



The USAID Food Aid Product Mix: Presentation of Stakeholder Feedback

A webinar hosted by the Core Nutrition Group & TOPS
Presented by Kristine Caiafa, Food Aid Quality Review Project (FAQR)
November 16, 2017
Foodaidquality.org

WEBINAR OVERVIEW

GOAL Get feedback from participants on the key takeaways from FAQR's interviews with stakeholders

OUTLINE

1. Background on FAQR
2. Context of USAID/FFP food aid
3. The insights gathered fell into 4 main topic areas
 - Present our findings
 - Time for feedback & discussion
4. Prioritizing Key Takeaways & Next Steps

FOOD AID QUALITY REVIEW

Phase I 2009 – 2011

Is Title II food aid ‘fit for purpose?’

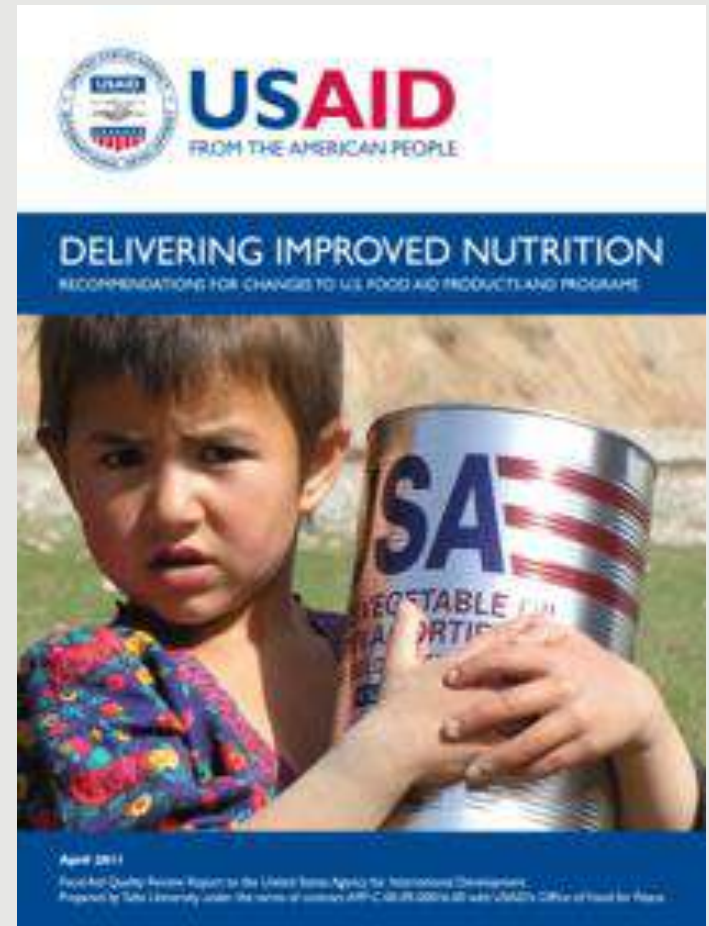
- *Delivering Improved Nutrition: Recommendations for Changes to U.S. Food Aid*
- Identifying differences across specifications

Phase II 2011 – 2016

- *Food Aid Quality Review Phase II Closeout Report*
- Multiple field studies initiated
- USDA-USAID Interagency harmonization
- Published reviews (e.g. protein quality)

Phase III 2016 – 2019

- Field study findings (impacts, C-E, SBCC)
- Processing/packaging innovations
- Supply chain optimization
- Relative cost decision tools
- Quality/safety monitoring, feedback reporting



3 GOALS of FAQR Phase III

EVIDENCE GENERATION

Generating new field-based evidence to support cost-effective use of products for wasting and stunting



Identifying food aid packaging innovations



EFFICIENCY GAIN

Calculating cost effectiveness of food aid products and programming



Optimizing food aid supply chains



INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Enhancing food safety and quality assurance systems along food aid procurement and shipping claims

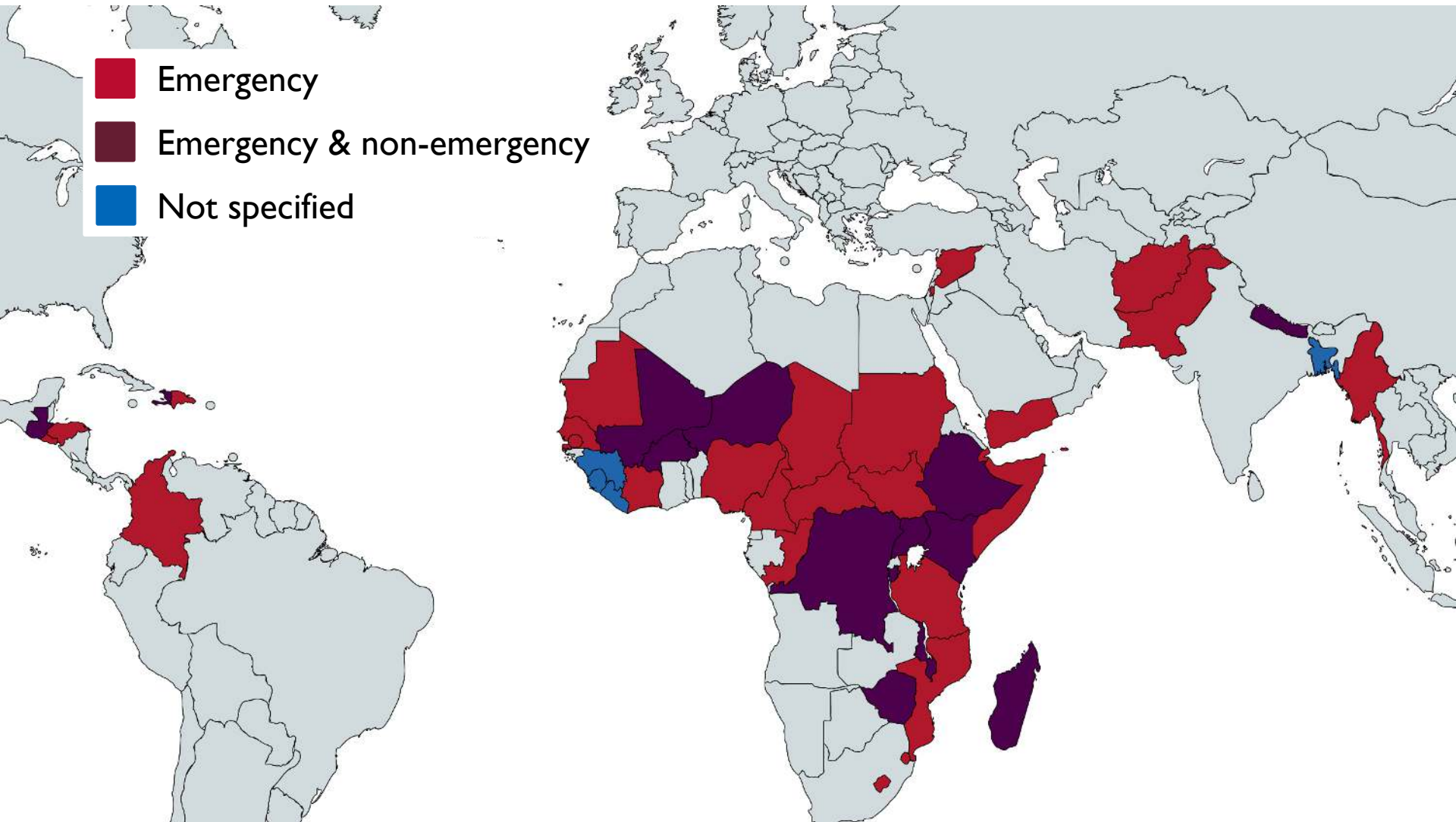


Promoting public-private partnerships in food aid



Today's Question: How can the USAID/FFP food basket can be improved?

CONTEXT: WHERE ARE USAID/FFP FOOD AID PROGRAMS?



CONTEXT: IN FY2016, USAID DISTRIBUTED 1.7 MILLION MTs

80% Emergency



20% Development



CONTEXT: WHAT CONSTITUTES USAID/FFP FOOD AID?

COMMODITIES (15)

PULSES / LEGUMES	Beans packaged (6 varieties)	
	Lentils packaged	
	Peas packaged (4 varieties)	
	Soy flour packaged	
	Soybeans packaged	
STAPLE GRAINS, GRAIN PRODUCTS, & TUBERS	Bulgur packaged	
	Corn bulk and packaged (1 variety)	
	Cornmeal packaged	
	Potato Flakes packaged	
	Rice bulk and packaged (7 varieties)	
	Sorghum bulk and packaged (1 variety)	
	Wheat bulk (6 varieties) and packaged (6 varieties)	
	Wheat Flour packaged (2 varieties)	
	OIL	Soybean Oil bulk
		Vegetable Oil packaged



SNFs (17)

SOY	Soy-fortified Bulgur
	Soy-fortified Cornmeal
FBF	Corn Soy Blend (CSB)
	CSB Plus (CSB+)
	CSB Super Cereal Plus (SC+)
	CSB Instant
READY-TO-USE FOODS	Wheat Soy Blend (WSB)
	A20 Paste Pouch
	A28 Rice Bar
	A29 Wheat Bar
	RUSF
OTHER	RUTF
	High Energy Biscuits
	Soy protein, isolate
	Soy protein, concentrate
	Soy protein, textured
	Fortified Rice



UNDERSTANDING USAID/FFP PRODUCTS

QUESTION How can the USAID/FFP food basket be improved?



METHODS



FAQR conducted 31 structured interviews with food aid professionals...

...from 11 partners who were prime awardees of food aid programs from FY2011 to FY2016



TOPIC AREAS


1. **PRODUCT MIX** Does the mix of products meet programming needs?
2. **PRODUCT QUALITY** Does product quality need to change?
3. **PRODUCT GUIDANCE** Do partners have the tools they need to make the most of the products?
4. **PRODUCT UPDATES** Are partners able to easily stay up-to-date on information about USAID/FFP food aid products?

I. PRODUCT MIX

Does the mix of products meet programming needs?

❖ Specialized products (SNFs)

- SNFs are viewed as important for programming



“The specialized foods are definitely advantageous to us given that they meet a lot of micronutrient gaps that we find in communities.”

❖ Specialized products

- SNF products are viewed as important for programming
- CSB/CSB+ products are viewed as the sole SNF option

“Typically for Title II if we’re targeting children under 2 and/or PLW we would almost always program CSB.”

“Maybe it's not explicitly stated but CSB+ and vegetable oil seem to be what USAID in most cases for PLW and children under 2 are suggesting we provide.”

❖ Specialized products


- SNF products are viewed as important for programming
- CSB/CSB+ products are viewed as the sole SNF option
 - Mixed opinions on RUSFs

“I think it’s definitely more beneficial, you’ve got the shelf life, you don’t have pests eating it, it’s more likely that one child’s going to eat that packet once they open it, there’s not as much sharing just because of that.”

“They are more expensive and there is less experience using them on a large scale.”

❖ Specialized products

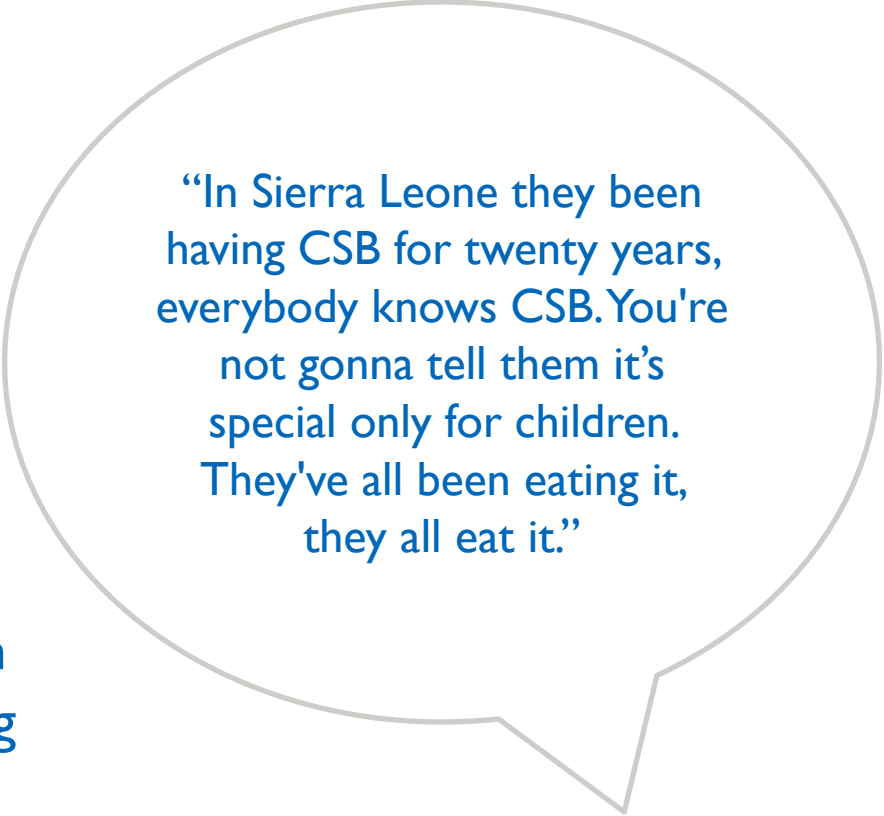
- SNF products are viewed as important for programming
- CSB/CSB+ products are viewed as the sole SNF option
 - Mixed opinions on RUSFs
 - WSB not typically considered



“In Ethiopia there's already an understanding that there's going to be certain commodities. I don't even know if you could get permission to go outside of that.”

❖ Specialized products


- SNFs are viewed as important for programming
- CSB/CSB+ products are viewed as the sole SNF option
 - Mixed opinions on RUSFs
 - WSB not typically considered
- Having just one SNF option limits program impact when doing targeted programming for specialized populations



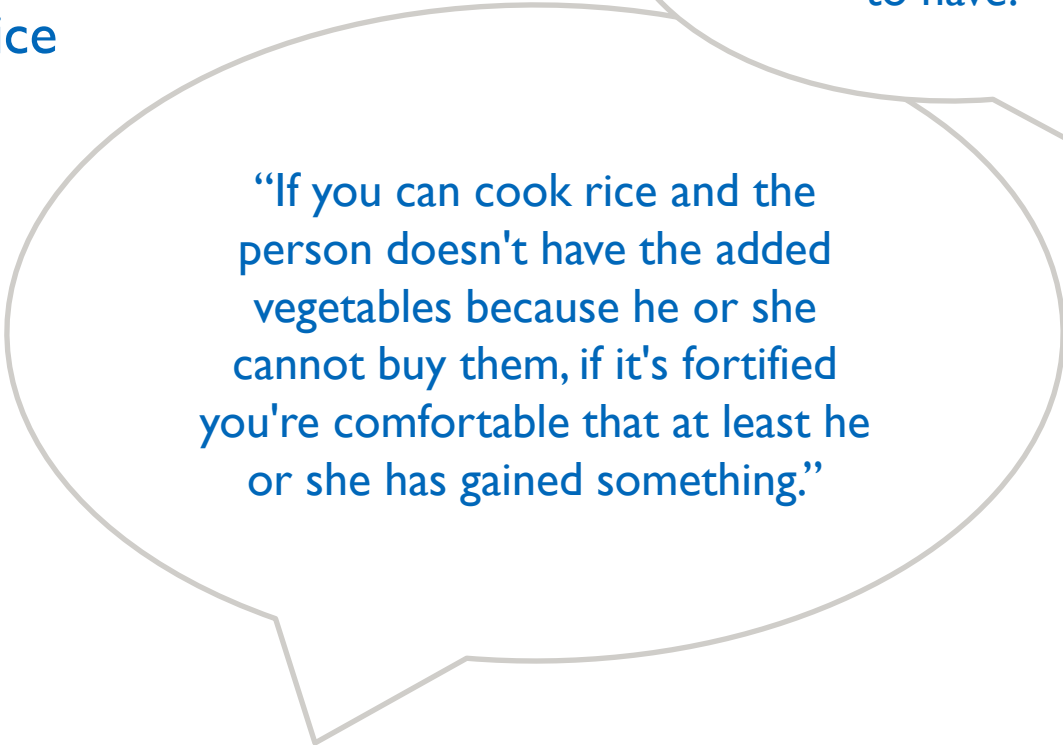
“In Sierra Leone they been having CSB for twenty years, everybody knows CSB. You're not gonna tell them it's special only for children. They've all been eating it, they all eat it.”

❖ Commodity products

- More fortified commodity options would be welcomed in programming, particularly fortified rice




“Depending on the situation it might be a really good product to have.”



“If you can cook rice and the person doesn't have the added vegetables because he or she cannot buy them, if it's fortified you're comfortable that at least he or she has gained something.”

❖ Overall product mix

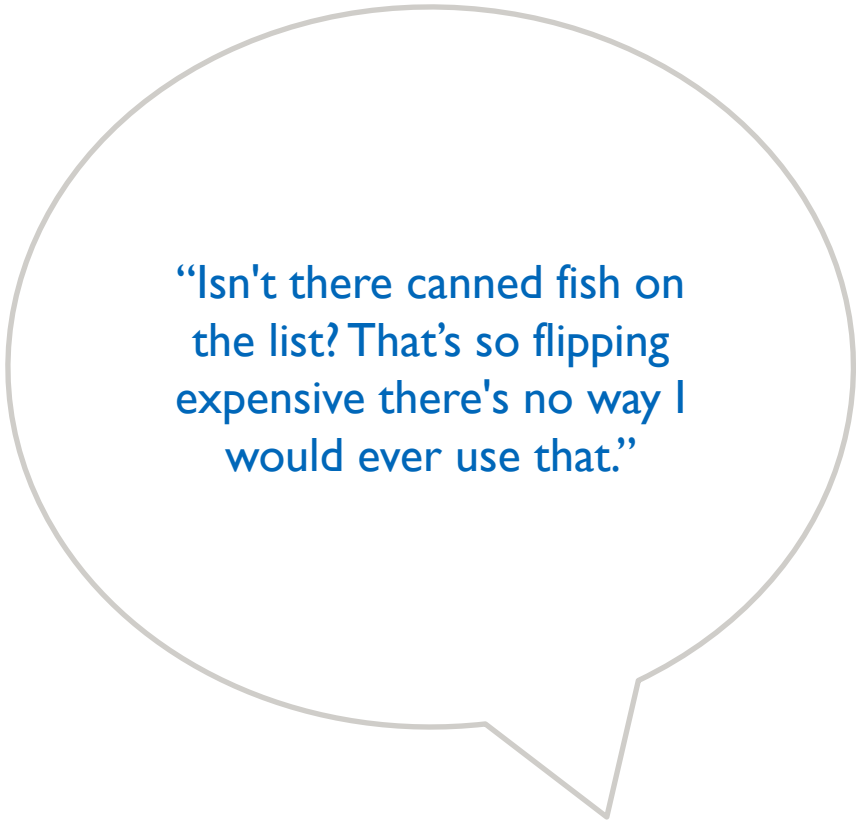
- Non-GMO products are desirable
 - Logistical challenge



“I just wish we had more GMO-free options. That is the first thing that cuts our list of products down. If there is a CSB+ equivalent that were GMO-free that would be really helpful.”

❖ Overall product mix

- Non-GMO products are desirable
 - Logistical challenge
- Some products are irrelevant



“Isn't there canned fish on the list? That's so flipping expensive there's no way I would ever use that.”

❖ Overall product mix

- Non-GMO products are desirable
 - Logistical challenge
- Some products are irrelevant
- Sometimes, the “ideal” product cannot be programmed

- Logistical reasons

“Because of the speed in which it takes the USG to go through the approval process we tend not to use them.”

- On-the-ground realities

“In Uganda but we didn’t want to import sorghum because then we figured it would get diverted and made into beer.”

FEEDBACK

Do your experiences reflect these takeaways?

Does the mix of products meet your programming needs?


- ❖ Specialized Nutritious Foods
- ❖ Commodity products
- ❖ Overall basket

2. PRODUCT QUALITY

Does product quality need to change?

❖ Product safety

- Partners are concerned about mycotoxins in food products
- Fumigation is also a concern



“There's risks in the warehouse staff who are doing it, there's risks in the community, there's risks in issuing the products too soon and still having the fumigant in the product. If I could have anything it would be to change that for all the grains.”

❖ Product durability

- Storage, handling & shelf-life are at the top of partners' minds

- Infestation
- Environmental conditions
- Shelf-life
- Life span once opened
- Handling

“You need to have that CSB last 12 months, and it typically lasts about 9 before it starts to turn rancid.”

“In Bangladesh, we have to use bulk wheat for an MCHN program because the barley weevil is a big problem there.”


“You also have to think about your storage and your climate and how well things keep.”

“The CSB+ bags rip really easily. It does have the double lining and the paper on the outside, but they do rip really easily.”

“You’re storing it in countries where the average temp can reach up to 110 degrees a day. You can ventilate your warehouse but to keep your warehouse cool it’s just not reasonable.”

❖ Product durability

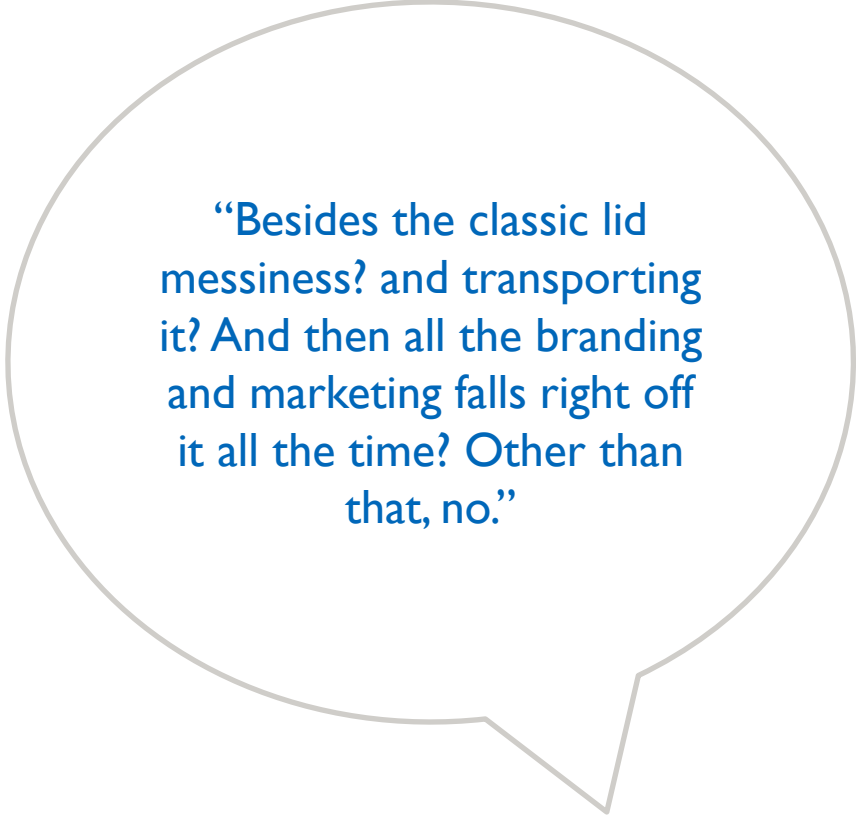
- Storage, handling & shelf-life are at the top of partners' minds
- [Long shelf-life is a desirable product trait](#)



“The more FFP can preposition this stuff would be very useful in emergency contexts.”

❖ Product durability

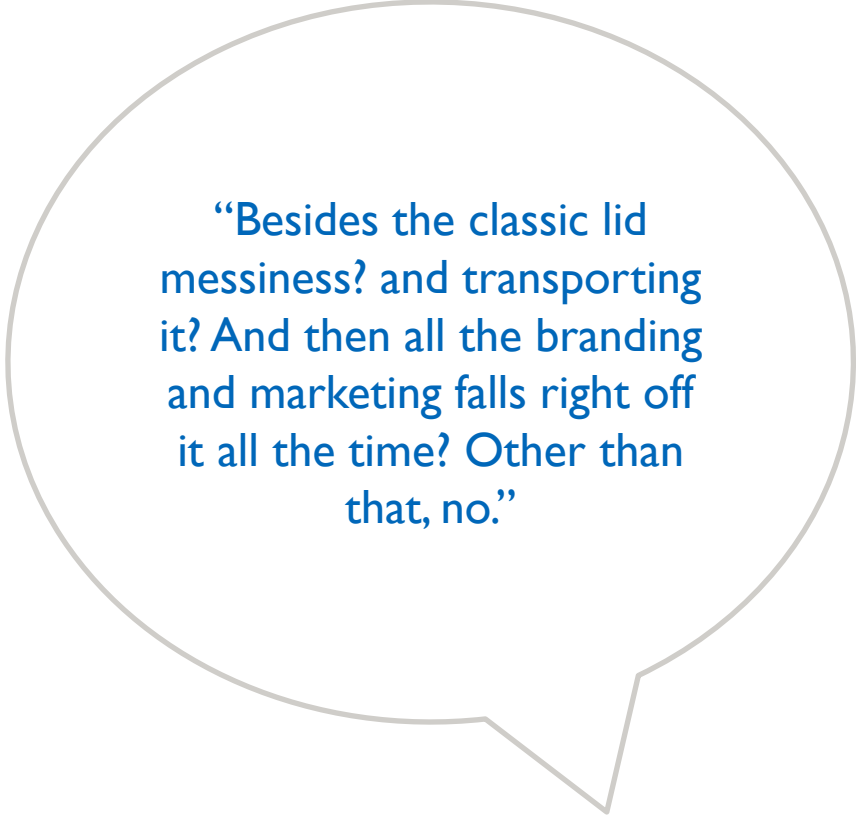
- Storage, handling & shelf-life are at the top of partners' minds
- Long shelf-life is a desirable product trait
- [Oil](#)



“Besides the classic lid messiness? and transporting it? And then all the branding and marketing falls right off it all the time? Other than that, no.”


❖ Product durability

- Storage, handling & shelf-life are at the top of partners' minds
- Long shelf-life is a desirable product trait
- **Oil**
 - Lots of opinions
 - Size of packaging
 - Challenges with repackaging
 - Distribution issues



“Besides the classic lid messiness? and transporting it? And then all the branding and marketing falls right off it all the time? Other than that, no.”

❖ Reporting quality issues



“I feel like there's no retribution. There's no way, if they get something that's bad, they can complain about it.”

FEEDBACK

Do your experiences reflect these takeaways?

- ❖ Product safety
- ❖ Product durability
- ❖ Reporting quality issues

3. PRODUCT GUIDANCE

Do partners have the tools they need to make the most of products?

❖ Tools

- Partners have & use a range of tools to design and update programs
- Not always updated or available

Determining Transfer Type

- Food for Peace Modality Selector Tool

Determining Nutrient Gap

- NutVal
- Secondary data from in-country surveys

Determining Food Type

- Bellman Analysis/BEST Report (Fintrack)
- Quarterly Freight Price Estimator
- Food Staple Analysis (FANTA)
- Desk Review in RFA
- FFP Nutrition Calculator

Determining Rations

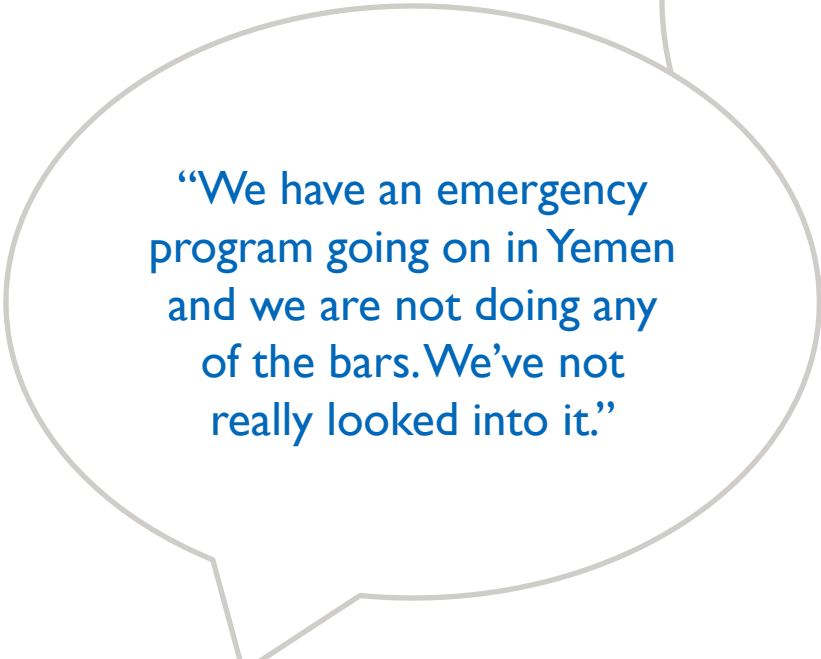
- USAID Ration Calculator
- Commodity Reference Documents
- PM2A Technical Reference Materials
- Commodity Calculator
- FFP MIS

Determining Caseload

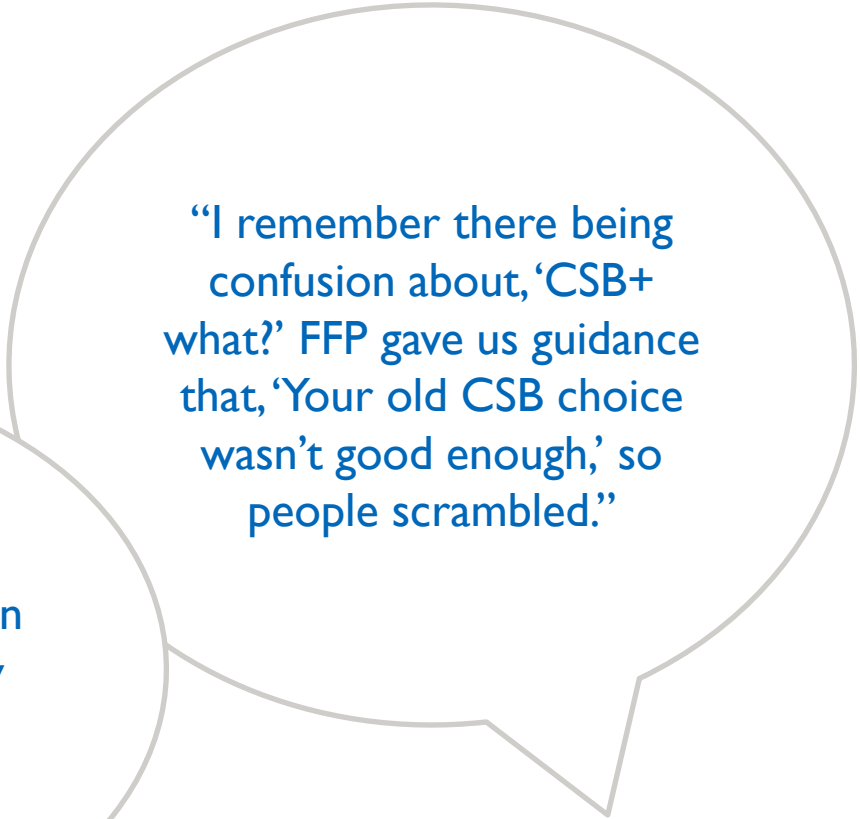
- Internal tools & spreadsheets
- SNAP/SNAP plus

❖ Making the most of products

- It's not always clear how and when products are intended to be used



“We have an emergency program going on in Yemen and we are not doing any of the bars. We’ve not really looked into it.”



“I remember there being confusion about, ‘CSB+ what?’ FFP gave us guidance that, ‘Your old CSB choice wasn’t good enough,’ so people scrambled.”

❖ Making the most of products

- Partners need more info relating product expenses to product performance

“CSB++ is double or triple the price of CSB+.”

“What is the metric that says CSB++ is infinitely better than CSB? There’s just no studies or way forward in having an understanding of that product.”

“It would be nice to know if there were cost-efficiency studies looking at, ‘Did the CSB++ do a better job at reducing stunting or micronutrient deficiencies compared to CSB+?’”

“If they’re cost effective I would prefer using them.”

“If some things cost a little more but the evidence is there that it makes a decided difference that would definitely be something we look at.”

FEEDBACK

Do your experiences reflect these takeaways?


- ❖ Tools
- ❖ Making the most of products

4. PRODUCT UPDATES

Are partners able to easily stay up-to-date on information about USAID/FFP food aid products?

PRODUCT INFORMATION & UPDATES

- ❖ Partners get updates through formal and informal channels



“There’s a lot of existing fora at the U.S. level we attend in various roles.”

PRODUCT INFORMATION & UPDATES

❖ Partners get updates through formal and informal channels

- [Continual communication](#)

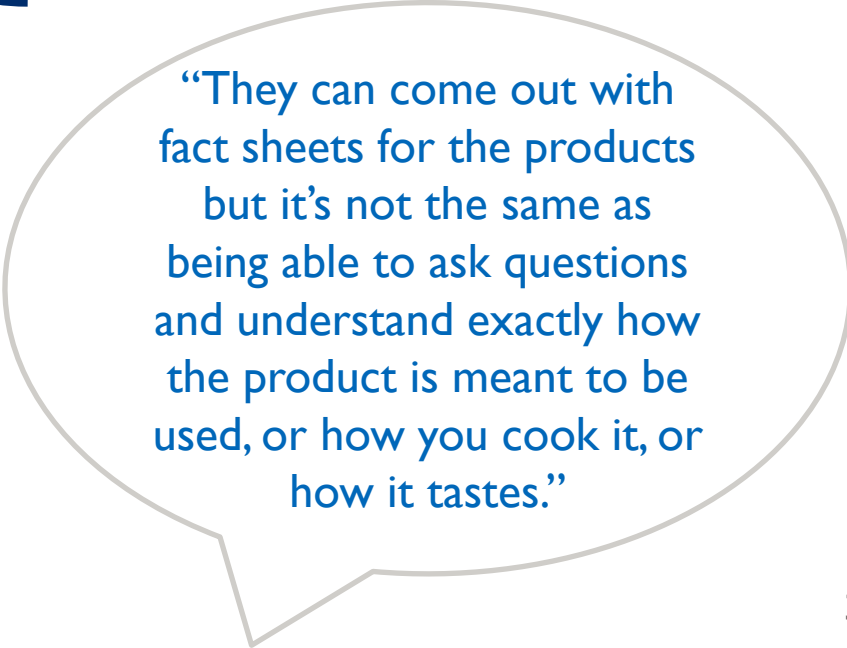
- Technical groups: TOPS, InsideNGO, Commodity Management Task Force (TOPS), Core Group
- Directly from commodity groups
- From FFP: Through the AOR, communication directly from the FFP office to HQ staff or via presentations

PRODUCT INFORMATION & UPDATES

❖ Partners get updates through formal and informal channels

- Continual communication
- Meetings & events

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- FACG, Commodity Working Group
 - International Food Aid and Food Security Conference (“Kansas City”)




“They can come out with fact sheets for the products but it’s not the same as being able to ask questions and understand exactly how the product is meant to be used, or how you cook it, or how it tastes.”


PRODUCT INFORMATION & UPDATES

- ❖ Partners get updates through formal and informal channels...

...but there are mixed opinions about the effectiveness



“I think FACG and the commodity groups are both pretty good about sharing information if there are changes.”



“There’s not an easy way to find out that CSB is now CSB+ and here are the changes.”

FEEDBACK

Do your experiences reflect these takeaways?

- ❖ Partners get updates through formal and informal channels...but there are mixed opinions about the effectiveness



**“It’s really complex. Just this one
decision about food.”**

DISCUSSION

How would you prioritize the key takeaways?

1. **PRODUCT MIX** Does the mix of products meet programming needs?
2. **PRODUCT QUALITY** Does product quality need to change?
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DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

What big next steps need to be taken?

How can USAID/FFP involve partners to identify solutions?

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

- Submit comments to kristine.caiafa@tufts.edu by Thursday, Nov 23, 2017
- Food Aid Quality Review Evidence Summit June 20-21, 2018





Source: USAID Food for Peace flickr

THANK YOU!

CONTACT

Kristine.caiafa@tufts.edu

Food Aid Quality Review