

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOD COST SURVEYORS

University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service

Food Cost Surveyors must adhere to the rules of confidentiality, which includes not divulging names or information regarding any store or food cost survey.

Surveys are to be completed during the second week of March, June, September, and December. If you are unable to perform the Food Cost Survey (FCS), receive questions from the media, the general public or have any questions, contact Bret Luick at 907-474-5170, bluick@alaska.edu or Heather Angeloff at 907-474-6339, hangeloff@alaska.edu

Informing the Store Manager

As a new surveyor, a brief introduction and request to perform the Food Cost Survey is all that is necessary. Locate the store manager, introduce yourself and inform the manager that you are conducting the quarterly AK CES Food Cost Survey. If the manager would like additional information, or there are questions and/or concerns that need to be addressed, have him/her contact Bret Luick at the number listed above.

General Instructions

- The following information is to be completed on each page of every FCS in case pages are separated:
 - Surveyor's Name, Store Name & Telephone Number (this remains confidential), Survey Date and Community Name.
- Survey data from all stores within a given community should be collected on the same day.
- Stores that require paid memberships are not to be surveyed (Costco, Sam's club, etc.).
- Stores offering free memberships, e.g., Safeway and Fred Meyer, are OK to survey.
 - Use the special "member" pricing when available.
- Some locations may have two of the same store, choose different stores if at all possible.
- In some rural communities, weekly shipments could affect product availability
 - Store(s) may receive their weekly shipment on Wednesday vs. Monday, in which case, it may be better to survey the store(s) on Thursday or Friday to ensure that a larger percentage of the surveyed items will be in stock.

Food Pricing

To make the Food Cost Survey reflective of the true costs for feeding a family, the survey specifies a desired weight and unit size. To ensure that the item you're selecting is the least expensive, we recommend the following:

- **Select the least expensive food item in the weight and unit listed**
 - Record the price, weight and unit in the corresponding boxes of the survey.
- **If the desired weight and unit is not available**
 - Use the same food item packaged in a different weight and unit
 - Record the price, weight and unit in the corresponding boxes of the survey
- **If the requested food item is not available at all**
 - Refer to the Substitution List and select a Substitute item
 - Record the price, weight and unit in the corresponding boxes of the survey
 - List substitution in Notes section of survey

- **If the requested food item and the substitution are not available**
 - Put an NA in each of the three columns
- **If an item is on sale**
 - Check to see if the sale price is the least expensive (\$/lb.), as compared to others of the same weight/unit. Choose the least expensive item.
- **Individual items**
 - Some produce (green peppers, melons) is sold on an individual basis (\$/each).
 - In such cases, record: 1 in the Weight column; “e” in the Unit column, and the price.
- **Multiple items**
 - If price of food item is listed as 2/\$7.00, 5 for \$10, etc., enter how many in the Weight column, a “c” in the Unit column, and the price.
- **Items sold in a packages**
 - Such items as hamburger buns, dinner rolls, bagels, and fudgsicles.
 - For these food items, record how many are in the package (in the Weight column), a “c” in the Unit column, and the price of the package.
- **Reporting in pounds and ounces (English units) is preferred**
 - However, please feel free to use metric weights and volume measurements.
- **Meats**
 - Substitute only those cuts of meats listed In the **Substitution List**.
- **Tax**
 - Each quarter, verify the sales tax for the store surveyed.
 - Please note: Occasionally stores located in the same community may have different sales tax rates.
- **Store changes**
 - Please let us know if there is a new store, a store closing or a store under new management in your community, as it may impact food costs.

Closing Procedures

After the data has been collected and before you leave the store, please make sure **all spaces are filled, amounts are accurate and writing is legible**.

Again, please complete the survey(s) the second week of March, June, September, and December. Prompt completion and submission of the surveys allows us time to check the data and resolve any discrepancies. As a precaution, please make a copy of the survey(s) as sometimes surveys, for whatever reason, don't make it to us!