A **ration** is the amount of commodity an eligible recipient is entitled to receive for a specified time period. The program description section in the operational plan should describe approved ration size and composition, and a rationale for this size and composition. A display board or banner at the distribution site with ration entitlement is a good practice.

The most commonly used **methods to measure commodity rations** at distribution sites are:

1. **Recipient division**:Small groups of recipients are called into a distribution area and presented with the ration, packaged in its original bags and tins, equivalent to the approved ration multiplied by the number of recipients in the group. The group then divides the commodities among themselves (often under the guidance and observation of a food monitor).
2. **Scooping**:Standard, calibrated volume-measuring cups, tins, or bottles designed for the approved ration for a particular commodity are used to provide rations to recipients. For example, if the ration for maize meal is 400 g per person per day, and distribution is conducted every 15 days, a scoop for maize meal is manufactured to hold exactly 6 kg of maize meal when filled to the top and leveled off (400 g × 15 days = 6 kg). During distribution, commodities are then scooped into containers brought by the recipients. Scoops must be clean during food distribution.

* Horizontal slits can be punched into the scoops at the fill line to prevent over-scooping.
* Avoid flexible scoops, as the sides can be squeezed to reduce the ration.
* Scoops should be stored in a locked box when not in use.
* Use local measurements (instead of metric measurements) if commonly used and understood.
* Scooping is **not** effective when the approved ration and/or the frequency of distribution changes over time.

1. **Weighing**:A hanging scale is used to weigh out a per-person/per-distribution ration.

* Weighing is advantageous when the approved ration changes from time to time (due to breaks or shortages in the commodity pipeline) or the frequency of distribution changes (from weekly to monthly, and back again).
* To facilitate weighing, colored tape should be placed on the scale dial to indicate the “full” point for the approved ration.