

BEYOND NUTRITION:

Eggs Are Essential For Client Well-Being

You've probably been hearing a lot about eggs lately—whether you're closely following the news or just noticing changes when you go shopping. We decided to lean into the topic, taking this moment to look at “the incredible, edible egg” and how it factors into essential decisions about client care here at the Northampton Survival Center.

Why are eggs in the news right now?

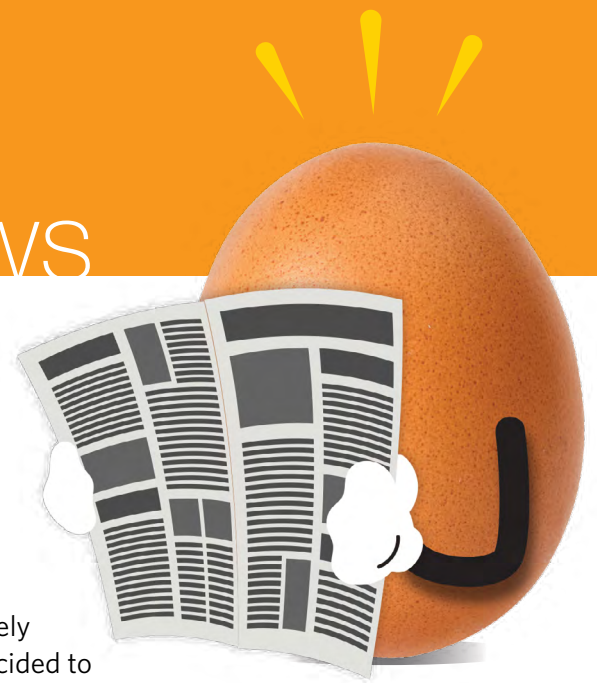
Starting in 2022, a highly-transmissible strain of bird flu forced egg farmers to destroy millions of laying hens (over 50 million of them just in the last year) to control the spread of the disease. This tightened supply met with a steadily-increasing demand for eggs, driving soaring costs, customer limits, and even empty shelves.

The difficulty of laying (our hands on) eggs

Limits of two dozen per customer can get tricky when we're trying to buy 250 dozen eggs every week. We're grateful that area retailers have been accommodating in lifting that cap for us—though it still can require ringing up 100 identical transactions in rapid succession!

With these constraints in mind, you might be curious why a food pantry would be buying eggs at all.

With a client base of roughly 4,000, we perceive a lot of demand for—and anxiety about—eggs. Read on to learn how we balance these considerations and come away with a greater appreciation for this humble protein source.



*Washing freshly-harvested
eggs at Prospect Meadow Farm*

PRIORITIZING LOCAL SOURCING

A Longtime Friendship with Prospect Meadow Farm

For over a decade we've been fortunate to receive bountiful donations of local produce from ServiceNet's Prospect Meadow Farm, a therapeutic vocational agriculture program providing meaningful employment and daily activities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Over the past year we've been delighted to expand this partnership and buy 40 to 50 dozen fresh, local eggs every week—nourishing clients while supporting this beloved farming effort.



“ I deeply value and appreciate the way you center your clients as humans and look for ways to make things (both small and big) better for them.

CENTERING CLIENT CARE

The Human Cost of Cutting Costs

News about food shortages spreads quickly and can make people already struggling feel even more stressed. When economic shifts cause our clients to worry that our supplies might start to dwindle, we’re quick to remind folks that “we’re here when you need us” and “there’s enough for everyone.”

But egg costs and shortages are real. We budgeted \$7,500 for eggs this year but will spend more than three times that amount. With a growing client base, even sourcing the 345 dozen eggs normally needed each week became unsustainable. Earlier this year we hit an important decision point: Do we stop distributing eggs altogether, instead spending that money on other important groceries for our clients?

Careful consideration of our mission and the wisdom of “trauma-informed” practices led us to an important truth: **Our clients needed to experience the reassurance and stability of knowing they could get eggs from us every week.** So, we set a modest limit of one dozen eggs per household, per visit, to more reliably source 250 dozen each week. We were pleased to have found a solution that allowed us to use our money wisely while caring for the whole client—body, mind, and spirit.

Cracking the Code on Decision Fatigue

The downside of the abundant options available at the pantry is the mental exhaustion that can come from facing upwards of 150 decision points for a family of four during every weekly visit. At the Center, we know this is more than a minor inconvenience—decision fatigue is a real burden for families struggling with difficult choices and limited means.

Enter the Combo Bag—a rotating selection of coordinated, ready-to-go ingredients like **The Graham** (breakfast items), **The Sidekick** (side dishes), and **The Pantry Packer** (baking basics). Clients tell us they appreciate the ease of opting for these helpfully-combined staples while making fewer overall choices—a welcome antidote to decision fatigue.



The value of eggs is hard to beat

Eggs are great for breakfast, lunch, or dinner! Scrambled, poached, boiled, fried, or baked into any number of recipes, eggs are a very affordable complete protein. They’re one of the few foods containing all nine of the essential amino acids humans need to break down food, maintain a normal digestive system, grow and repair body tissue, boost the immune system, provide energy, and much more!

	EGG	CHICKEN (boneless breast)	PORK (chops)	BEEF (ground)
AVERAGE SERVING SIZE	1 large	4oz	4oz	4oz
COST PER SERVING	\$0.52	\$1.04	\$1.19	\$1.45

Eggcellent Questions!



Why do we accept egg cartons sometimes and not others?

When it’s cheaper to purchase eggs in large flats, we repackage them in regular egg cartons for distribution to individuals and families. *Keep an eye on our Facebook page to see when we need egg cartons.*



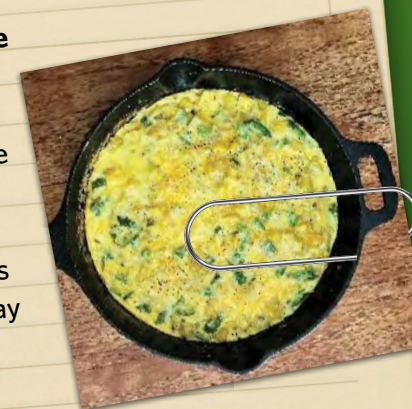
Does the color of an egg matter?

Eggshell colors are determined mostly by the breed of chicken laying them, and non-commercially farmed eggs come in all sorts of colors including grays, blues, and greens. No matter what color an egg’s shell is, the egg will taste the same and have the same nutritional benefits.



Community Cook-Along

Make this frittata with us and see why it’s a community favorite! Our monthly Pantry Fresh kits provide clients with a tasty recipe and all the ingredients to make it. This hearty egg, potato, and veggie combination is a delicious dinner or a great start to your day for breakfast!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 large or 2 small potatoes
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1/3 cup milk
- 6 eggs
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Salt and black pepper
- 1 teaspoon oregano (or any other spice you like)

Get the full recipe online at northampton-survival.org/frittata



How else can eggs help the Center?

A local family sets up an informal egg stand every spring to share their hens’ extra eggs with their neighbors, raising funds for the Center at the same time. People have been generous and respectful, taking what they need (someone once took a single egg!) and donating what they can (as much as \$100!).



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Northampton Survival Center is an
 Equal Opportunity provider.



We're a Local Hero!
 When sourcing
 food for clients, we
 buy fresh produce
 from local providers
 whenever possible.



United Way of the Franklin
 & Hampshire Region



This project is made
 possible by City of
 Northampton ARPA funds.

Northampton Survival Center

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 YOUR WORKPLACE,
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 WORSHIP, OR CLUB FOR
 SOME EASY IDEAS
 THAT ADD VARIETY TO
 OUR PANTRY.

Narrow Focus, Big Impact

It's not just clients who suffer from decision fatigue—sometimes donors do too! A themed drive makes giving easier (and more fun) by narrowing choices, so no one is stuck wondering what to bring. Food drives help us provide specialty items and things that make cooking at home a little more flavorful.



Northampton Community Rowing hosts a themed food drive for the Center every month, asking its members to donate hearty soups one month and condiments the next.

"Other rowers keep telling me how easy and satisfying it is to contribute to these food drives, and thanking ME for helping THEM help the Center!"

— ELLEN PUTNAM

FOOD DRIVE IDEAS

Breakfast Buddies: Healthy cereal, oatmeal packets, rolled oats, granola, breakfast bars

Spice It Up: Spice blends, dried herbs, bouillon cubes, salt and pepper, seasoning packets, curry paste

Pasta-bilities: Pasta mixes and sides (like Hamburger Helper and Knorr), spaghetti sauce, alfredo sauce, diced tomatoes, pesto

Flour Power: Flour, sugar, baking mixes, baking powder, baking soda, vanilla extract, honey, vegetable and canola oil

Spread the Love: Peanut butter, jelly, jam, alternative nut butters, mayonnaise, mustard

Everyone Eats (foods for special dietary needs): low-sodium, sugar-free, dairy-free, nut-free, gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, etc.

Steeped in Kindness: Ground coffee, bagged tea, shelf-stable creamers

Healthy Snack Attack: Crackers, pretzels, granola bars, lunchbox snack packs, applesauce, fruit pouches

TOILETRY DRIVE IDEAS

Personal care and cleaning items are essential, but people on a tight budget often have to use their limited funds on food. Organize a toiletry drive to shower our clients with support!

Smile Supplies: Toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, dental floss

Clean It Up: Laundry detergent, dryer sheets, dish soap, cleaning wipes, all-purpose cleanser

Roll With It: Toilet paper and paper towels

Period Power: Maxi pads, pantliners, tampons

Shower of Support: Shampoo, conditioner, body wash, soap, razors, shaving cream

