope of return in our lifetime?



In his anthology *The Snow Walker* Farley Mowat tells tales of Inuit parents instructing relatives to cannibalize their own bodies (after draining their blood) in order to feed their children. (Yep, time to grow a garden, folks.)

³¹ Warren, Lynne. "Edge of the World" National Geographic. January 2010: 74-75



In ***Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage*** I explain everything I think you need to know to prepare for a survival gardening situation. I show how to find non-hybrid seeds and which fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains you can most easily grow in your own backyard. I also show you how to store the seeds. Go to www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2 to find out more.

86% of Americans lived or worked on farms up until the 20th century. In India and much of South and Central America people still live this way. If the infrastructure collapsed – life wouldn't change much for them.

Sure, your own crisis garden won't produce aisles and aisles of chocolate chip cookies and endless supplies of McBurgers. But it will produce tasty, nutritious food that will keep you and your family alive and well.

Each year's harvest will not only give you food, it will also produce seeds that you can replant the following year. And each generation of seeds will produce plants better adapted to your soil, pests, weeds, climate and water situation. Each year, you will grow stronger plants with greater ease. (And your gardening skills will improve with each passing year, too.) Check out ***Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage*** (www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2) for more details.

1. Get seeds.
2. Plant a garden.

Sounds simple. It is. Or at least... it was. It still can be simple, but you have to know how to avoid the pitfalls of modern agricultural which have made living off the land rather difficult.

You need to make sure you use what are called heirloom non-hybrid seeds. These are the only type of seeds that will produce fruits and vegetables with new seeds that can be planted again the next year. In other words, heirloom seeds will produce generations of crops year after year after year.

Even if you're not a gardener (yet), make sure you own plenty of open-pollinated (or heirloom) seeds. This way, if the food system collapses, you're set to start producing your own edibles. Prepare your family so that if survival gardening becomes necessary, you'll be ready to go while others haven't a clue what to do. You'll be able to grow plenty of hearty vegetables, grains and legumes that you can store throughout the winter months.

This is the way people lived for all of recorded history. Our modern system of agricultural and food distribution is only a century old. It was an experiment.

Chapter 5: Don't Panic! (And Other Thoughts About Living Off the Land)

The first half of this book gave me the chills. Researching and describing very real and probable disaster situations is not fun work. We know these situations are going to happen. It's just a matter of time. Maybe it'll be "the end of the world"; or maybe it'll just be a change in the way we live; or maybe we'll bounce back to our same mode of living after a few years of chaos.

But let's assume the "worst" happens. A total collapse of our food system. Billions of people starve. Oil disappears. Electricity is limited to a few generators and windmills guarded behind barbed fences. We regress to a strange combination of 19th century farm life with a lot of 21st century technology that we can't use anymore.

CDs might be used to reflect sunlight and keep birds away from your crops. We might be gutting our SUVs and having a dog team pull them. Cell phones may become a useless piece of plastic while we revert to ham radios, telegraphs and smoke signals.

Whatever happens, don't panic. Especially if you are prepared. Store food. Store seeds. If you do those two things you'll be ahead of the pack.

For most of recorded history the majority of people on this planet lived in rural, self-sustaining communities. Sure, there were periods with lords, serfdom, raids and pillaging. Hopefully we won't revert back to the Dark Ages. Let's pray for "Little House on the Prairie" time. It wasn't all that bad.

In fact, a lot of people suffer from the delusion that our current mode of living is superior to how we lived before. Obviously, there are advantages. But in many ways we are losing a bit of our humanity. Never before have cancer rates been so high. Obesity is off the charts. Adult-onset type 2 diabetes is hitting children as young as twelve. Families are breaking apart. We are addicted to buying stuff we don't need and can't afford. People get more upset about their favorite sports team losing than the collapse



During the previous boom years of the 1920s many North Americans bought vehicles which they soon found they could not afford to operate. During the Great Depression they pulled the engines out and had their automobiles pulled by horses. In Canada they were called Bennett Buggies, named after Prime Minister Richard Bennett (1930-1935) who Canadians blamed for the nation's poverty. In America, we called them Hoover Wagons after President Herbert Hoover.³²

³² Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. *The Age of Roosevelt, Vol. 1: Crisis of the Old Order*. Paperback ed. New York: Mariner Books, 2003. (Originally published 1957.)

of the economy. People average about six hours a day watching TV and only manage to read 1.5 books a year.

And despite our industrial accomplishments we are still working long hours with barely time to cook a proper meal.

Taxes are up. Despite living in an age of telecommunication marvels, we have less, not more, control over the actions of political representatives.

Sometimes Progress Involves a Few Steps Backwards

Returning to local economies, local government and local food may be progress – even if we have to take a few steps backwards technologically.

As of this writing, I live in the suburbs of Denver. It's an upper middle-class neighborhood. A lot of soccer moms ferrying their kids around all day (in between shopping, "laying out" and watching TV). Everybody seems to be "keeping up with the Joneses" – trying to outdo each other in the acquiring of status symbols.

Sadly, the modest neighborhoods that made America great only exist in small towns and memories. We've turned over our shops, stores, and supermarkets to international corporations to the point that every city in the States looks almost identical (with its Starbucks, McDonalds, Wal-Marts and Home Depots).

While a lot of good things might disappear in a long-term survival situation – emergency medical care, the Internet, telecommunication – many negative things would also disappear.

Our current way of life is not sustainable. You can't export jobs to third world countries and expect the economy to support itself. You can't slash food quality for price savings and expect people to stay healthy.

We've put ourselves in our current situation out of greed. Sure you can blame big corporations who export our jobs to third world sweat shops. But we are the ones buying their DVRs. We may complain that they've driven out small local farms... but we are the ones trying to save \$50/week on groceries (so we can buy that cheap DVR from China).

We got greedy. We wanted more for less. We exchanged security and sustainability for transient price savings.

So if a new world is to be rebuilt, hopefully we'll learn from our mistakes. Stick to sharing more in smaller communities where we connect as human beings face-to-face (not merely as Facebook Friends).



Little House on the Prairie was one of the most popular and longest running (203 episodes) dramatic family TV shows. Just goes to show we all long for simpler days.

Doomsday or Paradise: Which Will It Be?

The collapse of the food system can either be a "survival situation" or it can be a "new way of life." It can be doomsday or it can be paradise.

Most people today voluntarily eat garbage. It's not even food. It's denatured, over-processed, preservative-filled, genetically modified substances that had some original link to a plant in the ground. Just think how much healthier and stronger people will be eating food grown or caught locally. They'd feel better not just from eating the food, but from the exercise it takes to grow or catch it. Plus, there are all the health benefits that come from exposure to sunlight, fresh air and contact with the earth.

These days may or may not come. But it's very likely some variation of them will. You need to be prepared. Our grandparents lived by the motto "Prepare for the worst, hope for the best." I hope this book has encouraged you to do the same.

The average Joe will do nothing. I'm hoping you're not an "average Joe." I'd wager you're a survival Joe (or Jane). Read the next chapter for suggestions on what steps to take next...

Chapter 6: What's Your Next Step?



While the grid is still up I'm working away trying to get as much information to you as possible.

I think one of the reasons people do so little to prepare for the possibility of a food shortage (even when it's almost a certainty) is because they have been trained by the government, the media and corporate advertising to feel like helpless victims.

As they squander their salary each week on things they don't need, they wonder how they could possibly be preparing for an international food shortage.

But I can't stress how even a little bit of preparedness and foresight could mean the difference between life and death.

You need to just take things one step at time. Do whatever you can. Trust in God to take care of the rest.

He's pretty good at taking care of 75% of our problems if we take responsibility for at least 25%.

You can only do your best. That thought should be a major de-stresser. Just don't waste your time and money on things that give you a little fun now but leave you in jeopardy later. This is only creates more subconscious stress because you know you're making your situation worse by exchanging a little temporary pleasure for possible long-term agony.

Anyway, once you get moving with preparedness it's actually quite fun. It brings an added sense of purpose to your life. You feel good about yourself knowing you are taking greater responsibility for your family and your community.

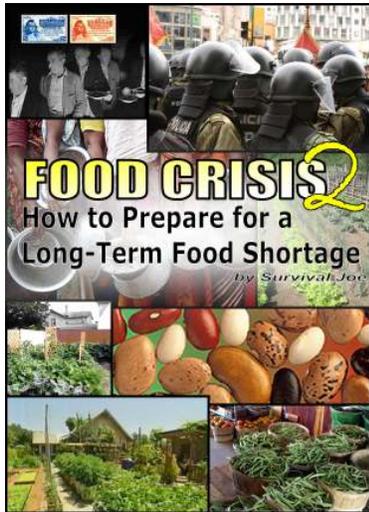
Just create a to-do list. Put things in priority. Put aside a ½ hour each day to read up or take action. Or make Saturday morning time to prepare. If you're unemployed, you may be better off than most – as you have more time. Time is often more valuable than money.

And more valuable than time and money is mental preparedness. When crisis situations happen most people die not because they didn't have food stores or hunting knowledge. They perished because they didn't see what was coming and it put them in a state of inanimate shock. So, yes, even if all you do is read more about preparing for the collapse of the food bubble, you're chances of survival are higher than the average Joe.

Here's my very short if-you-do-nothing-else priority list for surviving the coming food shortage...

Priority No. 1: Store Some Food

Number one priority should be storing food for an emergency. **Food Crisis 1: Emergency Food Storage Basics for the Average Joe** will help you immensely with that. Make sure you are a subscriber so that you'll be notified as soon as it is available. For the moment just store a balanced diet of foods that won't spoil. Or just buy more of what you're already buying. If it would only take three days to empty your home of edibles, you're living life on the razor's edge.



Priority No. 2: Be Ready to Grow Some Food

Second priority, I believe, is to at least be prepared to begin survival gardening. That means you need to have a basic plan and the right kind of seeds. That's where **Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage** can be a life-saving resource.

I released this second Food Crisis volume first simply because I think there is a greater need for people to be ready to prepare for a long-term food crisis. Even if all you do for the moment is get enough of the right kind of seeds and store them safely away from rot and thieves.

While there a lot of tricks, short cuts and money-saving tips when it comes to food storage – any fool can buy some non-perishable food and store it and under the bed. But

stored food will only keep you fed so long. A survival seeds can keep you and your family fed for a lifetime. So I strongly encourage you to head over www.survivaljoe.net/foodcrisis2 right now and find out more about **Food Crisis 2: How to Prepare for a Long-Term Food Shortage**.