Cash not Carbs: The Case for Local/Regional Procurement of Food Aid

By Kathryn Sumner

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

The United States currently has over 90% of food donated as foreign food aid bought in the US and then the physical bags of grain are shipped to the needy countries. This plan takes the recommendation of many experts who advocate switching to local and regional procurement (LRP). Under LRP, we send money and they use it to buy food from local farmers or from regional sources closer to the need where grain is available. We wouldn’t have to ship anything, food will get there several months faster, and we will save millions of lives. The best part? Local and regional procurement (LRP) is cheaper, so more food can be bought at no additional cost.

All of this happens while also helping local farmers in the affected regions, who are often destroyed because they can’t compete with food priced at zero that arrives in the region from abroad. Destroying farms in areas affected by famine is a really bad idea, and that makes this plan a really good idea.

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LRP is less costly (35-53%) and faster (14 weeks) – 9 country study 14

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LRP results in a time savings of 106-112 days (for WFP) 15

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The UN’s World Food Programme explained it best in 2017 QUOTE:

World Food Programme 2017. (Assisting 80 million people in around 80 countries each year, the World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.) 30 January 2017 “Zero Hunger” http://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger

Every day too many men and women across the globe struggle to feed their children a nutritious meal. In a world where we produce enough food to feed everyone, **815 million people – one in nine – still go to bed on an empty stomach each night**. Even more – one in three – suffer from some form of malnutrition.

END QUOTE.Current US food aid needs to be reformed so we can help as many people as possible. Please join my partner and me as we affirm that: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS.

**Foreign aid**: “Foreign aid can involve a transfer of financial resources or commodities (e.g., food or military equipment) or technical advice and training.” (*Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018 https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-aid*)

**Reform**: “to put or change into an improved form or condition” (*Merriam Webster, 2018 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reform*)

**Local and Regional Procurement (LRP)**: “Local and regional procurement (LRP) of food aid refers to the purchase of commodities for emergency food aid by donors in countries with food needs or in another country within the region” (*Charles E. Hanrahan 2010, Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy for the Congressional Research Service, http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40759.pdf*)

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. We offer 2 key facts.

FACT 1. Current Policy Requires Shipments of Commodities from the US

Over 90% of all US food aid is required by law to be transoceanic shipments of physical commodities

Vincent H. Smith and Ryan Nabil 2016. (Smith – a visiting scholar and the director of Agricultural Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of economics and co-director of the Agricultural Marketing Policy Center at Montana State University. Nabil – a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute.) 2 November 2016 “US food aid’s costly problem” http://www.aei.org/publication/us-food-aids-costly-problem/

Given the urgency of the humanitarian disaster in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the agencies tasked with managing U.S. food aid programs, should strive to use their funds as effectively as possible. Yet through a number of burdensome regulations, Congress has severely restricted their efficiency. The 2014 farm bill requires that USAID and the USDA source over 90 percent of all food aid from producers in the United States.

FACT 2.Massive Delays and Higher Cost

Shipping food from the US slows delivery by four months and costs 50% more than local sourcing

Rep. Eliot Engel 2018. (Representative of New York on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. This was part of the hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.) 14 February 2018 “Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Transcript-20180214.pdf>

For instance, even though it is the largest food program in the world, Food for Peace lags behind other countries in terms of response time in crisis situations. When we ship food from the U.S., it can slow down the delivery of assistance by as much as 4 months, and cost up to 50 percent more than sources of food closer to those in need.

OBSERVATION 3. Our PLAN implemented by Congress and the President

1. Switch US food aid from transoceanic shipments of physical product to cash-based assistance

2. Funding and enforcement through normal means.  
3. Plan takes effect one month after an affirmative ballot.   
4. All Affirmative speeches may clarify

OBSERVATION 4. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Less Time

Link: LRP gets there 2-5 months faster

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

In-kind food shipments take an average of 4 to 6 months to reach their recipient destination; LRP food reaches beneficiaries in 1 to 2 months; food vouchers and cash transfers can occur in less than a month.Research has shown that cash-based food security assistance can get food to people in critical need 11 to 14 weeks faster than commodity shipments from the United States.

Impact: Healthy Children.Time saved means kids saved

Erin Lentz 2015. (Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs, February 2015 “The Future of Food Assistance: Opportunities and Challenges” https://elibrary.law.psu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1096&context=jlia

One reason why timeliness matters is because the first 1000 days (discussed below)—from conception until a child turns age two—is the most critical window for nutrition during a person’s life. A savings of fourteen weeks translates into about ten percent of the first 1000 days. The timeliness of food assistance delivered to pregnant and lactating women and children could make the difference between a healthful, productive life, and stunted growth and decreased human capital.

ADVANTAGE 2. Less Cost

Link: LRP is less costly

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

In a 2001 report, GAO found that USAID's average cost recovery per taxpayer dollar expended on monetized in-kind food aid was 76%, while USDA's was 58%.

Quantification:4 to 10 million more people get food at no additional cost

Christopher Barrett and Erin Lentz 2016. (Barrett - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. He is also a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Lentz - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration

U.S. food aid programs need flexible sourcing, allowing food to be purchased closer to where it is needed and to distribute cash or vouchers when most appropriate to the conditions of a specific disaster. Increasing flexibility of sourcing could enable the U.S. to reach an additional 4 to 10 million people at no additional cost.

Impact:Lives saved.16% reduction in mortality rate from switching to pure cash-based policy

Alex Nikulkov, Christopher B. Barrett, Andrew G. Mude, and Lawrence M. Wein 2016. (Nikulkov - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Mude - International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. Wein - Graduate School of Business, Stanford Univ.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0168432&type=printable

We compute the annual child mortality rate in the population of 2236 children as a function of the food assistance delivery parameters *l* and *p* (Fig 2). Because the cost of transoceanic shipments only influences the non-cash portion of food assistance, the curves in Fig 2 fan out to the upper left from a single point in the lower right. The annual mortality rate decreases from 4.4% to 3.7% (a 16.2% relative reduction) as we switch from the current U.S. policy (*l* = 0.65 for cash-based interventions, *p* = 0.5 for non-U.S. carriers) to a pure cash-based policy (*l* = 1). Nearly all of the improvements in Fig 1 are due to increasing the use of cash-based interventions: at *l* = 0.65, where the cargo preference parameter *p* has its maximum impact, increasing *p* from 0.25 to 1 decreases the annual mortality rate from 4.5% to 4.4% (a 2.0% relative reduction).

ADVANTAGE 3. Helps local markets

A.The Problem:US food aid hurts recipients by depressing local production, increasing poverty and creating long-term food insecurity

Oxfam International 2005. (Oxfam is an international NGO that does food aid in poor countries; this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

The greatest concern around food aid is the possibility that it can undermine the livelihoods of poor farmers by creating disincentives for local food producers, by flooding markets and depressing prices. Substantial volumes of food aid provided over a long-term basis could discourage local production, result in increased poverty, and create long- term food insecurity due to increased dependence on food imports. Regenerating agricultural production and local markets is central to any strategy for longer-term recovery and development.

B. The Solution: LRP solves.

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

Support local market channels and food preferences: Whether LRP, food voucher, or cash transfer—procuring food locally can bolster local marketing channels, support farmers, and better comply with local food preferences.

2A Evidence: Local/Regional Procurement of Food Aid

OPENING QUOTES

Hunger is on the rise

Christopher Barrett and Erin Lentz 2016. (Barrett - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. He is also a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Lentz - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration

Often lost in the coverage of the international refugee crisis and our nation's immigration debate is a main reason for worldwide forced migration: hunger. In a new report from the United Nations World Food Programme a 1 percent increase in food insecurity was found to have increased migration by nearly 2 percent. This shouldn't be surprising. Hunger will cause us to go to great lengths – and distances – to feed our families. This becomes a vicious cycle where migration often leads to more food insecurity and impoverishment in different regions, which in turn causes more migration.

The US needs to reform its food aid

Vincent H. Smith and Ryan Nabil 2016. (Smith – a visiting scholar and the director of Agricultural Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of economics and co-director of the Agricultural Marketing Policy Center at Montana State University. Nabil – a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute.) 2 November 2016 “US food aid’s costly problem” http://www.aei.org/publication/us-food-aids-costly-problem/

Conflicts across the Middle East have brought many in the region to the verge of starvation. The United States urgently needs to organize and deliver more food aid to hundreds of thousands of [displaced people in Syria,](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/levant/2015-10-20/help-refugees-help-themselves) northern Iraq, and refugee camps in the surrounding countries, particularly as the campaign against the [Islamic State, or ISIS](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/isis-not-terrorist-group), intensifies.

US food aid is in desperate need of reform

Christopher Barrett and Erin Lentz 2016. (Barrett - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. He is also a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Lentz - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration

Food aid is one of the United States' most powerful tools to support humanitarian relief efforts. Globally, the U.S. is the largest donor of food aid. Although we spend roughly $2.5 billion annually, on average, on international food assistance programs, this represents a more than 70 percent decline in inflation-adjusted terms as compared to U.S. food aid donations in the 1960s. With food aid funding scarcer, and needs greater, we need to get smarter in how we use these resources. U.S. food aid is in desperate need of reform.

INHERENCY

1. The US uses transoceanic shipments for food aid

The US delivers primarily through transoceanic shipments

Alex Nikulkov, Christopher B. Barrett, Andrew G. Mude, and Lawrence M. Wein 2016. (Nikulkov - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Mude - International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. Wein - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0168432&type=printable

The U.S. is the main country in the world that delivers its food assistance primarily via transoceanic shipments of commodity-based in-kind food. This approach is costlier and less timely than cash-based assistance, which includes cash transfers, food vouchers, and local and regional procurement, where food is bought in or nearby the recipient country.

The US relies heavily on in-kind transfers for food aid

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

Despite growth in cash-based assistance under EFSP, the United States continues to rely heavily on in-kind transfers of domestic commodities for international food aid. In contrast, most other countries operating international food aid programs have converted primarily to cash-based food assistance. U.S. reliance on in-kind food aid has become controversial due to its identified inefficiencies and potential market distortions compared with cash-based assistance.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. There is a famine crisis

We need to use our resources wiser so we can help

Christopher Barrett and Erin Lentz 2016. (Barrett - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. He is also a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Lentz - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration

Today, the world confronts an unprecedented crisis of famine or near-famine conditions in four countries – Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen – and a record of more than [65 million people worldwide](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html) driven from their homes. More than ever, we need to use scarce humanitarian resources to ensure people have enough to eat so that they don't feel driven to leave their homes and communities.

At least 30 countries lack food supplies

Christopher B. Barrett and Daniel G. Maxwell 2004. (Barrett – International Professor of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University. Maxwell ­– was Deputy Regional Director, Eastern and Central Africa for CARE International and a professor of nutrition at Tufts University.) August 2004 “Recasting Food Aid’s Role” http://barrett.dyson.cornell.edu/Papers/BM\_policybrief.pdf

At least 30 different nations – two-thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa – currently lack food supplies sufficient to meet basic, minimum food consumption standards for their whole population. When food availability from local production and commercial imports is insufficient— as most commonly occurs in acute emergencies – food aid fills a crucial gap, thereby contributing to economic development and the protection of basic human rights.

Support for Syria isn’t enough [impact: Adv. 2 ‘Less Cost’ means we can provide more food for same amount of money spent]

Vincent H. Smith and Ryan Nabil 2016. (Smith – a visiting scholar and the director of Agricultural Studies at the American Enterprise Institute and professor of economics and co-director of the Agricultural Marketing Policy Center at Montana State University. Nabil – a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute.) 2 November 2016 “US food aid’s costly problem” http://www.aei.org/publication/us-food-aids-costly-problem/

Washington’s emergency food aid programs form the core of the world’s efforts to meet the basic needs of about 12 million displaced and desperate Syrians. Since 2011, emergency assistance from the United States to Syria has amounted to $2.3 billion, nearly four times more than what the European Union, the second-largest donor, provides. But the support that the United States and other countries give does not come close to meeting Syria’s humanitarian needs. Last year, funding shortages forced the United Nations World Food Program to cut its food budget for Syrian refugees in Jordan by 50 percent. According to the 2016 UN Humanitarian Response Plan, donors have so far committed enough funding to meet only 38 percent of Syria’s humanitarian needs for this year.

2. Undernourished children

Children two and under need food to grow correctly

Erin Lentz 2015. (Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs, February 2015 “The Future of Food Assistance: Opportunities and Challenges” https://elibrary.law.psu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1096&context=jlia

Mounting evidence indicates that the period from conception to age two—the first 1000 days—is the most important window for lifelong health and cognitive outcomes.36 Victora et al. find that poor fetal growth or stunting before age two is associated with shorter adult height, reduced economic productivity, less schooling, and, for women, lower offspring birthweight.37 Although there is more evidence of the possibility of cognitive and socio-emotional skills “catch-up” after the first 1000 days, the evidence of successful “catch-up” growth for stunted after the first 1000 days has been uneven. The authors argue that an implication of their findings is that “the prevention of maternal and child undernutrition is a long- term investment that will benefit the present generation and their children.”38 Furthermore, Ruel et al., found that in Haitian districts with high rates of undernutrition, preventing undernutrition was more effective and lower in cost than a recuperative approach targeting already underweight children.The preventative approach included food aid rations, as well as a range of health and behavior change interventions.

3. Difficulties from in-kind food-aid

Ocean freight rates vary

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

Both USDA and USAID in various budget requests have proposed that some portion of Title II funds be made available to purchase commodities in areas near the emergency so as to lower the time and cost of delivery. Because freight and other transportation costs must be paid out of Title II appropriations, they limit the amount of funds available for actually purchasing commodities. In addition, ocean freight rates vary from year to year, making it difficult for USDA and USAID to plan their annual programming.

Disruptive to global commercial markets

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

In-kind food aid—whether monetized or distributed directly—can impede or displace commercial exports depending on the extent of distribution leakages or the economic viability of food aid recipients.[91](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41072.html" \l "fn91) In-kind food aid has engendered international concerns from key trade partners that the United States is using international food donations as part of a domestic supply-management, price-support strategy, interfering with commercial market activity and potentially violating international trade agreements.

4. Hurt Local Markets

Transoceanic shipments hurt the local markets

Celia W. Dugger 2007. (American journalist who is deputy science editor of The New York Times. She was a 1997 Pulitzer Prize Finalist in Beat Reporting. She has also contributed to the Seattle Times.) 14 August 2007 “Charity finds that U.S. food aid for Africa hurts instead of helps” https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/14/world/americas/14iht-food.4.7116855.html

CARE, one of the world's biggest charities, is walking away from about $45 million a year in federal funding, saying American food aid is not only plagued with inefficiencies, but may hurt some of the very poor people it aims to help. Its decision, which has deeply divided the world of food aid, is focused on the practice of selling tons of American farm products in African countries that in some cases compete with the crops of struggling local farmers.

"If someone wants to help you, they shouldn't do it by destroying the very thing that they're trying to promote," said George Odo, a CARE official who grew disillusioned with the practice while supervising the sale of American wheat and vegetable oil in Nairobi. Under the system, the U.S. government buys the goods from American agribusiness, ships them overseas on mostly American-flagged carriers and then donates the goods to the aid groups. The groups sell the products in poor countries and use the money to fund their anti-poverty programs there.

Examples of hurt local markets from US food aid

Oxfam International 2005. (this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, and Oxfam acknowledges her contribution to this work. Oxfam was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms. In addition, Oxfam wishes to express appreciation for the contributions of Mark Ludwick, Angele Kwemo, and Stephanie Fell, and especially of Emily Alpert, who provided extensive research, writing, and editing support. This paper is part of a series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

This paper shows that current practices, especially those of the USA, create substantial adverse side-effects in trade that damage the livelihoods of poor farmers and stymie their economic opportunities to develop.

* Damage to local production in recipient countries: in 2002/2003 food aid donors over-reacted to a projected 600,000 metric tonne food deficit in Malawi, causing a severe decline in cereal prices and hurting local producers.
* Displacement of exports: in 2000, Guyanese rice exports to Jamaica were displaced by US food aid which suddenly doubled following a bumper crop in the USA.
* Food aid is used to dispose of surpluses: in-kind food aid peaked in 1999-2000 when there were large surpluses and low prices for cereals. This depressed prices for poor farmers around the world.

Link: LRP is less disruptive to local agricultural producers and markets

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

In-kind food aid—particularly when monetized—can encourage black market activity and cause price distortions and volatility in local markets with harmful effects on agricultural producers in recipient countries.

Malawi example: hurt local market from food aid

Oxfam International 2005. (international hunger relief NGO; this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder; was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

At the local level, there are numerous cases where producers report falling prices and market displacement as a result of an influx of food aid commodities. For instance, in 2002 and 2003 food aid donors over-reacted to a projected 600,000-tonne food deficit in Malawi, and sent close to 600,000 tonnes of food in aid. However, commercial and informal importers brought in an additional 350,000–500,000 tonnes. Malawi was flooded and had very large carry-over stocks. Maize prices dropped from $250 per tonne to $100 per tonne in the course of a year. Local production of maize, cassava, and rice fell markedly, and estimated losses to the Malawian economy were approximately $15m.

Guyanese example: hurt local market from US food aid

Oxfam International 2005. (this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, and Oxfam acknowledges her contribution to this work. Oxfam was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms. In addition, Oxfam wishes to express appreciation for the contributions of Mark Ludwick, Angele Kwemo, and Stephanie Fell, and especially of Emily Alpert, who provided extensive research, writing, and editing support. This paper is part of a series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

In the 1990s, for example, Guyanese rice producers found an important export market in Jamaica, which grows little rice itself. Rice exports from Guyana to Jamaica grew from 7,700 tonnes in 1994 to 57,700 tonnes in 1997. However, Guyanese rice exporters found themselves facing intense competition from large volumes of US food aid rice, which began pouring into Jamaica in comparable quantities at the same time. As a result, Guyanese exporters were forced to look for other markets for their rice and many producers faced ruin.

SOLVENCY

1. Reduction in Mortality

Child mortality would decrease by 16.2%

Alex Nikulkov, Christopher B. Barrett, Andrew G. Mude, and Lawrence M. Wein 2016. (Nikulkov - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Mude - International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. Wein - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0168432&type=printable

First, we estimate that child mortality in northern Kenya can be reduced by 16.2% (i.e., from 4.4% to 3.7%) if the U.S. joined the rest of the world and switched entirely to cash-based interventions such as LRP, cash transfers and food vouchers; to our knowledge, there are no other analyses that directly assess the impact of these changes on child mortality. Although our forecasting data are from Kenya, the results are likely to be representa- tive of sub-Saharan Africa (recall that 22.8% of the children in [16] had MUAC-Z values below -2, which is similar to the 23.8% of people in Sub-Saharan Africa who are undernourished [25]). The relative child mortality reduction achieved by a change in U.S. policy is approximately linear in the food budget, as can be seen by comparing the results under the base-case budget and the restrictive budget considered in the sensitivity analysis: the budget ratio is 2382/19,867 = 0.120 and the relative mortality reduction ratio is 2.2/16.2 = 0.136. To the extent that spatial targeting is efficient (i.e., areas with significant mortality receive significant amounts of food assistance), the 16.2% estimate should be indicative of the overall relative reduction in child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa.

People die if the food doesn’t get there in time

Professor Andrew Natsios 2018. (serves at Texas A&M as executive professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service. He is director of the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs. From 2001 to 2006, he served as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.) 14 February 2018 “Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Transcript-20180214.pdf>

Frederick Cuny, a well-known disaster relief practitioner from my home state of Texas argued in a book discovered in his papers after he was murdered in Chechnya, “the chance of saving lives at the outset of an operation are greatly reduced when food is imported. By the time it arrives in the country and gets to people, many will have died.” This was the case in Ethiopia in 1985, when imported food aid took four to six months to reach the rural areas of the country. By this point, it was too late, as the death rate had peaked and had already begun to decline.

2. More Timely and Less Costly

LRP is more timely and less costly

Alex Nikulkov, Christopher B. Barrett, Andrew G. Mude, and Lawrence M. Wein 2016. (Nikulkov - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Mude - International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. Wein - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0168432&type=printable

Undernutrition causes 45% of deaths in children under 5 years old [1], and the supply of international food assistance is much less than the demand [2]. Although the U.S. is the world’s largest provider of food assistance [3] and recently increased its use of cash-based food assistance [4], it is one of the few countries (along with Brazil and China, although they provide much less food aid than the U.S. [5]) that provides the majority of its assistance via transoceanic shipments of commodity-based in-kind food aid [2]. Other countries rely on local and regional procurement (LRP), where food is bought in the recipient country (local) or a neighboring country (regional) and then delivered to the target recipients [6], and direct delivery of cash or vouchers to the target recipients [7]. LRP provides more timely (62% delay reduction) and less costly (>50% reduction) delivery than transoceanic shipments [8].

Food aid purchased in the US that is shipped abroad is the slowest form of food assistance

Erin Lentz 2018. (Assistant Professor of Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. She has studied US and global food aid and food assistance policies for fourteen years, including publishing 16 peer reviewed articles and 4 book chapters on the topic.) 14 February 2018 “Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Wstate-LentzE-20180214.pdf>

Increasing flexibility of food assistance sourcing would ensure that more of every taxpayer dollar goes to those who need it most and that assistance would arrive faster. Food aid purchased in the US and shipped abroad is the slowest form of food assistance and often the most expensive. In 2013, I co-authored a nine-country study of the USDA Local and Regional Procurement Pilot Program, which found that buying grains in or near the country where the U.S. donates food aid saved 53 percent relative to purchasing grains in the US, 25 percent in the case of legumes and pulses. Market-based food assistance also shaved 14 weeks off delivery times compared to purchasing and shipping food from the US.

A report by the GAO found that shipping food from the US takes a lot longer

Dan Glickman 2018. (a Distinguished Fellow of Global Food and Agriculture for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs; former Secretary of the U.S. Dept of Agriculture) 14 February 2018 “Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Transcript-20180214.pdf>

In the case of acute and sudden disasters, a report by Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that shipping food from the United States to sub-Saharan Africa took 100 days longer than procuring food from local or regional sources. Additionally, GAO reported that food from the United States can take four to six months longer to reach beneficiaries. In instances of natural disaster like an earthquake or typhoon, speed is critical to mitigate loss in the short term.

LRP is more efficient because it is is cheaper and faster

Alex Nikulkov, Christopher B. Barrett, Andrew G. Mude, and Lawrence M. Wein 2016. (Nikulkov - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. Mude - International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya. Wein - Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, California.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0168432&type=printable

Cash-based interventions are both cheaper and faster than transoceanic shipments, and so improved efficiency could be due to larger quantities procured because of the reduced cost of cash-based interventions, or to more efficient ordering based on more accurate forecasts because of shorter delivery lead times under the cash-based interventions.

Studies show that LRP is less costly and faster in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

In a 2009 study, GAO concluded that between 2001 and 2008, food aid obtained by the U.N.'s WFP using LRP substantially reduced costs and improved timeliness of delivery, relative to similar food aid that USAID purchased and shipped from the United States to the same countries.[87](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41072.html" \l "fn87) LRP was less costly in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Asia by 34% and 29%, respectively, and reduced aid delivery time by over 100 days for many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In FY2006, USAID estimated that almost half of its food aid allocations went to paying the cost of transportation (ocean transport and internal shipping costs).[88](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41072.html" \l "fn88) Other studies have found savings in cash-based assistance—LRP for bulk commodities can save over 50% compared with in-kind food aid (LRP for processed commodities may be less effective).[89](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R41072.html" \l "fn89)

LRP is less costly (35-53%) and faster (14 weeks) – 9 country study

Christopher Barrett and Erin Lentz 2016. (Barrett - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. He is also a professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University. Lentz - Opinion Contributor to U.S. News and World Report. She is also an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas and a Public Voices Fellow.) 30 June 2017 “How to Feed More People Worldwide” https://www.usnews.com/opinion/op-ed/articles/2017-06-30/how-the-us-can-reform-its-food-aid-to-feed-more-people-and-stem-migration

Second, buying commodities in the U.S. dramatically slows down delivery of food aid and costs more. We conducted a nine-country study which found that buying grains in or near the country where the U.S. donates food aid saved 53 percent relative to purchasing grains in the U.S., 25 percent in the case of legumes and pulses. It also shaved 14 weeks off delivery times. Hungry families can't afford to stay in place and wait those extra months.

LRP is the best practice for food aid because it is cheaper and faster

Professor Andrew Natsios 2018. (serves at Texas A&M as executive professor at the Bush School of Government and Public Service. He is director of the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs. From 2001 to 2006, he served as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.) 14 February 2018 “Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Transcript-20180214.pdf>

Local and Regional Procurement is regarded by virtually every humanitarian assistance manager I know to be the best practice for managing food aid, and all donors except the United States allow the practice for 100% of their food aid programs. This is particularly embarrassing, given that the United States is the greatest humanitarian power in the world today, despite (not because of) these regressive provisions of PLO 480. Both international NGOs and U.S. government agencies have carried out pilot programs that demonstrate that local procurement is cheaper and faster than shipping and monetizing U.S. commodities in foreign markets.

LRP results in a time savings of nearly 14 weeks

Erin C. Lentz, Simone Passarelli, and Christopher B. Barrett 2013. (Lentz - Bucknell University, Lewisburg, USA and Cornell University, Ithaca, USA. Passarelli - Tufts University, Boston, USA. Barrett - professor and deputy dean at the SC Johnson College of Business at Cornell University, Ithaca, USA.) September 2013 “The Timeliness and Cost-Effectiveness of the Local and Regional Procurement of Food Aid” https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X13000235

Local and regional procurement (LRP) of food aid is often claimed to lead to quicker and more cost-effective response. We generate timeliness and cost-effectiveness estimates by comparing US-funded LRP activities in nine countries against in-kind, transoceanic food aid shipments from the US to the same countries during the same timeframe. Procuring food locally or distributing cash or vouchers results in a time savings of nearly 14 weeks, a 62 percent gain.

LRP results in a time savings of 106-112 days (for WFP)

Charles E. Hanrahan 2010. (Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy for the CRS.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40759.pdf (brackets added)

GAO also found that delivery of WFP [World Food Program] locally procured commodities was more timely than for U.S. in-kind donations. For example, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, delivery time for U.S. food aid was 147 days compared to 35 and 41 days, respectively, for locally and regionally procured food.

A USDA pilot program found that the average response time was 74 days faster with LRP

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For example, a USDA pilot in 2012 found that the average response time to a food crisis under a Local and Regional Procurement system was 56 days, while under the current system, it was 130 days. This makes a crucial difference in the long-term health and livelihood outcomes of young children. Additionally, rapid and decisive action through emergency aid programs is the best way to prevent the politically destabilizing effects of mass population movements caused by famine, and such rapid action is best achieved through locally purchased food.

Cash is faster than transoceanic shipments

Oxfam International 2005. (this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, and Oxfam acknowledges her contribution to this work. Oxfam was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms. In addition, Oxfam wishes to express appreciation for the contributions of Mark Ludwick, Angele Kwemo, and Stephanie Fell, and especially of Emily Alpert, who provided extensive research, writing, and editing support. This paper is part of a series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

Firstly, cash is almost always faster. In humanitarian emergencies, where weeks or even days can mean the difference between life and death, there is no excuse for delay. And yet much food aid is tied to purchase and shipment from donor countries. It can take months from the date of a procurement order for food aid to be delivered to port. US emergency shipments experienced a median lag of nearly five months in 1999–2000, due to bureaucracy and cumbersome procurement restrictions — and, of course, the need to ship food over long distances.24 By contrast, cash can be used to procure food locally or regionally, in close proximity to the places it is needed. In most cases (though not all), purchasing food closer to its intended destination reduces the time delay. Cash gives decision-makers more flexibility in addressing emergencies.

Cash is cheaper than transoceanic shipments

Oxfam International 2005. (this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, and Oxfam acknowledges her contribution to this work. Oxfam was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms. In addition, Oxfam wishes to express appreciation for the contributions of Mark Ludwick, Angele Kwemo, and Stephanie Fell, and especially of Emily Alpert, who provided extensive research, writing, and editing support. This paper is part of a series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

Secondly, cash is cheaper. The inefficiency of sending food over long distances, often with restrictive procurement and shipping requirements, means that funds are spent on bureaucracy, process, and shipping rather than on the food and its distribution. In fact, according to a study by the OECD, shipping food from donor countries is 33 per cent more expensive than buying it from a third-party country (usually closer to the destination) and 46 per cent more expensive than buying it locally in the destination country.25

LRP is less costly for maize and corn/soy (52-61%) and overall (33-50%) – OECD study

Charles E. Hanrahan 2010. (Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy for the CRS.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40759.pdf (brackets added)

The OECD study found that the cost savings of LRP relative to in-kind food aid are greatest for the two main commodities shipped to Sub-Saharan Africa (maize and corn/soy blend). The cost of locally procured maize and corn/soy blend (CSB) was 61% and 52%, respectively, that of in-kind food aid. Overall, the OECD study determined that the cost of in-kind food aid averaged 50% more than local food procurement and 33% more than regional food aid procurement.

Saving time helps families who would otherwise have to relocate and helps children grow up heathier

Erin Lentz 2018. (Assistant Professor of Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. She has studied US and global food aid and food assistance policies for fourteen years, including publishing 16 peer reviewed articles and 4 book chapters on the topic.) 14 February 2018 “Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing on Modernizing Food Aid: Improving Effectiveness and Saving Lives” <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20180214/106858/HHRG-115-FA00-Wstate-LentzE-20180214.pdf>

Beyond cost savings, saving time also matters, for at least two reasons. First, hungry families on the verge of migrating in search of food cannot afford to stay in place and wait those extra months for delivery of assistance.16 Second, the 14 weeks saved when using the faster market-based food assistance works out to be approximately 10% of the first 1000 days. This 1000 day window between a woman’s pregnancy and her child’s second birthday is the most critical window for interventions to positively impact a child’s cognitive and physical development.17 Delivering food assistance faster during this crucial period of a child’s life can have lifelong benefits.

3. More Food Aid Can be Sent

Since LRP is less expensive, more food aid can be sent

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

By avoiding expensive ocean shipping (subject to cargo preference requirements), a larger share of each taxpayer dollar can reach the intended recipient country, thus allowing a larger number of beneficiaries to be reached.

LRP:More Food Aid Can be Sent

Charles E. Hanrahan 2010. (Senior Specialist in Agricultural Policy for the CRS.) 20 December 2016 “Assessing the Impact of U.S. Food Assistance Delivery Policies on Child Mortality in Northern Kenya” http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40759.pdf (brackets added)

The MSU report found that there were cost savings when LRP was used instead of in-kind food aid. Using LRP rather than in-kind donations of maize (corn) in three Sub-Saharan African countries (Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia) over a five-year period saved nearly $68 million and allowed 75% more food aid to be provided to beneficiaries, according to the MSU report.

4. LRP is better for the localities

Food Aid recipients prefer LRP

Marc F. Bellemare 2013. (associate professor in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, where he also directs the Center for International Food and Agricultural Policy. For his research, he have won the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association’s (AAEA) Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award in 2007, the AAEA’s Outstanding American Journal of Agricultural Economics Article award in 2011 (with Zack Brown), and the AAEA’s Quality of Research Discovery awards in 2014 (with Chris Barrett and David Just). He also won the European Association of Agricultural Economists’ Quality of Research Discovery Award (also with Chris Barrett and David Just) in 2014.) 6 March 2013 “Food Aid: Why Local and Regional Procurement Is Better (Updated)” http://marcfbellemare.com/wordpress/8526

In the [second paper](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X13000259), William Violette and his coauthors find that

**[R]ecipients of locally procured rations are generally more satisfied with the commodities they receive than are recipients of US-sourced foods. This pattern is especially pronounced among less-well-off recipients.**

In other words: LRP means food aid that is generally cheaper and quicker to get to target populations, and those target recipients like the food aid rations they receive under LRP more than food aid rations purchased in the US.

Cash provides more appropriate food aid

Oxfam International 2005. (this paper was written by Gawain Kripke. It relies heavily on a draft written by Sarah K. Lowder, and Oxfam acknowledges her contribution to this work. Oxfam was also assisted by insights from Professor Chris Barrett. His book, co-authored with D.G. Maxwell, is an important contribution to understanding food aid and the opportunities to improve it. Thanks also to Professors Linda Young and Philip Abbott for their constructive criticisms. In addition, Oxfam wishes to express appreciation for the contributions of Mark Ludwick, Angele Kwemo, and Stephanie Fell, and especially of Emily Alpert, who provided extensive research, writing, and editing support. This paper is part of a series written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.) March 2005 “Food Aid or Hidden Dumping?” https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp71\_food\_aid.pdf

Thirdly, cash can be used to procure better, or more appropriate, food aid. Rather than limiting food aid to commodities available in donor countries, cash can be used to procure food that is more appropriate to local conditions and tastes. In the past, there have been serious mismatches between food aid donations and recipient needs. There are many anecdotal examples of food aid donations that require unfamiliar preparation or impose new burdens on recipients through introduction of exotic foods that are not well suited to local conditions.

5. LRP is good for when there are other factors

LRP is flexible

Randy Schnepf 2014. (Specialist in Agricultural Policy.) University of North Texas Digital Library, 28 May 2014 “International Food Aid Programs: Background and Issues” https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc306429/m1/1/high\_res\_d/R41072\_2014May28.pdf

**Flexibility**—Food vouchers and cash transfers can be used when a rapid response is needed, people are physically spread out or highly mobile, or there are security concerns about moving in-kind food or making cash transfers into the affected region.

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