



**The Knesset
Research and
Information Center**

**An Emergency Food Authority
The Case of Israel and a
Comparative Survey**

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This document, prepared at the request of Knesset member Haim Yelin, provides information regarding emergency food reserves in Israel and the entities responsible for them. The organizations discussed herein are the National Emergency Authority (RACHEL), the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Health. It also includes a comparative survey of emergency food reserves in 12 countries. It should be emphasized that this document focuses on emergency food reserves for the civilian population and does not address issues of nutritional security, emergency reserves for items other than food or emergency reserves for the security forces. Furthermore, precise food quantities for emergency situations and their cost of storage have been classified as confidential information affecting the reference scenario,¹ and, as a result, full and exact data were not provided.

Abstract

- Food reserves have existed since ancient times. They serve several purposes, among them contending with crises and with disruptions of food production and supply, stabilizing grain market prices and granting grain loans in times of shortage.
- Several entities in Israel are responsible for emergency food reserves for the home front. **The National Emergency Authority (RACHEL)**, currently subordinate to the Minister of Defense, is the **coordinating staff entity** for managing home front readiness for national emergencies, and also assists the Defense Minister with the civilian front during an emergency, the area for which he has executive authority. Emergency food reserve policy is determined by RACHEL as part of the country's reference scenario for the home front. The ministries charged with implementing the policy and managing the reserves are the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economy in their respective areas of responsibility.
- **The Ministry of Economy's Emergency Food Supply Division** is responsible for implementing the Ministry's policy in an emergency in order to ensure the supply of products and services under the Ministry's responsibility, and to assist in maintaining the economy's functional continuity during an emergency. The Division operates four departments, among them the **Chief General Economy Authority (MASKAL)** which,

¹ Reference scenario: description of a future development of a war from which the outputs required from the planning entities are derived. The scenario is a binding determination regarding the main operational challenges for which the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) must prepare in building its military force. The reference scenario should serve as the basis for human resource planning, inventory quantities and support measures, and as a common basis for planning models of the IDF and its entities and branches. Oriana Almasi, [Authority of the Ministry of Home Front Defense](#), Knesset Research and Information Center, October 22, 2012, (In Hebrew).



as part of its responsibilities, publishes recommendations regarding the food supply which every household should prepare for an emergency situation.

- Another department reporting to the Ministry of Economy Emergency Division is **The Chief Food Authority**, tasked with preparing a reference scenario for food as well as with maintaining a reserve of certain strategic food items to ensure the needs of the economy during a crisis. The stock items are renewed according to the Israeli standard for each item's shelf life, and the inventory is operated as an open inventory system according to the First-in, First-out (FIFO) method. Items are stored in reserves and granaries owned by franchisees selected through public tenders.
- Eight types of food products are stocked in the emergency food reserve managed by the **Chief Food Authority** in quantities sufficient for the period determined by the reference scenario: baby food; dry yeast; flour; canola and soy oil; white sugar; coffee beans; tea; and white rice.
- The **Quality Management, Production Boards and Emergency-State Economy Unit** were established in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**, under the professional guidance of RACHEL. The Division is responsible for managing reserves of animal feed grains (flours, pulp or gluten feed, dried distillers grains or soy pulp) and wheat for human consumption. Quantities are based on actual weekly consumption and the required readiness period according to the reference scenario. Most of the reserve is imported and kept in reserves operated by franchisees selected through tenders.
- The **Ministry of Health's Emergency Department** manages and maintains a reserve of medical foods for emergency situations, most of them imported. Responsibility for maintaining this stock is outsourced to companies dispersed throughout the country. The Division manages the following types of medical foods: medical food for intravenous feeding; preparations for direct feeding through a gastric feeding tube; special medical food for infants; and a total of approximately 33 different ingredients used as metabolic food. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health instructs general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, geriatric hospitals and geriatric nursing institutions on issues pertaining to food acquisition, quantity, maintenance, preservation and safety. Each medical institution is responsible for managing its own reserve.
- A comparative survey of the emergency food arrangements implemented in various countries identifies in general three main models of state preparedness in the area of emergency food reserves. In the first model, these reserves are managed by the state through entities acting on its behalf or by franchisees. According to the second model,



the state does not establish reserves but it does coordinate among entities and authorities to ensure the consistent supply of food and goods during an emergency. Alternatively, legislation grants the state permission to appropriate food products during an emergency and to compensate the suppliers at a later time. In the third model, the state has no involvement in establishing or maintaining emergency food reserves. In several countries operating according to this last model, the authorities publish recommendations advising civilians how to prepare for emergencies, including storing food for their own use.



1. Introduction

National food inventories are garnering increased public attention and discussion in the face of hunger or famine in many places in the world, significant food price volatility and large-scale natural disasters. Declarations of the G8 nations (the group of eight industrialized nations), the G20 (an international forum of finance ministers and central bank governors from the world's 20 major economies) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization attest to the recognition of the importance of food inventories. Having existed since ancient times, food reserves are an important tool for providing access to and distribution of food to the population, and can help countries contend with crises and with damage to food production and supply. Food reserves can be classified into two prominent types, food emergency reserves and price stabilization reserves. There are several reasons for the decreased number of national programs in recent years focused on maintaining food reserves, including the costs entailed in establishing an efficient and sustainable food reserves system and economic orthodoxy inhibiting state intervention in the market.²

In addition to these reserves' main purpose of helping the population in the event of an emergency, emergency food reserves fulfill additional goals, among them stabilizing grain market prices and granting grain loans to recognized organizations and agencies in the event of a shortage.³ Maintaining public food reserves is expensive, and the costs are only rarely incurred by those who consume the products. Governments fund these reserves in a variety of ways, including taxation, customs in the case of imported food goods and taxation of transportation costs and consumers.⁴ The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) establishes various provisions regarding public expenditures for agriculture. The premise of the agreement is that agriculture should be publicly supported in a manner that will not distort trade or production. According to Appendix 2 of the agreement, this applies mainly to cases in which reserve management will not adversely affect international trade, or will have a minimal effect on it.⁵ The agreement also stipulates

² Kristin Sampson, "Why We Need Food Reserves," in: Lilliston and Ranallo (ed.), [*Grain Reserves and the Food Price Crisis*](#), Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2012, pp. 7–8.

³ John Lynton-Evans, [*Strategic Grain Reserves: Guidelines for their Establishment, Management and Operation*](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, 1997.

⁴ Chirstian Haberli, [*After Bali: WTO Rules Applying to Public Food Reserves*](#), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome 2014.

⁵ Ibid.



that in certain circumstances, national food reserves may also be exempt from the established restrictions.⁶

Emergency food reserves are one component of Israel's civilian home front policy. The civilian home front has contended with security risks since the establishment of the state in 1948, and continues to be a central element of the security challenges confronting Israel in recent years. In the state's early years, the Civil Defense Service (HAGA) attended to the home front during an emergency. In the beginning of the 1990's, HAGA was merged into the newly established IDF Home Front Command. The National Emergency Authority (RACHEL) was established in 2007 following the Second Lebanon War to serve as an integrating entity to coordinate between the military and civil organs responsible for the home front. It was subordinated to the Ministry of Defense and in 2011 it was transferred to the newly established Ministry of Home Front Defense. With the dismantling of this ministry in 2014, RACHEL returned to operate under the Ministry of Defense.⁷ A more detailed review of the entities responsible for the civilian home front and for emergency food reserves and warehouses is presented below.

2. National Emergency Authority (RACHEL) Status and Responsibilities

Two reports were written after the Second Lebanon War about the civilian home front, among other issues. The first was written by the State Comptroller and the second by the Knesset committee for the Examination of Home Front Readiness, chaired by Ami Ayalon. They determined that the failures in addressing the needs of the home front during the war stemmed from the absence of a central entity responsible for coordinating among emergency organizations. In response to the conclusions of these reports, [Government Resolution No.1577](#) was adopted on April 15, 2007, which entrusted the Minister of Defense with overall responsibility for the civilian home front in all emergency situations. Following this government resolution, and during the course of December of 2007, the Ministerial Committee for National Security decided to establish the National Emergency Authority (RACHEL) as the designated civil head-office. The role of this Authority is to serve as a **coordinating staff entity** for managing civilian home front preparedness for

⁶ Sophia Murphy, "WTO Rules and Food Reserves," in: Lilliston and Ranallo (ed.), [Grain Reserves and the Food Price Crisis](#), Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2012, pp. 13–15.

⁷ For further information see: Oriana Almasi, [Authority of the Ministry of Home Front Defense](#), Knesset Research and Information Center, October 22, 2012, (In Hebrew).



national emergency situations, and to assist the minister responsible for the home front in realizing this overall responsibility in emergency situations.⁸

[Government Resolution No. 3048](#) of March 27, 2011 established that RACHEL's responsibility areas would be transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Home Front Defense, and that the Minister of Home Front Defense would be in charge of RACHEL. This government resolution was adopted only two months after the establishment of the Ministry of Home Front Defense pursuant to [Government Resolution No. 2745](#). About three years later, in line with [Government Resolution No. 1661](#) of June 1, 2014, the Ministry of Home Front Defense was dismantled and RACHEL was transferred back to the Ministry of Defense, reporting to the Minister of Defense. This ended the subordination of RACHEL to a civilian ministry, returning it to the auspices of the defense system.

During times of calm, RACHEL is tasked with defining the reference scenario, ensuring the readiness of organizations and government ministries for emergencies, formulating actions plans for operating an emergency management center managed by RACHEL, defining emergency budgets for government ministries along with the Ministry of Finance, planning and conducting exercises and training and instructing the public on how to prepare for and behave during an emergency. **During times of an emergency**, RACHEL's responsibilities include operating a situation room, presenting the condition of the civilian home front to the Minister of Defense, organizing staff work under the Minister of Defense, proposing action plans to address the needs of the home front, coordinating activities for the provision of information and guidelines to the public and presenting the condition of the civilian home front to the Crisis Management Center in the Prime Minister's Office.⁹ Nonetheless, it should be noted that RACHEL does not have the authority to issue orders to other entities or to impose guidelines, and a command hierarchy was not defined for RACHEL vis-a-vis operational entities. It does not replace other entities with respect to their areas of responsibility and authority and it does not detract from the authority and functions of government ministries or other authorized authorities on emergency issues.¹⁰

In reply to a request for information from the Knesset Research and Information Center, RACHEL replied that, "formulation of policy for maintaining emergency food reserves is

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The Crisis Management Center is one of the organs for whose operations the National Security Staff in the Prime Minister's Office is responsible pursuant to the National Security Staff Law, 2008.

¹⁰ Oriana Almasi, [Authority of the Ministry of Home Front Defense](#), Knesset Research and Information Center, October 22, 2012 (In Hebrew).



determined by RACHEL within the framework of ‘the economic reference scenario for the civilian home front,’ while the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of the Economy are responsible for implementing the policy in practice and for managing the reserves for which they are tasked. It should be noted that the information requested is for the most part confidential and as such its provision will not be possible.”¹¹

Another organization worth mentioning that is involved in the civilian home front area is the National Security Staff (MALAL), which serves as a staff entity to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs and security issues.¹² In reply to a request for information from the Knesset Research and Information Center on the issue of emergency food reserves, the reply of the MALAL was identical to the response given by RACHEL as provided above.¹³

3. Ministry of Economy’s Areas of Responsibility

The Emergency Food Supply Division in the Ministry of Economy is responsible for implementing the Ministry’s policy in an emergency in order to ensure the supply of products and services over which the Ministry has responsibility and to help maintain the functional continuity of the economy. The Administration’s areas of responsibility include: ensuring functional continuity of essential plants; helping to minimize the damage suffered by small and medium businesses during an emergency and assisting their recovery in the aftermath; **coordinating the functioning of the economy’s food product supply chain in preparation for and during an emergency in order to ensure, as much as possible, the unrestricted supply of food products to the population and the maintenance of a**

¹¹ Avi Burger, acting Head of RACHEL’s Policy Division, in reply to a request for information from the Knesset Research and Information Center, letter, June 14, 2015.

¹² The MALAL, initially called the National Security Council, was established in March of 1999 pursuant to Government Resolution No. 4889, and on July 29, 2008 was anchored in the [National Security Staff Law, 2008](#). It is defined as a staff entity to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs and security issues. The responsibilities of the MALAL as established in the National Security Staff Law include: coordinating the work of the government’s staff, the Ministerial Committee for National Security and of any other ministerial committee on foreign affairs and security issues; preparing and submitting, at least once a year, an annual and multi-year assessment of the state security condition to the Ministerial Committee for National Security; and examining the security conception of the State of Israel and proposing updates. The National Security Staff is comprised of eight theme-based divisions including the Internal Security Policy and Home Front Division that coordinate all aspects of emergency and crisis preparedness that may affect the national security of the State of Israel, with an emphasis on the civilian arena. The Prime Minister’s Office, the National Security Staff, [The Internal Security Policy and Home Front Division](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).

¹³ Brigadier General (Ret.) Tzuk-Ram Zeev, Deputy Chairperson of the National Security Council for Internal Security and the Home Front, the National Security Staff, in reply to a request for information from the Knesset Research and Information Center, fax, June 15, 2015.



strategic reserve of essential food products; ensuring reserves of essential products and services for the general economy in preparation for and during an emergency for unrestricted supply of general economy products to the population to the greatest extent possible; assuring continuity of foreign trade.¹⁴ The four departments of RACHEL are the Chief General Economy Authority, the Chief Food Authority, the Chief Human Resources Authority and the Erez Coordination and Liaison Administration.

The Chief General Economy Authority (MASKAL): During an emergency the designated emergency economy authorities (MELACH) operate in many areas. Their areas of responsibility and the products or services which they are responsible for supplying are pre-defined. The Chief General Economy Authority is one of these MELACH authorities. Its responsibilities include: preparing a network of essential plants in the general economy in order to minimize economic damage to the economy and the State; participating in MELACH committees at the military command and district levels; conducting training, exercise and control activities; ensuring import and export activity; and preparing contingency procedures and regulations.¹⁵ District MELACH units operate under the Chief General Economy Authority to ensure the supply of essential products during an emergency. They are responsible for preparing a network of essential factories for the supply of food and for the general economy in the event of an emergency, tracking existing reserves and preparing local and regional government in these areas.¹⁶ These district units recommend that each household prepare for an emergency by maintaining a stock of basic food, including food products found in the home on a regular basis as well as a stock of preserved foods and four liters of water per person per day. The Ministry of Economy, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, publishes **recommended minimum food quantities** per person per week for an emergency (see details in Appendix No. 1 below).¹⁷

The Chief Food Authority: This Authority is responsible for preparing the reference scenario in the area of food and for maintaining a stock of strategic foods comprised of certain items as specified below, in order to ensure that the demands of the economy are met during an emergency. It also conducts inspections and ongoing procurement. The Authority issues guidelines regarding the supply of food and essential products to the population

¹⁴ Ministry of Economy, [Emergency Administration](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).

¹⁵ Ministry of Economy, [The Chief General Economy Authority \(MASKAL\)](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).

¹⁶ Ministry of Economy, [MELACH: Food and General Economy](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).

¹⁷ Ministry of Economy, Tel Aviv and Central District, [Emergency Economy Unit: Food and General Economy](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).



through distribution networks, and is also responsible for preparing contingency procedures and ordinances for emergency action. The Chief Food Authority is authorized to identify essential manufacturing plants and to declare them as such, to perform inspections of their emergency readiness and to conduct training and education programs for their employees.¹⁸ The National Emergency Administration provided the Knesset Research and Information Center with a short list of essential products, some for basic subsistence and others compatible with the public's consumption habits, the supply of which the Chief Food Authority must coordinate during an emergency. It has also conducted an examination to determine whether reserves of essential products should be maintained for products which, according to the reference scenario, production may be halted or import discontinued during an emergency. The products kept in stock are renewed according to the Israeli standard for the specific product, and inventory is managed as an open inventory; in other words, it is renewed on an ongoing basis according to the inventory movements in the warehouse based on the FIFO method. The products are stored in warehouses and in granaries owned by franchisees selected through public tenders.¹⁹

According to attorney Sigal Mered from the Ministry of Economy's legal department, "the Ministry's responsibility does not include fresh agricultural produce, milk, fruits and vegetables, wheat, poultry, fish and beef, for which the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible."²⁰ According to Mr. Riad Ibrahim, Director of the Emergency Administration in the Ministry of Economy, emergency food reserves include eight types of food in quantities sufficient for the period established by the MELACH reference scenario, regardless of whether the scenario pertains to a war or to a mass-casualty event. The cost of the products kept in the reserves is about 200 million NIS, and the annual product maintenance and renewal cost incurred by the franchisees is about 40 million NIS.²¹

As previously mentioned, the precise quantities and costs of the emergency reserves cannot be published. Nonetheless, from time to time, the Government Procurement Administration website for government ministry tenders publishes tenders related to the emergency

¹⁸ Ministry of Economy, [Chief Food Authority](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).

¹⁹ Riad Ibrahim, Director of the Emergency Administration, Ministry of Economy, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, June 16, 2015.

²⁰ Stated by attorney Sigal Mered, Legal Department, Ministry of Economy, in deliberations of the Knesset Home Front Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, May 13, 2014; provided by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

²¹ Stated by Riad Ibrahim, Director of the Emergency Administration, Ministry of Economy, in deliberations of the Knesset Home Front Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, May 13, 2014; provided by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.



reserves. Several examples of tenders pertaining to the emergency stock under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economy are listed below:²²

Table Number 1: Examples of Ministry of Economy Tenders for Emergency Food Products

Tender No.	Purpose of Tender	Quantity (ton)
3/15	Renewal and storage of baby food formula	150
40/15	Renewal and storage of dry yeast	209
1/12	Request for information for flour reserve storage and renewal services	-
4/15	Renewal and storage of canola oil	1,600
6/15	Sale of crude soy oil	1,500
47/14	Renewal and storage of white sugar	21,023
29/15	Conversion, renewal and storage of Robusta Grade 1 green coffee beans	1,309
2/14	Request for information for provision of tea stock during an emergency	233
5/15	Renewal and storage of processed white rice	7,027

4. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's Areas of Responsibility

The **Quality Management, Production Boards and Emergency-State Economy Unit** was established in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in January of 2014 and operates under the professional guidance of RACHEL. The Unit's goals include: overall integration of the handling of every event that threatens the functional continuity of the Ministry of Agriculture and the agricultural sector; maintaining the ability to continue an ongoing orderly supply of food to the population during war, natural disasters, and the eruption of animal and pest diseases; organizing, training and professionally guiding the Ministry's emergency organizations at the national, district and support organizations levels; and assisting government ministries and rescue and emergency entities as needed. **During periods of calm**, it is the Unit's responsibility to advance and maintain the readiness of essential plants in the supply chain; promote support plans to procure

²² Ministry of Finance, Accountant General, [Government Procurement Administration](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015.



emergency equipment; track and oversee emergency, wheat and animal feed reserves; formulate work procedures for emergencies; conduct training for emergency staff from other Ministry divisions; and participate in countrywide and ministerial emergency exercises. **During an emergency**, the Unit's responsibilities include maintaining agricultural activity and functional continuity, including the supply of fresh produce to the population; ensuring the economic stability of the agricultural market; and providing direct assistance to farmers or to Ministry divisions in need of assistance in contending with the emergency.²³ In 2014, the Unit finalized the issue of essential reserves for which it is responsible. Furthermore, a remote inventory management software program was developed to provide inventory status information at any given time, and a procedure was written for the transport of wheat grain and animal feed from abroad during an emergency.²⁴

The Ministry of Agriculture is the office responsible for maintaining the emergency reserves of wheat for human consumption as well as the emergency reserves of animal feed. While the latter is based wholly on imported grains, local wheat production can supply, at most, 25% of wheat consumption during particularly rainy years. The emergency reserve is maintained by private granary owners selected through a tender for a period of up to three years. The granary owners purchase the reserves and are in effect their owners, while the government only covers storage costs. The average annual budget cost for the emergency reserve programs amounts to about 40 million NIS.²⁵

The Ministry of Agriculture informed the Knesset Research and Information Center that the food reserve policy is based on the reference scenario published by RACHEL. It also noted that the Ministry is responsible for wheat for human consumption and animal feed, and that quantities are determined by Ministry professionals according to actual weekly consumption and the period for which readiness is required as established by the reference scenario.²⁶

As indicated, the precise quantities and costs cannot be published. However, the Government Procurement Administration website for government ministry tenders

²³ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, [Quality Management, Production Boards and Emergency-State Economy Unit](#), last accessed: November 11, 2015.

²⁴ Senior Division for Crisis Management and Implementation of the Agriculture Settlement Law, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, [Activity Summary of the Division for Crisis Management for 2014](#), March 2, 2015 (In Hebrew).

²⁵ The OECD, [OECD Review of Agricultural Policies: Israel 2010](#), August, 2011, p. 106.

²⁶ Haim Anjoni, Director of the Senior Division for Crisis Management and Implementation of the Agriculture Settlement Law, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 1, 2015.



publishes tenders related to the emergency reserve. Two tenders were published in 2014 for emergency reserves under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture:²⁷

Table No. 2: Examples of Ministry of Agriculture Emergency Food Tenders

Tender No.	Tender Purpose	Quantity (ton)
22/2014	Maintenance of an emergency reserve of wheat grain for consumption in a sabbatical year (in Hebrew, <i>Shmita</i> year, the seventh year of the seven year agricultural cycle mandated and still observed in contemporary Judaism)	165,000
23/2014	Maintenance of an emergency reserve of animal grain, flours, pulp or gluten feed, dried distillers grains or soy pulp	64,300

It should be noted that the proposed government budget for 2015-2016 includes a budget adjustment for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development signifying an 11.485 million NIS decrease for expenditures and for authorizations to take on obligations from the basis of the emergency reserve budget. Explanations to the budget proposal stated that, “an inspection of the emergency reserve of animal feed and wheat indicated a large-scale emergency reserve that over the past two decades was rarely used, and when used, the volume was small. Accordingly, the Ministry of Finance budget proposal proceeds to propose a budget cut for the animal feed and wheat emergency reserve while examining the option of importing goods as an additional source of supply for the needs of the economy in an emergency.”²⁸

5. Ministry of Health’s Areas of Responsibility

The Ministry of Health Emergency Department is responsible for the preparedness of the hospitalization system, the community medicine system and Magen David Adom (Israel's national organization for emergency pre-hospital medical and blood services) to deliver first response services and to treat the injured in mass-casualty events during routine times and at times of war, and to provide required medical treatment to the public. The Department operates based on the policy set by the Supreme Hospitalization Authority. This

²⁷ Ministry of Finance, Accountant General, [Government Procurement Administration](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015.

²⁸ Ministry of Finance, [Government Budget Proposal for 2015-2016](#), last accessed: August, 2015, p. 59 (In Hebrew).



Authority is headed by the Director General of the Ministry of Health, and its members include representatives of the Ministry of Health, the IDF, the army Medical Corps and the Clalit HMO.²⁹ The Emergency Department is only responsible for medical food, while the Ministry of Health is responsible for formulating procedures for medical institutions regarding emergency food reserves. The Department itself manages and maintains an emergency stock of medical food which is for the most part imported, and food storage is outsourced to companies dispersed throughout the country.³⁰ The Economy Equipment Emergency Committee operates within the Division as a professional committee that works according to Food and Nutrition Bulletins issued by the Ministry of Health Medicine Administration and the Ministry's Nutrition Department.³¹ This Committee advises the Ministry regarding types and quantities of metabolic foods that should be stocked.³² The Division manages the following types of medical foods: Parenteral nutrition for intravenous feeding (TPN); preparations for enteral feeding using a feeding tube; special infant medical food of types Nutramigen 1, Nutramigen 2, Pregestimil LIPIL, Phenyl-Free 1, Phenyl-Free 2; and metabolic food.³³ The list of metabolic food types includes 33 substances, including Diet Neocate, Diet Nutramigen 1, Diet Nutramigen 2, Diet L-Alanine, Ketocal, Glycosade, L-Citruline, Infantrini, Nutren Junior, Diet Monogen and Diet Essential Amino Acid Mix.

In order to implement and assimilate emergency food policy and procedures, the Ministry of Health works with general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, geriatric hospitals and geriatric nursing institutions,³⁴ and instructs them based on various procedures,³⁵ including the [Food and Nutrition Procedure for Emergencies](#) from 2012 (Procedure No. 3.037) which provides

²⁹ Ministry of Health, [Emergency Department](#), last accessed: November 8, 2015.

³⁰ Ronny Tzadok, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment Coordinator, Emergency and Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Health, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 2, 2015.

³¹ Miri Cohen, Senior Director of Emergency Services and First Aid in the Ministry of Health, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 2, 2015.

³² "Metabolic food is special food administered primarily to patients with a metabolic defect or an enzymatic deficiency such as phenylketonuria. This food is a critical item for these patients and a shortage may cause them harm, sometimes irreversible." Ronny Tzadok, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Equipment Coordinator, Emergency and Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Health, in reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 2, 2015.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See for example, Ministry of Health, Geriatrics and Chronic Diseases Division, Appendix No. 500-10 of Food Organization Procedure No. 5.0.3, [Ongoing Essential Food Inventory and Emergency Inventory](#), February 1, 2015 (In Hebrew).

³⁵ Ministry of Health, [Emergency Procedures for Hospitals](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).



guidelines for these entities on issues of food procurement, quantity, storage, preservation and safety. Every medical institution is responsible for maintaining its own stock.³⁶

6. Emergency Food Reserves: A Comparative Survey

The following is a survey of the emergency food reserves in 12 countries: Australia, Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, New Zealand, Poland, Russia and the United States. The survey identifies, in general, three main models of state preparedness in the area of emergency food reserves. In the first model, food reserves are built and managed by the state through entities operating on its behalf or by franchisees. In the second model, the state does not maintain reserves, but supervises coordination among entities and local authorities to ensure ongoing supplies of food and goods during an emergency. Alternatively, there are countries in which legislation is enacted granting the state the right to appropriate food products during an emergency and to compensate those entities from which the food was appropriated at a later date. In the third model, the state is not involved in establishing or maintaining emergency food reserves. In some countries, irrespective of the model adopted, the authorities publish recommendations advising civilians on how to prepare for emergencies by keeping an emergency food stock for household use. In examining the various countries with respect to this issue, several variables should be considered, including the size of the state and its ability to manage food reserves in its various geographical areas and to produce food for its population compared to its dependence on imports. These factors no doubt influence each country's reference scenario.

Some of the materials presented in this survey are based on answers received from European countries to a request for information regarding emergency food reserves. The request was submitted in 2012 by Germany to the European Center for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD).³⁷ Some of the information is also based on answers received from Ministries of Agriculture and emergency agencies in the countries surveyed to a request for information from the Knesset Research and Information Center. It should also be noted that in some countries, information about types and quantities of food in the emergency reserves is classified and therefore was not published or provided.

³⁶ Miri Cohen, Senior Director of Emergency Services and First Aid, Ministry of Health, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 2, 2015.

³⁷ Request No. 1958, forwarded by the German Bundestag concerning alternatives to state food reserves (as part of emergency preparedness), March 20, 2012.



Australia

The Ministry of Agriculture in Australia acts to ensure food security. Although Australia produces food in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of 60 million people, extreme cases such as natural disasters, extreme weather conditions or other unexpected events may affect food production, supply and distribution. Australia's food industry has in the past contended on its own with local crises. However, it may have difficulty doing so when faced with a national state of emergency or in response to an event that crosses geographical areas and legal jurisdictions. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture decided to allocate a sum of 83 million AUD³⁸ for providing assistance services during an emergency and supporting various communities and charities that provide emergency relief. The Ministry acts in cooperation with local governments and with the governments of the Australian territories as well as with the local food industry in order to increase efficiency, improve the operation of this industry and to prepare it to contend with a significant emergency in a manner that will enable an ongoing and consistent food supply. The Ministry promotes a Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy approach; in other words, it acts to advance a plan for developing efficient collaboration between the government and the business sector by sharing information and increasing awareness about emergencies and how to respond to them among various entities. Furthermore, the Ministry also operates in the field of education and fosters initiatives in local communities to encourage their emergency readiness.³⁹

It should be emphasized that in a reply to the information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center regarding emergency food reserves, the Australian Federal Ministry of Agriculture noted that emergency food reserves are not the Ministry's responsibility.⁴⁰ In her article about food security in Australia, Adriana Keating claims that the Australian government does not maintain a food reserve for emergencies. Moreover, despite Australian government recommendations that all households keep a stock of food, water and other essentials to last them for 14 days in the event of an emergency, public compliance with this recommendation remains low.⁴¹

³⁸ Approximately 233 million NIS. Exchange rate where taken from the <http://www.xe.com> website which provides international currency exchange rates.

³⁹ Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, [Maintaining Food Security in Australia](#), last accessed: July 16, 2015.

⁴⁰ Linda, Department of Agriculture, Australian Government, reply to information request of the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 24, 2015.

⁴¹ Adriana Keating, "[Food Security in Australia: The Logistics of Vulnerability.](#)" in: Farmer-Bowers et al. (eds.), *Food Security in Australia: Challenges and Prospects for the Future*, New York, 2013, pp. 21–34.



Austria

State authorities in Austria do not maintain strategic food reserves. However, according to current legislation, in the event of a food supply shortage, or in order to address a food supply problem, and assuming the problem is not the result of a seasonal shortage that can be resolved by market forces, the state can take the necessary measures to address the problem. The aim of these measures is, among other things, to ensure the production and supply of goods.⁴²

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, while government preparedness for emergencies is based on a government act, information regarding food types, quantities and costs is not available.⁴³ The Administration of State Material Reserves operates pursuant to a government act,⁴⁴ and is the entity charged with managing government emergency reserves. The Administration is responsible for reserves management and maintenance of food materials as well as of fuel, oil and industrial materials for use in the country during an emergency or for humanitarian assistance throughout the world.⁴⁵

In reply to an information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, the Administration disclosed that, based on Ministry of Agriculture requirements, food reserves include mainly grains, sugar, meat and dairy products, while fresh agricultural produce is not stocked. Some of the reserves are kept in Agency warehouses and some are the responsibility of custodians selected through a public tender for a pre-determined period. The Agency also advises citizens to keep a stock of food for an emergency based on their needs.⁴⁶

⁴² Reply of the Austrian Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012.

⁴³ Reply of the Czech Republic Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012.

⁴⁴ Act No.97/1993 Coll., On the Purview of the Administration of State Material Reserves.

⁴⁵ Administration of State Material Reserves of the Czech Republic, [Basic Information](#), [State Material Reserve Logistics](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015.

⁴⁶ Robert Velký, Ing., Director of the Food and Industrial Commodities Division, The Administration of State Material Reserves, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, August 12, 2015.



Denmark

In Denmark, the state does prepare or organize for food supply during emergency situations.⁴⁷

Finland

In Finland, the National Emergency Supply Agency (NESA) operates under the Ministry of Employment and Economy. It is responsible for planning and undertaking necessary measures to develop and maintain the national supply of raw materials, products, food, water and fuel. The Agency functions under the auspices of the National Emergency Supply Fund, an extra-budgetary fund responsible for funding state-owned reserves. The Agency is tasked with maintaining reserves of fuel, medical products and other materials needed both to ensure the welfare of the population in the event of emergencies and to provide assistance for military purposes.⁴⁸ Finland produces 70%-80% of the food it consumes, and emphasis is therefore placed on maintaining food supply lines between its geographic areas. The Agency also maintains reserves of wheat and other critical products, among them pharmaceuticals and medical products. It advises citizens to keep a stock of basic food products and medicines for emergency situations.⁴⁹ In response to an information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, the Agency noted that it stores mainly grain products in its reserves and does not hold fresh produce. Guidelines to citizens recommend storing products with a long shelf life, such as grain products, rice, pasta, tea and coffee, canned foods, dry bread, milk powder and water.⁵⁰

Every five years, the government of Finland formulates general guidelines according to which the Agency operates. Its work is currently based on collaboration between the public and private sectors in industry and agriculture.⁵¹ On December 5, 2013 a decision of the Finnish government regarding the security of the state's security supply established that among the Agency's responsibilities, it must support an ongoing supply and trade of local or imported food. In addition, it was decided that government-owned emergency reserves

⁴⁷ Reply of the Danish Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012.

⁴⁸ [The National Emergency Supply Agency](#), last accessed: July 23, 2015.

⁴⁹ The National Emergency Supply Agency, [Media](#), last accessed: July 23, 2015; Erja Saraste, Head of Communication, National Emergency Supply Agency, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 27, 2015.

⁵⁰ Jyrki Hakola, Director, Dept. of Basic Supply and Industry, National Emergency Supply Agency, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, August 3, 2015.

⁵¹ Ibid.



would also hold grain products to provide for six months of consumption, and that fodder protein and other necessary food production inputs would be stocked as well.⁵²

France

In France, three entities are involved in emergency food reserves. Two focus on the storage of food for humanitarian assistance to developing countries or for nutrition security of those in need in France. The third entity is the Emergency Authority which is subordinate to the Ministry of Interior and tasked with ensuring readiness for disaster scenarios, including nuclear disaster events. In the event of a disaster, the Authority is authorized to use products appropriated from manufacturers and suppliers.⁵³

Germany

In Germany, the Federal Grain Reserve Authority (Bundesreserve Getreide) stores wheat, oats and rye in its reserves. Between 458,000-574,000 tons of these products were stored in the reserves during the years 2005-2009. Germany also has a civilian authority for emergency reserves (Zivile Notfallreserve) that is tasked with storing products ready for consumption such as rice, legumes, full powdered milk and concentrated milk. Between 115,000-128,000 tons of these products were stored during the years 2005-2009.⁵⁴

Great Britain

The government of Great Britain does not maintain emergency food reserves and does not require its citizens to keep an emergency stock of food. The British government believes that food security must be based on free access to international markets.⁵⁵

⁵² Decision of the Government of Finland, [On the Security of Supply Goals](#), December 5, 2013.

⁵³ Reply of French Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012. Translated from French with the assistance of Sarah Zwebner, Director of Inter-Parliamentary Research, Knesset Research and Information Center.

⁵⁴ Reply of the German Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012.

⁵⁵ Reply of the British Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012.



New Zealand

The government of New Zealand advises its citizens to prepare home emergency kits to last for at least three days. Recommended items to keep in the kit are dry food and canned goods, infant food and infant food compounds, water (at least three liters per person per day), water for cooking and for cleaning, a can opener and a camping gas burner. It also recommends replacing the food once every 12 months.⁵⁶ This is also the recommendation of local government relief organizations and of the Civil Defense and Emergency Management Ministry.⁵⁷ To these recommendations several local government authorities add details regarding food products, divided into three food types: ready to eat foods, such as preserved meat, fish, canned fruits, juice, vegetables, prepared canned meals, soup, pasta sauce; dry goods, such as ready to eat meals, breakfast cereal, flour, milk powder, soup mix, dried vegetables, rice and pasta, tea, coffee, chocolate milk powder and sugar; snacks, such as dried fruit, nuts, biscuits, spreads, crackers and snack bars.⁵⁸ In reply to an information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center regarding emergency food reserves, the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture replied that they are not involved in this matter and referred the inquiry to the Center to the Civil Defense and Emergency Management Ministry from which the above information was obtained.⁵⁹

Poland

In Poland, the Material Reserves Agency (Agencja Rezerw Materiałowych: ARM) is responsible for managing reserves of raw materials, production materials, medical products, agricultural products and food products through tenders that it awards for provision of services by civilian entities. The Agency is also tasked with managing the reserve of crude oil and petroleum products and for inventory oversight and control. The Agency's numerous areas of responsibility include: implementation of decisions of the appointed minister on issues relating to strategic reserve management by purchasing quantities of products to be stored in the reserves; inventory management and distribution; sale or distribution free of charge of stocked products that were not sold to local government units or to their agencies

⁵⁶ New Zealand Government, [Home Emergency Checklist](#), last accessed: July 27, 2015.

⁵⁷ Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, [Step 9, Stock Emergency Supplies](#), last accessed: July 27, 2015; Ministry of Civil Defense & Emergency Management, Get Ready, Get Thru, [Emergency Survival Items & Getaway Kit](#), last accessed: July 27, 2015.

⁵⁸ Porirua City Council, [Emergency Food Stores](#), last accessed: July 27, 2015.

⁵⁹ Keegan Platten, Customer Enquiries Coordinator, Ministry for Primary Industries, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, July 28, 2015.



in order to meet economic or social demands in the event of an emergency or a natural disaster; recycling or neutralizing inventories pursuant to legislation regarding waste management; handling contracts related to emergency inventory management; investing in the improvement of technical infrastructures of strategic reserves; purchasing and maintaining a reserve of crude oil and petroleum products pursuant to legislation; overseeing entities that manage strategic reserves. The Ministry of Economy is the Ministry charged with oversight of the Agency, and the Agency itself has several offices, including the food reserves office which is responsible for emergency food reserves.⁶⁰ In response to an information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center regarding emergency food reserves, the Material Reserves Agency replied that the information regarding quantities and costs of products stored in emergency reserves is classified and therefore cannot be published.⁶¹

Russia

The Federal Agency of State Reserves of the Russian Federation, which operates within the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, is the entity responsible for managing federal reserves of goods. The Agency's authority includes: managing orders and federal contracts for products; performing work and providing services, as well as conducting studies in its area of responsibility; storing, maintaining and managing the federal reserve of goods; auditing reserve volume, conditions and more. Several support entities operate within the framework of the Agency, including a center for information and data processing, a research institute that, among its activities, seeks to develop advanced storage technologies and conducts quality control of the materials intended for storage, and a college qualifying students for various positions in the Agency as well as in industrial plants and various economic branches.

Federal Agency reserves are dispersed throughout the Russian Federation and their location and contents are classified. Information published on the Agency's website indicates that, among other things, the reserves are stocked with various types of fuels, construction materials and equipment, technological equipment, metals and several types of food. The

⁶⁰ Reply of the Polish Parliament to ECPRD questionnaire No. 1958 requested by Germany, March 20, 2012. [The Material Reserves Agency](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015.

⁶¹ Grzegorz Adamczewski, Director of Organizational Office, Material Reserves Agency, reply to information request from the Knesset Research and Information Center, Email, August 5, 2015.



national reserve serves the state during emergencies, but is also used for economic purposes to stabilize prices and prevent inflation.⁶²

United States

The United States Ministry of Agriculture, through the Food and Nutrition Service, is responsible for the supply of food to those affected during an emergency. The Food Distribution Division provides food to voluntary relief agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army which transfers it to victims or to mass feed the affected population. The relief agencies are the ones that submit requests regarding types and quantities of food which they need. Every state has food reserves ready for use during an emergency. If the President declares a state of emergency in a certain area, the state itself is permitted, subject to the approval of the United States Department of Agriculture, to distribute food directly to the affected households. Such direct distribution will be conducted if the commercial supply of food through stores has been impaired. If a certain state does not have a sufficient stock of food, the Department of Agriculture will transfer food from other states or from the Department's own food inventories, and in certain cases, the Secretary of Agriculture can approve special acquisition of food in order to fill food stocks that were depleted. The reserves stock food that requires very little, if any, preparation,⁶³ with more than 50 different products currently provided by the service to those affected.⁶⁴ For example, in 1997, the Department of Agriculture supplied products such as canned juice, preserved meat and preserved fruits and vegetables.⁶⁵ The planned list of products for 2015 includes a wide variety of products, all **dry or canned**. The listed products include: canned vegetables such as beans, carrots, corn, peas, potatoes, pumpkin, spinach and tomatoes; apple, grape, grapefruit, orange and tomato juices; eggs; canned fruit such as apple sauce, apples, apricots, peaches, pears, plums and raisins; a variety of preserved meats and fish; flour; cheese; cereals; oil; pasta; peanut butter; rice, etc.⁶⁶

⁶² Website of [The Federal Agency of State Reserves of the Russian Federation](#), last accessed: July 30, 2015. The texts were translated from Russian with the help of Flora Koch Davidovich, researcher at the Knesset Research and Information Center.

⁶³ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, [Food Assistance in Disaster Situation](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.

⁶⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, [USDA Foods from Farm to Plate: June 2015](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.

⁶⁵ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, [Food Assistance in Disaster Situations](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.

⁶⁶ [USDA Foods Available for 2015](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Department of Homeland Security operates various programs for increasing civilian awareness of the importance of preparedness for national emergencies. For example, the Agency and the Red Cross cooperated in publishing a booklet about emergency preparedness with recommendations regarding food and water, as well as food storage and shelf life. Most of the recommendations pertain to preserved or dry food products.⁶⁷

In February 2003, FEMA launched a public campaign called "Ready" in order to empower and educate the civilian population to prepare for natural or man-made disasters. Among other things, the campaign urged people to prepare emergency supply kits⁶⁸ with food products for all household members to last for at least three days. The recommended food products are meat, preserved fruits and vegetables, protein or fruit bars, dry cereal or granola, peanut butter, dried fruit, nuts, crackers, canned juices, non-perishable pasteurized milk, vitamins and food for infants.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ FEMA, [Food and Water in an Emergency](#), August, 2004.

⁶⁸ Ready, [About the Ready Campaign](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ready, [Food](#), last accessed: July 28, 2015.



Appendix No. 1

Minimum **recommended** food quantities per person per week during an emergency according to the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Health in Israel:

Table No. 3: Minimum Recommended Food Quantities Per Person Per Week during an Emergency⁷⁰	
Product Name	Quantity/ Person/Week (kg)
Cracker/matzo cracker/matzos	0.75
Biscuit/wafer/cake/snacks	0.25
Grains (rice, noodles, corn, buckwheat, bulgur, potato flakes, instant porridge, breakfast cereals)	0.5
Canned meat/poultry/turkey/fish	0.7
Dry/preserved legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas, etc.)	0.35
Canned vegetables	0.9
Canned fruit	0.9
Oil/mayonnaise/tahini	0.315
Olives	0.3
Sweet spreads/chocolate/candy	0.5
Sugar	0.5
Tea	0.025
Coffee	0.2
Cocoa powder	0.0375
Instant dry soup mix	0.56
Mother's milk substitute 4 months	0.8
Mother's Milk substitute 4-12 months	1.6
Water	28 liters

⁷⁰ Ministry of Economy, Tel Aviv and Central Region, [Emergency Economy Unit: Food and General Economy](#), last accessed: July 14, 2015 (In Hebrew).



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