



# **Agricultural and Applied Economics Seminar**

## **The Impact of an Information Intervention on Food Shelf Nutritional Quality: A Randomized Control Trial**

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**12:00 – 1:30 pm**

**119 Ruttan Hall**

Food shelves are an important source of food support for families struggling with food insecurity in Minnesota, but studies have found nutritional quality to be lacking in food distributed by food shelves. Food shelf staff face a number of obstacles to providing nutritious foods, including the higher cost of quality food, their limited control over donations, and client preferences that sometimes favor foods with lower nutritional value. In some cases, food shelf ordering managers (half of whom are volunteers or part-time employees) may have limited knowledge of the appropriate mix of foods to provide a balanced diet for their clients. This study uses a randomized control trial design to evaluate the impact of an information intervention on the nutritional quality of food shelf food orders. For 15 months, treatment food shelves received a monthly feedback report that scored the nutritional quality of their orders, showed how their scores compared to those of their peers and their own prior scores, and provided recommendations for how to improve their scores. We find evidence that the information intervention improved the nutritional quality of food shelf food ordering in at least one quarter, with an especially significant impact on fruit and vegetable scores.