Set!
Designing Your Food Sovereignty Assessment

Hosted by First Nations Development Institute

Introduction by Tawny Wilson

Presentation by Vicky Karhu, Sharon Silvas and Scott Brant
Announcements

• All attendees are on mute
• Questions:
  • Listen: Type in Question box and we will read
  • Q/A also at end of presentation
• Evaluation: survey will pop up when webinar ends and sent in an email. Please complete.
• Recording and attachments can be downloaded from www.firstnations.org/fnk next week.
Upcoming Webinars

• December 5, 2016 @ 12:00 p.m. MDT
  “Data collection and Presentation for Food Assessments”

• December 13, 2016 @ 1:00 p.m. MST
  “Go! Conducting Your Community Food Sovereignty Assessment”

• January 17, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m. MST
  “Moving Forward! Community-Based Policy and Action Plans”
Set!
Designing Your Food Sovereignty Assessment
We’ve been talking about Food Sovereignty and are ready to take a close look at our community.

Food Sovereignty, simply stated, means that the control of a tribe/community’s food system is in the hands of the people of that tribe/community.

We’ve explored our pre-contact foods and now we are ready to determine what our current food sovereignty situation is.
By now your Food Sovereignty Team should be meeting regularly and everyone has a good idea what food sovereignty means to your tribe/community.

You have also decided how you are going to define your community for the purposes of this assessment.

You’ve been talking with tribal/community members about food sovereignty and have been getting great response and ideas from everyone!

Through your focus groups and conversations you have begun to identify some obstacles and issues affecting your ability to achieve food sovereignty.

Today we will talk about:

• Choosing priority issues to address in the assessment.
• Designing questions to find out the tribe/community status, concerns and opinions regarding priority issues.
• Choosing assessment and survey tools that are most appropriate for your tribes/communities.
• Choosing the most appropriate approach for conducting the assessment.
• Publicizing the assessment activities.
Think about the issues that are affecting your food sovereignty situation. These could be things like:

Obstacles to food sovereignty - These can come in many forms, but the common denominator is anything that is preventing your community from having control of what foods are available, how the foods are produced and processed and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.

Affordability of healthy and culturally appropriate foods - All foods cultivated before European contact were grown using “organic methods” or selective harvesting. Are organic foods affordable in your community?

Access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods - Is transportation to stores or markets making access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate foods a major challenge?

Loss of farming, hunting, gathering and other traditional food knowledge - Do you find that your community/tribe is dependent on the dominant society for food production and your food production and procurement skills are fast disappearing?
Think about the pieces of the food system that you identified in the “loaf of bread exercise.”

For each step that is not under local control, examine issues that prevent local control (or food sovereignty) and identify resources that can be used to regain community/tribal control of the food system.

The issues you identify will become key issues that you want to address in designing your Food Sovereignty Assessment questions.

Example: There are ranchers producing meat in your community, but the majority of community/tribal members are purchasing meat from retail outlets and do not know its source or how it has been processed.

In this case you have the producer, but the rest of the process to bring the meat to the table takes place outside your tribe or community.

Think about possible remedies for this and what information you will need to begin to make a positive change for this issue. What will it take to regain control of the meat that your people are consuming?
Identifying and Prioritizing Food Sovereignty Issues

Your Food Team will identify many key issues preventing food sovereignty as you go through these exercises. How can you prioritize focus issues to be examined in your food sovereignty assessment?

Here's another exercise to help your Food Team prioritize issues and come to consensus:

1. Each Food Team member writes 5 key issues that should be addressed in your assessment on sticky notes or index cards.
2. Draw four lines on the board with the top being the highest priority and the bottom being the lowest.
3. Each person places their issues on the board in the appropriate priority level.
4. Combine similar issues in general categories using group discussion. *Example: Access to healthy foods and need for farmers markets could go together.*
5. Once all key issues are grouped together, prioritize them using consensus. (This may take several sessions).
Designing Assessment Questions

Starting with the highest priority key issues agreed upon by your Food Team:

List information valuable to help you learn about that issue.

Example: Your first priority issue is “access to healthy foods.” You think about what affects access to healthy foods in your tribe/community. You need to know if any healthy foods are being produced in your community/tribe? Are healthy foods affordable? Do people have access to farmers markets or any retail healthy foods? Is transportation to healthy food sources a problem? How much are your families spending on food and how much of that is going to outside producers?, etc.

Next, create questions that will provide the information you have agreed you need to know.

Example: Would your family shop at a farmers market if one was nearby? Would you buy more fruits and vegetables if they were affordable? ___Yes ___No. Do you know where to get traditional and culturally appropriate foods? ___Yes ___No. How far is your nearest full-size grocery store?

Create questions for all of your highest priority issues. Your Food Team will decide on the final questions to be used. Remember to keep written surveys as simple as possible and try to make them short enough so that people can complete them in 15 minutes or so.
Some Assessment Tools

Written surveys are generally most successful when...
• They are filled out in person rather than mail-in or online.
• Most of the questions are yes/no and multiple choice.
• No one puts their name on the questionnaire.
• Open-ended questions are limited and require simple answers.
• They include lists where people simply circle their choices.
• Incentives are offered for completion of the questionnaire.

Dot surveys give you a snapshot of the situation on a single question.
• Give each person participating in the assessment 3 sticky dots.
• Have one question printed on a flip-chart or white board.
• Have each person place their dots on the three most appropriate answers for themselves.
• Discuss the instant results that you see.

Guided discussions with responses recorded on-site are good for introducing the ideas of food sovereignty in your communities/tribes. You should...
• Use the same discussion topics and questions with each group or individual.
• Have two people involved so that one can lead the discussion and ask questions and the other can record the answers.
• Limit the number of discussion questions to not take more than 15 to 20 minutes.
Some Logistics for Success

Your Food Team will determine the best means by which to gather your information. It may be:

- In meeting settings
- Individual interviews
- Holding focus groups or talking circles and recording responses
- Setting up tables for written surveys at events
- Having dot surveys at events

In settings where you do not have the opportunity for discussion about what food sovereignty is and what it means in your community/tribe...

Distribute an information card with a definition of food sovereignty as well as basic information about why you are conducting the survey and how you plan to use the results.

Always state that this is a tribal/community-based assessment and all of the information gathered will be used by the tribe/community for the tribe/community.

Choose meeting places or sites for setting up a table that are convenient to a large cross section of your tribe/community or are places where people congregate.

Your goal is to get broad-based and honest information! Emphasize anonymity and confidentiality!
Publicizing Your Food Sovereignty Assessment

Use all publicity channels and venues that are available to you!

Create a Publicity Checklist that has all public information avenues listed.

Each time you visit a community or attend an event to conduct assessments, go down the list and use all avenues available.

- Muscogee Nation News Schedule for that month. Deadline 15th of proceeding month.
- Muscogee Nation radio program. Schedule for week of event.
- Muscogee Nation TV Schedule for week of event.
- Local radio PSA
- Local newspaper
- Local TV (if applicable)
- Flier at local Creek Indian Community Center
- Flier at local public library
- Flier at local Agriculture Extension Service Office
- Flier at Elderly Nutrition Feeding location
- Flier at local non-Indian community center
- Flier at local non-Indian Sr. Citizen center
- Flier to local grocery store if possible
- Phone call to local community center to copy and distribute fliers in community.
- Phone call to local Indian community center to copy and distribute fliers in community.
That’s all for today!

Now your Food Team is ready to...

- Identify food system related issues and obstacles to food sovereignty in your tribe/community.
- Prioritize key issues affecting your food sovereignty situation.
- Identify the information that you need in order to address key food sovereignty issues.
- Create questions that are culturally appropriate and address key issues.
- Design culturally appropriate and practical assessment tools and methods for collecting the information that you need.
- Finalize your assessment plan and set dates for information gathering events.
- Publicize your assessment.
FAST Blackfeet

Food Access and Sustainability Team

Development Process

Sharon Silvas and Scott Brant

FAST Blackfeet Leaders Team
FAST Blackfeet
Food Access and Sustainability Team

FAST Blackfeet is a group of community leaders, health professionals, educators and citizens on the Blackfeet Reservation who are dedicated to:

Food Security for Our People
When people know where their next meal is coming from and that they will have the food they need.

Food Sovereignty for Our Nation
The right to healthy, culturally appropriate foods and our right to define our own food and agriculture system.

1. Finding areas of hunger in our communities and looking for solutions to these issues.

2. Addressing issues of access and cost-effective, local production of culturally familiar foods on the Blackfeet Reservation.

We invite you to help us in this effort!
blackfeetnourishproject@gmail.com
Forming the Team

• Group formed with the intent to increase food access to reservation communities
• Three goals were developed:
  • To assess the community’s opinions about food sovereignty and security
  • To assist the community food bank
  • To inform the community about hunger issues
The moon was aligned:
• Tribal members attended First Nations assessment training in Billings
• FAST forming at the same time
• Assessment training brought to Blackfeet in May
• 30-60-90 day plans developed during training
Developing the Assessment

• Intern from U of Tennessee School of Public Health in Browning to assist in development, distribution, and compilation of data for assessment
• Assessment was developed with FNDI tools and USDA tools
Developing the Assessment cont.

- Linked the questions to Community Food Security Assessment
- Used the six components: production resources, socio-demographic info, community resources, food security, accessibility, affordability
- Intern had previous research demographic information and constant access to FAST members
- Heavy reliance on FNDI tool
Developing the Assessment cont.

• Assessment was piloted with Community Health Representatives (CHRs) to provide information and community feedback.
• Plan A was to administer the assessment during the tribal council elections.
• Plan B was to physically go to the five main reservation communities to administer...
Best Practices

• Using N. Am. Indian Days had its positives and challenges
• Across the trail, the community college was paying $20/each for assessments
• Many summer family/children events leading up to NAID; where there were crowds, we had surveys
• Key Stakeholders = Leadership Team
Next Steps

- Winter assessment
- Further break-down of population by community to compare and contrast
- Possible publication of findings
- Support efforts by schools by providing education and gardening skills
- Identify distribution and access channels and assist with the creation and implementation of the Browning School District’s Farm to School Plan
Questions?
Thank You!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have as you continue your work.

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Any questions, please feel free to contact Marsha Whiting at (303)774-7836 or via email: mwhiting@firstnations.org