

# SEASONAL CALENDAR

## Purpose

The seasonal calendar is useful for mobilizing the community and creating ownership of the program by involving the community in the program design.

The seasonal calendar helps implementers understand what types of foods are available during various seasons and what sicknesses/diseases are common in certain seasons. By understanding what foods are available during certain seasons, this information can be taken into account when conducting the market survey and in the menu design.

The sickness and disease information can also be used to ask questions especially to the households involved in community programs and how they seek health care services or how they treat children for these sicknesses or illnesses at home.

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## Preparation

### Materials:

- Table 1: Seasonal Calendar worksheet
- Blank flip charts and coloured markers
- 60 stones or leaves or other common material to use as markers

**Facilitators:** At least one trained facilitator (good to use a Health and Nutrition specialist and a Livelihoods/Agriculture Specialist)

**Community members:** Approximately 5-10 local community residents familiar with seasonal food availability in the community.

## Conducting the Activity

1. With a group of local community members, ask the participants if they know the food groups (for example, cereals, proteins, fruits, vegetables, fats). For each food group, list the foods that the community grows.

Do one food group at a time. Make sure to note which grains, fruits, vegetables, proteins (meat and produce), and dairy products members of the community typically grow and consume.

2. Mark a grid of 12 months on the ground (use Table 1 as a guide). Down the left side, pile a small sample of each of these foods (for cereals, samples may include maize, sorghum, and/or millet). Give the group a pile of 60 stones or other small objects per sample of food.

Ask the group to distribute the stones to show the proportion of households with access to the different food items during the year. For example, if no families have a crop in certain months, there are no stones in those squares; if a food is available to families at all times of year in the same quantity, then each month would have an equal number of stones. Do this for all cereal crops and then for each of the other food groups.

You may also conduct this activity with diseases/illnesses after going through all food groups.

3. Record the results of the community members' seasonal calendar with the food groups they use in Table 1. Make sure the results are recorded on a piece of paper after drawing on the ground. Distribute a copy of Table 1 and advise community members to record the results individually.

Write out the food items commonly used in the country and the common diseases that exist. Indicate with an 'x' as to when they are in low or high season for the various months.

This is an example of a seasonal calendar below:

Items (e.g. Foods available, diseases, etc.)		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Common Diseases in U5 Children	Malaria	x	x	x	x	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	x	x	x
	Diarrhoea	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx	x	x	x	x	x
	Upper Respiratory Tract Illnesses	x	x	x	xx	xx	xx	xx	0	0	0	0	0
Vegetables	Cowpeas	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
	Dark green leaves	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
	Okra	x	x	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	x	x
	Leafy Okra	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Fruits	Mangoes	x	0	xx	xx	xx	x	0	0	0	x	x	xx
	Guava	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	xx	xx	xx	x
Flesh foods	Chicken	x	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx	xx	x	x	x
	Fresh Fish	x	x	xx	xx	xx	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Dry fish	x	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx	xx	xx	x	x
Season	Dry season	x	x	x	x							x	x
	Rainy season					x	x	xx	xx	x	x		

Low season = x  
High season = xx  
Not available = 0



## Annex

### Table 1: Seasonal Calendar Worksheet

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