

Topic Area: Nutrition Strategy Development

Abstract Title: Development of a Nutrition Strategy for the Canadian Armed Forces to enhance operational effectiveness, human performance and long term health based on scientific evidence.

Troupe H¹

¹Strat J4 Food Services, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Ontario [E]

Process: A comprehensive literature review of military nutrition research was completed to determine gaps with the current feeding program. This review showed nutrition has been associated with challenges to military personnel readiness, long term health, and issues with operational effectiveness. It identified that energy deficits occur on training and operations. Factors were identified that affect intake by military personnel including nutrition knowledge. The literature review enforced the need for a nutrition strategy to support CAF feeding programs and meet nutritional requirements of the military population

Project Summary: Implementation of the strategy continues. Changes were implemented to improve the nutritional content of the shelf stable combat rations. A nutrition education program was developed and will be implemented as part of the mandatory training program for all recruits, leadership training programs, and CAF members tasked for deployments. A National Standardized Cycle menu has been implemented that includes healthier choices at all meals with promotional material to encourage intake of these choices. Standards for feeding have been revised to address the increased nutritional requirements of CAF personnel working in austere conditions.

Systematic approach used: The strategy identified five focus areas: optimal nutrient content; intake and delivery; hydration; education and strategy sustainment. Dependency linkages, time lines and evaluation of outcomes were identified.

Recommendations/Conclusions: Briefing senior leadership in the CAF on the strategy and the importance of nutrition to soldier readiness and performance has increased the awareness of the importance of nutrition in the success of military operations and the long term health of CAF personnel. There is a requirement for further research in military nutrition to fully implement the strategy.