



FOOD JOURNAL

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HOUSE PASSES AGRICULTURE SPENDING BILL

On June 8th, the United States House of Representatives passed the fiscal year (FY) 2006 Agriculture Appropriations spending bill (H.R. 2744), by a vote of 408-18. The discretionary funding levels are described below:

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) was funded at \$5.257 billion, an increase of almost \$22 million above the FY 2005 level and a decrease of \$253 million below the Bush Administration's FY 2006 budget request. It was noted that, since the time of the Administration's budget request (submitted in February), estimates for WIC program participation and food costs have declined for FY 2005 and FY 2006. A contingency fund of \$125 million was included, with a possible rescission of up to \$32 million attached to the contingency fund. Also included was a \$15 million earmark for continuation of the breastfeeding peer counselor program. Specifically excluded was a Bush Administration proposal that would have required a 25 percent cap for nutrition services and administration. And included was an Administration proposal to cap Medicaid adjunctive eligibility for WIC at 250 percent of poverty (affecting six states: Rhode Island, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maryland,

with Medicaid eligibility above 250 percent of poverty).

Changes to the current moratorium on expanding "WIC-only" stores include language to allow the moratorium to be lifted upon implementation of interim final cost-containment regulations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as well as the creation of an exemption to the current moratorium related to the prices charged in "WIC-only" stores.

In a separate account from WIC, \$20 million was appropriated for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which was equal to the FY 2005 level.

TEFAP

\$140 million is provided for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) mandatory commodity purchases and \$50 million for transportation and storage costs, with up to \$10 million in additional administrative funding (the same levels as FY 2005).

CSFP

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) received \$107.7 million in annual funding with an expected commodity inventory of \$6 million. The FY 2006 funding is \$3 million less than FY 2005, and CSFP advocates had urged an additional \$20 million in funding to reflect increased food package costs.

***For additional information, visit
www.frac.org.***

HUNGER-FREE COMMUNITIES ACT OF 2005 INTRODUCED

Establishes Goal to End Hunger in America by 2015

Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) recently introduced S. 1120, the Hunger-Free Communities Act of 2005, to increase federal funding available to local organizations working to reduce hunger in communities nationwide as well as establishing an ambitious commitment to end hunger in the United States by 2015. The bill has bipartisan support with Senators Richard Lugar (R-IN), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), and Gordon Smith (R-OR) as co-sponsors.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), hunger and food insecurity in the United States has increased for the fourth straight year. In 2004, more than 36 million Americans (including 13 million children) lived with hunger or on the brink of hunger.

“This critical legislation will enable our member food banks and food-rescue organizations to better meet the needs of low-income Americans, particularly through enhanced facilities,” said Robert Forney, President and CEO of America’s Second Harvest, the nation’s food bank network. “We commend Senator Durbin and his colleagues for their leadership and commitment to addressing hunger in America.”

The Hunger-Free Communities Act preserves current funding levels for federal food programs and protects nutrition and hunger-relief initiatives. Additionally, it directs the Census Bureau to collect annual data on food insecurity in the United States and the USDA to prepare annual reports on the status of efforts to eliminate domestic hunger and recommendations for reducing hunger.

“Hunger is not a partisan issue, and we now have the opportunity to forge a new bipartisan partnership, committed to addressing hunger in communities all across our country,” Durbin said. “During the 1960s and 1970s, under both Dem-

ocratic and Republican Administrations, our country put in place programs that substantially reduced the number of people who struggle to feed their families. Unfortunately, today hunger and food insecurity has been on the rise. That is why we introduced The Hunger-Free Communities Act.”

Upon introduction of the bill, Senator Lugar noted, “Each citizen can make an important contribution to the fight against hunger at a local level. As Hoosiers continue to live longer lives, more people will rely on community organizations such as food banks. This legislation would help alleviate that burden on food banks by allowing these facilities to identify unique ways to serve their communities with federal assistance.” Lugar applauded the work of food banks and noted, “We should support this private sector activity, which not only feeds people, but also strengthens community bonds and demonstrates the power of faith, charity, and civic involvement.”

The Hunger-Free Communities Act enables Congress to establish a first of its kind grant program authorizing up to \$50 million a year for five years to help hunger-relief organizations reduce hunger locally through efforts such as infrastructure improvements, training and technical assistance, and expanding access to more nutritious food including protein and produce. This public-private partnership focuses on addressing hunger at the local level while promoting collaboration among groups with mutual visions.

In 2000, as part of the Healthy People 2010 initiative, the U. S. government established a goal of cutting food insecurity in half by 2010. In June 2004, the National Anti-Hunger Organization issued the Blueprint to End Hunger which supports a strategy for cutting hunger in half by 2010. The Hunger-Free Communities Act reaffirms these commitments.

***To view the text of the bill go to
www.thomas.gov.***

MORE THAN 13 MILLION CHILDREN FACE FOOD INSECURITY

In recognition of National Hunger Awareness Day on June 7th, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) joined a nationwide effort to bring attention to the critical issue of millions of Americans who experience "food insecurity." CDF released a report on the effects of child hunger and food insecurity, which is defined as the lack of consistent access to enough food to ensure active, healthy living. CDF's report shows that hunger is leaving many of America's families and children behind, with effects that range from health problems to academic achievement delays and social difficulties.

According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 13.3 million American children were food insecure in 2003; of these, 420,000 lived in households where someone had to go hungry. Overall, 36.3 million Americans experienced food insecurity in 2003, 1.4 million more than in 2002, according to the USDA.

"As the wealthiest nation in the world, it is unconscionable that we have increasing rates of food insecurity among children," said Richelle Friedman, senior program associate for CDF's Family Income Division. "The tragedy of child hunger is the huge toll it exacts on children and our nation. Children who come from food insecure homes or who are hungry are more likely to get sick, have problems in school, experience trouble getting along with their peers, and show higher levels of anxious behaviors. As these children mature into adulthood, our society will feel the effects of their deprivation in the form of higher rates of school failure, greater health care costs, and lost workforce productivity."

The CDF report includes state-by-state breakdowns of the percentage of households with food insecurity and hunger.

Among the findings are:

- 18 percent of children were food insecure in 2003;
- Low-income families spent 25 percent of their after-tax earnings on food;
- 3.5 million families had to use a food pantry at least once during 2003 and 46.8 percent of these families also received food stamps; and
- 28.5 percent of African American and 28.1 percent of Hispanic households with children experienced food insecurity, compared with 11.3 percent of White households.

For a copy of the report, go to www.cdf.org.

USDA'S MYPYRAMID EDUCATING CONSUMERS ABOUT PROPER NUTRITION

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Mike Johanns announced that USDA's new web-based interactive food guidance system, MyPyramid.gov, has reached a new milestone with 500 million hits.

On April 19, MyPyramid.gov received nearly 50 million hits and the number quickly escalated to 200 million hits in the first week. MyPyramid is designed to help consumers move towards a healthier lifestyle. MyPyramid Tracker, an integral part of MyPyramid.gov, allows consumers to personalize dietary guidance and monitor daily progress. Through the use of MyPyramid, consumers can access the latest science-based guidance contained in the recently released 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

USDA is working on the Spanish translation of MyPyramid and developing a version tailored to children, as well as traditional nutrition education materials such as posters and brochures.

To learn more about MyPyramid go to www.MyPyramid.gov.

FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION EXAMINED

A new report from the Brookings Institute, *Leaving Money (and Food) on the Table: Food Stamp Participation in Major Metropolitan Areas and Counties*, analyzes U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Census 2000 data on food stamp use and program eligibility in 97 large metropolitan areas revealing that:

- **In 1999, 9.8 million individuals in 97 large metropolitan areas across the nation lived in households that received a combined \$9.1 billion in food stamp benefits.** Higher shares of the populations in the metropolitan Southern and Western United States received food stamps, as did those in urban “city-counties” such as St. Louis, New Orleans, and Philadelphia.
- **Only about one-half of all individuals in major metropolitan areas who were eligible for food stamps received benefits in 1999.** Participation rates ranged widely across the nation, from a low of 21 percent in the Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ, metro area to a high of 94 percent in El Paso, TX. Midwestern metropolitan areas reported above-average participation rates, and some urban counties exhibited considerably higher or lower participation rates than their respective metro areas.
- **Across all 97 metropolitan areas, eligible households that did not claim food stamps left an estimated \$4.9 billion on the table in 1999.** Forgone benefits in the Chicago and Houston areas exceeded \$200 million, while the New York and Los Angeles areas could each have reaped about half a billion dollars more in food stamp funding had all eligible households participated.
- **The number of individuals receiving food stamps in the 97 metropolitan areas rose by 1.4 million from 1999 to 2002, but esti-**

mates from the USDA indicate that the overall metropolitan participation rate has likely declined since then. Because of the economic downturn and changes in the Food Stamp Program that expanded eligibility for working families, the number of individuals eligible for food stamps has increased faster recently than enrollment in the program.

- **Texas ranked in both the top and the bottom for metropolitan areas receiving food stamps by the percentage of the population in 1999.** The McAllen-Edinburg-Mission area ranked number one in the country with 22.3% of the total population receiving food stamps. El Paso was second with 16.7% of the population receiving food stamps. In comparison, in Dallas 2.9% of the population was receiving food stamps.
- **Food stamp participation by potential eligibles varies across the state.** Some Texas cities showed below average participation in the Food Stamp Program (0-42%). For example, the Austin-San Marcos area, Dallas, Ft. Worth and Houston were ranked as below average participation. San Antonio was the only Texas city ranked as having average participation (43%-61%) whereas McAllen and El Paso were both ranked above average (61%-94%).

The report concludes that billions of dollars in unclaimed food stamp benefits and millions of nonparticipating eligible families should focus local leaders’ attention on opportunities to connect more eligible individuals to the program. The report includes recommendations to emphasize to federal officials the local importance of food stamps, integrate food stamp outreach into existing working-family campaigns, support state policies that streamline access to food stamps, and encourage the USDA to monitor food stamp participation rates at the sub-state level.

"Market food stamps as part of a package of supports. Rather than promote food stamps alone as a potential supplement to tax credits, successful outreach campaigns have often engaged in multi-benefit outreach," said the report. In addition, authors of the report encouraged states to simplify income and resource definitions for eligibility determinations. The 2002 Farm Bill gave states new options and flexibility. For example, states can consider the same sources of income for food stamp eligibility as for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

***To view the complete report, visit
[www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/
20050517_foodstamps.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20050517_foodstamps.htm).***

HOUSING SUBSIDIES MAY BOLSTER CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

The children of low-income families who receive public housing rent subsidies had greater weight for age, an indicator of better nutrition, than children whose families did not receive rent subsidies, according to a study in the June issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

Poor families in the United States are increasingly unable to afford basic necessities, including food and shelter, according to background information in the article. Household food insecurity, defined as a household with limited or uncertain availability of enough food for an active healthy life, affects children's health and well-being. Poor families who receive housing subsidies may be protected from excessive pressure on their food budget compared to comparable poor families without subsidies, the authors suggest. The current study tested whether the nutritional status of low-income chil-

dren, as measured by growth parameters (weight for age) and health status would be better among children whose families received housing subsidies.

Alan Meyers, M.D., M.P.H., of the Boston Medical Center, joined with colleagues to assess data from the Children's Sentinel Nutritional Assessment Program, which interviewed caregivers of children younger than three years in pediatric clinics and emergency departments at six sites in Arkansas, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota and Washington, D.C. The child's weight was recorded at the time of the interview, which then collected data regarding the family, the child's health, the U.S. Household Food Security Scale and public assistance participation.

Using data for 11,723 children of families who lived in rented housing and were identified as low-income, the researchers found that children of food-insecure families not receiving housing subsidies had lower weight for age compared with children in food-insecure families receiving housing subsidies. "The importance of this measure derives both from its value as a public health indicator of nutritional and health status in populations of young children and from evidence that undernutrition in early childhood causes increased susceptibility to infectious disease as well as concurrent delayed mental development and later poor school performance and reduced intellectual capacity," the authors write.

"The federal budget for low-income housing assistance has been targeted for reduction. From a public health perspective, the findings of the current study raise concerns about the impact on child well-being of these proposed reductions," the authors conclude. "Our results suggest that in a time of increasing economic hardship and food insecurity for American families, decreases in housing subsidies may further compromise the nutritional status of low-income children."

FUEL UP FOR SUMMER FUN!

Are there children in your community who will go hungry this summer? Children in low-income communities are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. But those programs end when school ends for the summer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps fill the hunger gap. Good nutrition is essential for effective learning every day, all year long. Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does the need for good nutrition. Children who aren't hungry learn better, act better, and feel better. SFSP helps children get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school.

SFSP was created to ensure that children in lower-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. Although millions of children depend on nutritious free and reduced-price meals and snacks at school for nine months out of the year, just a fraction of that receive the free meals provided by the SFSP during the summer months.

SFSP draws children into supervised activities that are safe, fun, and filled with learning opportunities. Children benefit nutritionally by receiving complete, wholesome meals, and parents benefit from some help in stretching their food dollars. The program encourages communities to provide safe places for children to go to be with other children and supportive adults. Parents know their children are receiving healthy meals in a supportive environment. Organizations receive funds to provide meals to complement recreational and educational programs that they have already planned.

To locate an SFSP site in your area, visit the web site at www.summerfood.org or dial 2-1-1 to request assistance.

FEDERAL REGISTER

- **Department of Agriculture (USDA), 05/20/05, p. 29270.** In accordance with Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collections. Section 6(o) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended by Section 824 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, establishes a time limit for the receipt of food stamp benefits for certain able-bodied adults who are not working. The provision authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, upon a State agency's request, to waive the provision for any group of individuals if the Secretary determines "that the area in which the individuals reside has an unemployment rate of over ten percent, or does not have a sufficient number of jobs to provide employment for the individuals." As required in the statute, in order to receive a waiver the State agency must submit sufficient supporting information so that the USDA can make the required determination as to the area's unemployment rate or sufficiency of available jobs. This collection of information is therefore necessary in order to obtain waivers of the food stamp time limit.

Written comments must be received on or before 07/19/05. Comments may be sent to Patrick Waldron, Chief, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302; faxed to 703/305-2486; or e-mailed to Patrick.Waldron@fns.usda.gov. For further information, call 703/305-2495.

- **USDA, 05/26/05, p. 30557.** This proposed rule implements the provision of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 that gives the USDA the authority to promulgate regulations for the operation and administration of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The purposes of the

SFMNP are to provide resources in the form of fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors; to increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding or aiding in the expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs; and to develop or aid in the development of new and additional farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. Submit comments by 11/25/05 to Patricia N. Daniels, Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 528, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. For further information, call 703/305-2746. Comments may also be submitted via the internet at www.fns.usda.gov/wic. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments through the link at the Supplemental Food Programs Division Web site. Send comments via e-mail to WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov and include "Docket ID Number 0584-AD35, SFMNP Proposed Rule," in the subject line of the message.

- **Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 06/06/05, p. 32794.** HHS announces a funding opportunity through the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP). The application is due 07/21/05. The Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG), as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make funds available under several programs to support program activities that will result in direct benefits targeted to low-income people. CSBG authorizes grants to be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible agencies for community-based, local, statewide, and national programs: (1) to coordinate private and public food assistance resources, wherever the grant recipient involved determines such coordination to be

inadequate, to better serve low-income populations; (2) to assist low-income communities to identify potential sponsors of child nutrition programs and to initiate such programs in underserved or unserved areas; and (3) to develop innovative approaches at the State and local level to meet the nutrition needs of low-income individuals.

The Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services (OCS), invites eligible agencies to submit competitive grant applications for the award of one cooperative agreement to support the CFNP Nationwide Initiative: Youth Obesity, An American Crisis. HHS' Administration for Children and Families/Office of Community Services is seeking assistance, through a cooperative agreement, to identify, complement, coordinate, and promote the numerous youth-obesity programs nationwide. The goal will be to identify and compile data on youth obesity, specifically focusing on the prevalence of youth obesity throughout rural, urban, and suburban locations nationwide. Socioeconomic factors, demographics, income level and percentage of youth obesity in low-income households will be assessed. For additional information go www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/.

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TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES, INC.

2512 IH 35 South, Suite 100

Austin, Texas 78704-5751

Telephone: (512) 462-2555 or (800) 992-9767

Fax: 512/462-2004

E-Mail: foodjournal@taca.org Web Site: www.taca.org

TACAA STAFF

Stella Rodriguez	Executive Director
Laurie S. Haney	Executive Assistant
Vacant	Office Manager
Pam Lawrie	Program Manager
Stephanie Hall	Program Coordinator
Anitra Hendricks	Program Assistant
Gilbert Blanco	Field Representative

TACAA OFFICERS

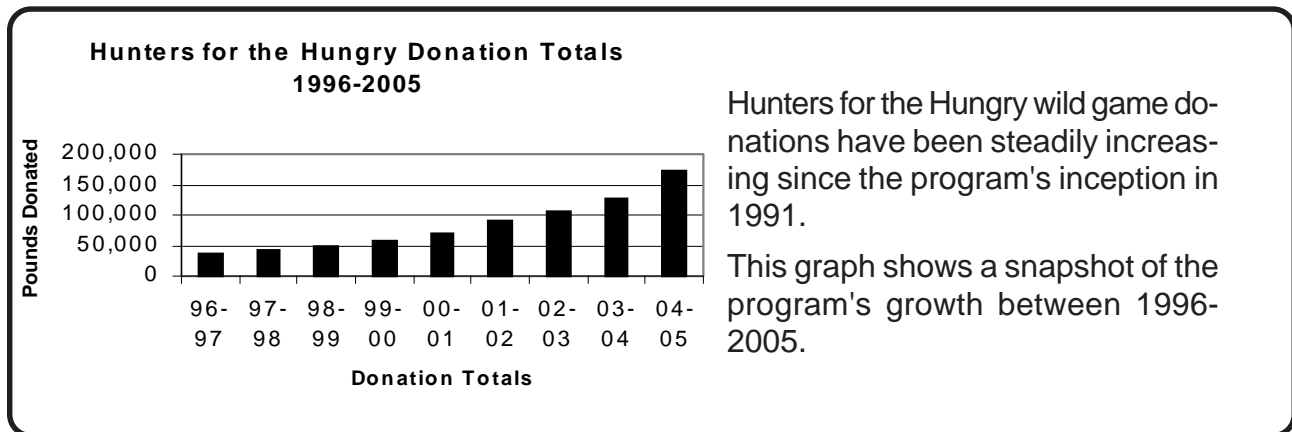
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HUNTERS FOR THE HUNGRY REACHES LANDMARK: 1 MILLION POUNDS OF DONATED WILD GAME

The numbers are in, and the year 2005 looks bright. Hunters for the Hungry (HFTH), a program of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA), has achieved not only record status, but landmark fame as well. During the 2004-2005 hunting season, hunters and meat processors donated more than 171,000 pounds of wild game to Texans struggling with hunger and malnutrition, an increase of 35% over the previous season. The increase follows the program's promising trend of record-setting donations year after year.



As a result of the sizable increase in wild game donations, 2005 marks the year that the program's grand donation total since its inception in 1991 exceeds 1 million pounds. Truly, HFTH has taken a big bite out of hunger.

What does 1 million pounds of donated wild game signify?

- ◆ Protein to support children's development.
- ◆ Iron for healthy skin, teeth, nails and bones.
- ◆ More balanced nutrition for families.
- ◆ Filling meals for hungry stomachs.
- ◆ Less food waste.
- ◆ A more sustainable environment.

HFTH donations provide all of these benefits, plus the opportunity to connect hunters and the sport they love to an important cause in their local communities.

HFTH is a unique, collaborative effort. Hunters harvest, field-dress, and donate the wild game, while also contributing a nominal fee to help cover the costs of processing. Meat processors accept and process the donations for a reduced fee, package the meat, and contact local food assistance providers for pick-up. Meat processors also donate meat unclaimed from regular business orders. Food assistance providers distribute and serve the meat to Texans in need of food and nutrition assistance.

The partnerships don't end here. Businesses showcase promotional material and contribute monetary and in-kind donations to the program. State government agencies provide outreach support, funding, and guidance. Volunteers help distribute brochures and other information about

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the program. Foundations, particularly the National Rifle Association Foundation (South Texas Region and West Texas Region), and individual donors generously contribute funds to help support the program. It is the combination of these efforts that makes the program a vibrant success.

TACAA attributes the significant increase in wild game donations to three primary factors. First, TACAA expanded its efforts to attract donations from wildlife management permits. Second, TACAA has maintained a presence in counties where there are high deer densities. Third and finally, meat processors were very generous in their donations of unclaimed meat.

To increase donations from permits, TACAA initiated the 2004-2005 Hill Country Permit Project. This project encouraged landowners with permits to donate their deer to HFTH by partially offsetting the processing fees. TACAA targeted landowners in an eleven county area in the Hill Country, where the largest white-tailed deer population in the state roams. Four landowners, three meat processors, and three Second Harvest Food Banks participated in the pilot effort. As a result of the project, more than 4,000 pounds, or more than 16,200 quarter-pound servings, of lean, protein-rich venison reached Texans in need.

Looking forward to the 2005-2006 hunting season, TACAA hopes to build on the success of the 2004-2005 Hill Country Permit Project and expand the effort to include additional counties in the Hill Country area.

While HFTH donations have steadily increased season after season, hunger and food insecurity continue to outpace the availability of wild game. Texas continues to maintain the second highest rate of food insecurity in the nation. According to the Food Research and Action Center's report, "*State of the States: 2005. A profile of food and nutrition programs across the nation*," more than 3.2 million Texans are food insecure, meaning that they don't have access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times. Almost one-quarter of Texas children—1.4 million households—live in doubt as to when their next meal will come.

HFTH donations are highly anticipated and do not stay on the shelves long. Rarely do they last longer than the general hunting season. As Dorothy LaFuente of McCulloch County Helping Hands observes, "[The Hunters for the Hungry donations] *are most helpful to the people that we serve*."

In order to better meet the demand for these nutritious donations, HFTH is appealing to Texans for additional financial support. Financial contributions to HFTH generate a tremendous impact by helping to subsidize processing costs of wild game donations and to further program development.

To make a financial contribution or simply learn more about HFTH, please call TACAA's Hunger Relief Hotline at (800) 992-9767, ext. 506 (toll-free in Texas), visit our website, www.tacaa.org, or send an e-mail to hfth@tacaa.org. If outside of Texas, call (512) 462-2555 ext. 506.

MAKE HUNGER YOUR NEXT TARGET!

HFTH is one of several hunger relief programs TACAA operates through Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) funds administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA).

