

## **Storing Your Emergency Supply of Flour**

### **By Joseph Parish**

One of the major items that are usually considered essential for survival in emergency conditions is bread and other flour products. I am a firm believer that if you can make Navajo Fry Bread you have the bread problem licked.

It has always been my contention that flour should be one of the staples of any emergency food supply. We do not store whole grains however we do take 25-pound bags of flour and store up with these products. We usually store both bread and general-purpose flour. We used to place them into a quart or half gallon jar but soon discovered that the life span was much less than the process I am about to describe to you. We do this on a regular basis to ensure that we have plenty of ground flour in the event of a major disaster.

Ideally whole grains, such as barley, oats, rye, wheat, etc., would be preferred and stored in plastic 5-gallon buckets by using Mylar bags and oxygen absorbers. Whole grains which are stored in this manner generally will last for up to 20 years or even longer. I have heard the argument that once these grains have been ground into flour that their shelf life will be significantly shortened however it is much simpler to merely open a jar or a package and remove the flour as needed. Don't get me wrong as we also have a grain mill for the time when the SHTF but our preferred method is that flour which is already milled.

For those people with modest incomes, the cost of these mills is outrageous and usually out of the range for new preppers therefore without such a machine the determined prepper or survivalist must resort to ground flour for their emergency preps. The shelf life of an ordinary 5-pound bag of flour is listed as 6 to 8 months maximum in the food pantry. This life could be increased greatly if the flour were stored in the refrigerator resulting in a life span of up to one year. This naturally doesn't seem like a long time when you consider the life span of most other products being stored. It is fairly easy to extend this shelf life to three years or more by a few simple suggestions.

We purchase our flour in 25-pound sacks. This bulk purchasing tends to save us money over the usual five-pound bags. Many people say they believe that leaving the flour in its original bag is the best policy for keeping it fresh however I feel that idea cannot apply to 25-pound bags. This would only apply to the smaller flour sack if you intend to place the entire bag into a one-gallon vacuum bag and seal it. This may work fine for the smaller five-pound packages but simply will not work for the larger bulk sacks. These packages must be repacked and then processed as described below in order to be stored as described.

If you plan to use small bags after they are sealed them place it directly into the freezer for two weeks. This procedure will kill off any insect eggs which may have been resting in the flour. Next you will want to move your sealed bag from the refrigerator to a

dry area and let it sit for approximately four days. This will permit the moisture from the refrigerator to evaporate.

Once you start accumulating the vacuum sealed bags and processing them you can store them in a plastic tote or five-gallon bucket to allow you to easily locate them and to prevent possible intrusion by rodents.

it is time for you to use the bags of flour the first thing you will notice is that it is very well packed and compressed. Do not be alarmed as you can use a flour sifter to loosen up the grounds when you get ready to use it.