



# Food Security and Agriculture Sector

## Brief guidance on food parcels composition

March 2020

In the context of increased vulnerability of Lebanese households and displaced Syrians due to the current economic crisis, compounded by the COVID-19 outbreak, the Food Security and Agriculture sector of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences, Center for Research on Population and Health at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the World Food Programme (WFP), has prepared a brief guidance on the composition of food parcels in emergency situations for vulnerable households.

As many initiatives multiply in the country to provide relief to vulnerable households through in-kind food assistance, the sector proposes the following composition of the food parcel to stakeholders, including NGOs, grassroots organizations, individual donors, and public sector institutions.

The rationale is to ensure that the quantity and quality of the food provided by different organizations and individuals respond to the recommended nutritional needs, ensuring that household members have access to a minimum and balanced nutritional content, including culturally acceptable foods.<sup>1</sup>

This recommended composition of the food parcel covers most of the energy/caloric needs for a family of five for one month (73% of the full daily requirement of 2,100 kcal/person/day with minimum macronutrient and micronutrient requirements). The ration provides 14% of total energy from proteins and 23% from fat.

The ration covers dry items and those that can withstand difficult storage conditions.

In the below table, you will find a suggested ration composition, with the possibility to choose a variety of items within each food group, depending on the budget, logistics and procurement capacity, availability of food items, and beneficiary preferences.

We understand capacities and context may vary among partners and, while from a nutritional point of view it would be preferable that partners adopt the contents detailed in the table, partners can also adapt it to take into account procurement and distribution constraints, costs and urgency of their operations.

<sup>1</sup>SPHERE Handbook, Chapter 6 "Food Security and Nutrition", Section 6: "Food Assistance":  
[https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/23%ch002\\_007](https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/23%ch002_007)

# Recommended Basket Composition

Recommended items for a Food Basket for a Family of five for 1 Month:

ITEM	Monthly ration Kg	Variety considerations	Considerations for families with young children	Other considerations
<b>Cereals</b>	<b>Total 30</b>	Can include rice, pasta, bulgur, wheat flour, etc.	Consider including rice powder, short-grain rice, semolina, wheat flour or any fine cereal.	Include distribution of fresh bread if possible Flour can be included in the parcel in case there are ovens in the community that can be used to bake bread
Rice	15	Any type (long grain, short grain, etc)		
Pasta	10	Any type (spaghetti vermicelli, etc)		
Bulgur	5	Any type (coarse, fine, etc)		
<b>Legumes</b>	<b>Total 15</b>	Can include lentils, beans, chickpeas, and any types of legumes		Can include canned legumes (beans, chickpeas, mixed beans, etc.)
Lentils	5	Any type (red, yellow, split, etc)	Consider yellow lentils	
Chickpeas	5			
Beans	5	Any type (red, white, pinto, etc)		
<b>Fish</b>	<b>Total 2</b>			
Canned fish (any type)	2	Tuna or sardines (any type)		If unable to provide the canned fish, substitute by adding 1 kg of beans and removing 1 kg of cereals
<b>Oil</b>	<b>Total 5L</b>			
Vegetable oil	5	Any type		Can substitute part of the oil with ghee or Tahini
Other				Can add tea, spices
<b>Sugar</b>	<b>Total 4.5</b>			Can substitute part of the sugar with jam, halawa, or other sweets
<b>Salt</b>	<b>Total 0.75</b>			
<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Total 4</b>	Can substitute part of the tomato paste with canned vegetables (peas, mixed peas and carrots, mushrooms, corn, etc). - pepper paste.		If budget and logistics allow, please consider adding dried vegetables such as dried okra, mulukhiyeh, aubergines, green peas. If logistics and partnerships allow, please consider adding fresh vegetables with long shelf-life such as onions, carrots, beets, pumpkin.
Tomato paste	4			
<b>TOTAL WEIGHT</b>	<b>61.25 KG</b>			

## In line with the National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and the IYCF Joint Statement published in December 2019:

- Never include infant formula or any other milk product, including powdered or ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk in the general distribution of food parcel;
- Never accept, solicit or distribute donations of any milk products or infant formula;
- For families with infants and young children less than 2 years of age, it is important to promote recommended breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices.

## Further recommendations

When people become food insecure, their diet quality is reduced, and they often cannot afford to buy fresh produce such as meat, chicken, and fresh fruits and vegetables, often leading to deficiencies in required vitamins and minerals. It is therefore recommended that the dry food ration distribution is **accompanied with fresh food baskets** whenever possible including vegetables that have a long shelf-life (please refer to the table).

Partners are advised to reach out to local agriculture cooperatives and farmers to locally procure fresh food items needed to supplement the dry food ration. This will support the nutrition of beneficiaries and livelihoods of farmers and cooperatives.

This recommended ration can be followed for a maximum of 3 months as it does not include fresh food items.

As with any food basket, this basket should:

- Include a culturally acceptable staple food such as wheat, rice, flour, etc.
- Include a pulse or legume, which is a source of complementary protein, such as lentils, beans (any type), peas, chickpeas;
- Include vegetable oil (a natural rich source of vitamin A), such as corn, soya, sunflower oil, etc.
- It is important to have a variety of each food group in the parcel.
- Salt needs to be iodized.
- Other items such as luncheon meat, hotdog, chocolate spread, and processed cheeses, should be avoided because they are highly processed and of low nutritional value.
- Provide labels with the date of production, country of origin, expiration or “best before” date, nutritional analysis and cooking instructions in accessible formats and in Arabic.
- Food packaging should not carry any messages that are politically or religiously motivated or divisive in nature.

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