

# It's a good time to clean out freezer

by **Monica Beaumont**  
**Foods and Nutrition Specialist**  
**Rural Organizations and Services**  
**Branch**

Now is the best time to organize yourself and your freezer for the upcoming fruit and vegetable harvest.

Clean out your freezer, place all foods in a cardboard box or wrap in heavy newspaper and cover with blankets. Wash the inside of the freezer and baskets with baking soda and water. Use 30 mL baking soda for every litre of water.

Organize the freezer so that you do not have to search for items and keep the freezer door open longer than necessary. Store similar foods together in boxes, baskets or bags. Color code packages with colored labels or tape to make them easier to find. For example, red for meat, yellow for fruit etc.

To retrieve food from the bottom of the freezer, place large bulky items in shopping bags with handles or string attached. On the top of these bags, place boxes to be stacked. Put quickly used items in baskets on top.

To keep track of food in your freezer, make up an inventory sheet and post close to freezer. Record the number of packages added to the freezer, the size of the package, for example 250 mL of green beans or .5 kg of ground pork, the date frozen and the date to use by.

Purchase plenty of packaging so that you will not run out at the crucial time. There are many different types of packaging on the market. You can select from a variety of heavy duty foil, plastic wrap, freezer bags, freezer paper and reusable plastic containers in various sizes.

Purchase freezer or masking tape and waterproof markers and pencils to identify packages.

When the fruits and vegetables are available, freeze only ripe but firm fruit and young tender vegetables. Wash, clean, prepare and package properly all produce. Remember to blanch all vegetables. Blanching destroys enzymes that produce flavour and texture changes in vegetables when frozen.

Label all packages clearly with the

name of the product, date when frozen and any other pertinent information. Don't forget to record foods on the inventory sheet.

When adding fresh produce, add no more than 10% of the freezer capacity each day and reduce the temperature to the lowest setting.

To fully utilize your freezer, use the food, do not keep it stored indefinitely. All produce should be eaten by the beginning of the next growing season.

