

North Korea: Report on the Famine
in the Hwanghae Provinces and the Food Situation 2012

ASIAPRESS INTERNATIONAL / North Korea Reporting Team

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Press Release

We would like to call out for the attention and interest of the international community regarding the famine in the breadbasket region of the North and South Hwanghae Provinces.

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In fiscal 2012, a famine broke out in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces located to the southwest from Pyongyang. The details are unclear, but the famine has resulted in many deaths. This famine was caused by large amounts of food such as rice and corn grown in this region, the greatest breadbasket region of North Korea, being transported away to secure food rations for the military and the citizens in the capital Pyongyang, leaving no food at all in some farming villages. Since March last year, Asiapress has been aware of the famine in this area and has continued to interview local residents, officials of the Korean Workers' Party, and members of hospital management, and has become firmly convinced that this famine has indeed occurred. We estimate that more than ten-thousand people have died.

The famine in this region peaked between January and May of 2012. Thanks to the potato harvest in June and the corn harvest in September, the worst seems to be over. However, last year in various regions of North Korea there were droughts and heavy rain damage which lead to problems in agricultural production in certain regions. The harvests of main staples such as rice and corn may have decreased compared to average years. We would like to point out that if the North Korean authorities persist in excessive transportation of food from the farming villages of the North and South Hwanghae Provinces again this year, this may lead to a tragic repetition of the deaths due to starvation in this region again.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) released a report in November last year estimating that North Korea's rice production in 2012 ~ 2013 increased by 11% over the previous year, and corn production improved by 10%. Moreover, an EU inspection team visited North Korea in October last year to survey the food situation and seems to have reached the conclusion that the situation does not require emergency aid. If food production has indeed improved over the previous year as these assessments by these organizations suggest, then this is indeed very fortunate. But considering the fact that the North Korean authorities have been imposing strict restrictions on the surveys by these international organizations, together with the fact that past precedents make us suspect false information has been provided, we would like to encourage

attention towards the fact that a famine may occur again this year in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces.

Media other than Asiapress have also referred to the outbreak of famine in the North and South Hwanghae region last year.

- The *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper of Japan pointed out the following in a June article by quoting from the statement of a person involved in trading with North Korea. “An internal document drawn up in mid-March by leaders of the Korean Workers’ Party recognizes that the cause of the deaths from starvation is excessive food collections for the military.”
- South Korea’s “Daily NK”, an online news site focusing on North Korea, reported in May of deaths due to starvation in an interview with a resident of the North and South Hwanghae Provinces.
- The *Tokyo Shimbun* newspaper of Japan quoted a source within North Korea in April, reporting that a serious famine had occurred in the South Hwanghae Province, with 20-thousand people starving to death.

We would like to call out to international organizations and international humanitarian aid NGO’s to execute the following immediately.

1. Demand to the North Korean authorities that they allow a fact-finding survey in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces in the regions where the famine occurred in 2012.
2. Encourage the North Korean authorities to request emergency food aid, and fertilizer and agricultural chemicals aid from the international community to prevent a recurrence of this year’s food crisis in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces.

* We recognize that this report is insufficient as a survey of the actual situation. This is because the North and South Hwanghae Provinces are among all the regions of North Korea located at the farthest distance from China, making it the most difficult region to come into contact with residents from that region to obtain information. At this point in time it is impossible to give an accurate account of the area and scale of the famine that occurred last year. But there is the possibility that the situation in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces may have been extremely serious, and we decided there was the need to communicate this humanitarian crisis of this region to the international community, even though our information is far from complete.

ASIAPRESS INTERNATIONAL – North Korea Reporting Team

ASIAPRESS is a news agency based in Japan. It sends out news and documentaries to the global media, and also produces TV programmes. Its North Korea news department, “the North Korea reporting team”, has been covering stories on the situation in North Korea for nearly 20 years, reporting on politics, the economic conditions, the food situation, the human-rights situation, the issues of North Korean defectors and other matters. Currently, within North Korea more than ten North Korean nationals are secretly active in areas such as the capital Pyongyang or in regional towns and villages, providing a variety of competent, highly reliable, solid information.

The reporting team has been sending out information uncensored by the authorities to the global community, on matters such as the human-rights situation that the administration has been trying to keep under a veil of secrecy, or the harsh way of life experienced by the ordinary people in North Korea. At the same time, the team has been contacting North Korean nationals in China, engaging in a project to train them as reporters.

This project aims to support North Koreans who are willing to risk arrest and incarceration by the authorities in order to give us coverage that cuts close to the heart of the matter in North Korea, a country where the government keeps tight control on information. The project has made great contributions to journalism for freedom of expression, and has been moving forward with the acclaim of many media organizations and international organizations.

<http://www.asiapress.org/rimjingang/english>

黄海道地図

(The Hwanghae Provinces map)



人口 Population	
黄海北道	約 211万名 (2008)
黄海南道	約 231万名 (2008)
North Hwanghae Province	about 2.11million (2008)
South Hwanghae Province	about 2.31million (2008)
面積 Area	
黄海北道	10,345 km ²
黄海南道	8,450.3 km ²
North Hwanghae Province	10,345 km ²
South Hwanghae Province	8,450.3 km ²

[2012 Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces] PART1

Mass Starvations Occurring in the Breadbasket

Tens of Thousands May Be Dead --- Also Reports of Cannibalism

A serious situation arose in the Hwanghae Provinces in the southwestern part of North Korea from the beginning of 2012. This is a major breadbasket area for North Korea, but there were a colossal number of deaths due to starvation. Ever since Kim Jong-un assumed the position of supreme leader, the media in North Korea and visiting foreigners have reported on “the beautifully developing capital Pyongyang”. But in the shadows of the “gorgeous” capital, a “hidden famine” has broken out. We would like to give you a partial glimpse into the real situation, and analyze the causes. Our hope is that the global community will focus on this “hidden famine”, and take immediate steps to look into the situation and take action. (Reporting by ISHIMARU Jiro, Lee Jin-su, Gu Gwang-ho, and Nam Joung-hak)

Since the beginning of 2012, our inside reporters and partners within North Korea have sent numerous reports to us, the Asiapress North Korea Reporting Team, on the food shortage in the North and South Hwanghae Provinces. Since March, we have paid several visits to the border area between North Korea and China to interview North Korean residents who had crossed the border into China. At the same time, we have been asking our reporters and collaborators within North Korea to conduct detailed surveys into the actual situation locally in the Hwanghae Provinces.

Moreover, in August and September, we spent two weeks in the border area between North Korea and China, holding interviews directly with six residents from the Hwanghae Provinces who had crossed the border into China, some legally, some illegally. During these interviews it became clear that since the beginning of 2012 considerable numbers of people had died of starvation, mainly in the agricultural villages of the breadbasket Hwanghae Provinces. What on earth is happening in the Hwanghae Provinces? We will be introducing testimonies by residents of North Korea. To insure the safety of the interviewers and witnesses, the names of some of the locations and regions in the interviews may be left undisclosed. Your understanding would be appreciated. All the names of the witnesses are aliases. (Lee Jin-su, ISHIMARU Jiro)

The Deaths Due to Starvation Peaked Out Between April and June

“Something terrible was happening. In my village people were dying left and right every day, like,

there would be deaths at six families one day, then at five families the following day. One family was completely wiped out --- everyone died of starvation --- while at another family, they gave up hope of living, and they all killed themselves. The situation was the worst in April and May.”

An official at a farming village in XX County in the South Hwanghae Province, Mr.Lim, met us in a seedy coffee shop far from the city center in China’s Liaoning Province and told us his story.

Speaking of April, in North Korea, that is when grand celebrations were taking place commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Kim Il-sung. To coincide with these events, in Pyongyang City redevelopment projects led to the construction of numerous high-rise buildings and major entertainment facilities. Preparations moved forward for Kim Jong-un’s “leader debut” programme. Many guests were invited from abroad including members of the media, and showy fireworks events lit up the Pyongyang night sky. We also hear special rations were handed out to the people as part of the celebration. How was it in the village where Mr Lim lives?

“It was complicated. It’s true it should have been a national day of celebration, but seeing so many people die right in front of my eyes made me feel a profound sense of sadness welling up. We were all quite excited that there would be lots of special rations handed out as part of the celebrations, but it turned out all we got was 500 grammes (17.5 ounces) of sugar, a plate of sweet potatoes, a bar of soap, and a toothbrush. It was so disappointing, we were in no mood to celebrate the holiday.” So saying, Mr Lim lowered his eyes.

Asiapress inside reporter in North Korea, Gu Gwang-ho, entered the Hwanghae Provinces in July. He had this to say about the situation at a farming village.

“At the farming village I visited on the coast of the South Hwanghae Province, there was no grass growing at all in the area. Normally, at this time of year, there would be mugwort, dropwort, shepherd’s purses and other plants growing in abundance. One of the local residents told me that this year, whenever a plant sprouts up, someone picks it at once and eats it, so there’s nothing left growing. My impression is that at that time, 80% of the village population were surviving on only two meals a day, if that. The villagers were saying, quite a lot of people had died from April to May.”

The testimony of Mr Park, who is involved in hospital management in the suburbs of XX County in the South Hwanghae Province, confirmed the fact that people were dying one after another since the beginning of 2012. He told us he was in China on a business trip, and looked back over the situation at his hospital.

“In January, February, and in May, it was a woeful situation. Dead bodies were brought to the hospital every day. These were the *kotchebi* (homeless) who had fallen dead on the streets nearby.

On a bad day, three or four such bodies would be brought in. We could not hold a funeral each time separately, so once we had ten bodies, we held a joint funeral. Even so, we held two or three funerals a week. We had no firewood to cremate them, or timber to make coffins, so we would just wrap them in straw mats, load them onto the back of a truck, take them to an empty lot in the suburbs, dig a hole and bury them. No gravestone to mark the site, or anything.”

We were also able to meet Mr Kim, who told us he was a middle-ranking official of the Korean Workers’ Party. He was worried about being seen, so we met and heard from him in a hotel room in a city in Jilin Province(China). Mr Kim introduced himself, saying he was responsible for communicating party guidance to farming villages in the South Hwanghae Province.

“The farming villages I visited from May to June were in such a tragic state, I wanted to cover up my eyes. There was no food at all. Casting out elderly parents or abandoning children was nothing rare.”

After saying this, Mr Kim went on to talk about an all too shocking incident.

“I visited all the farming villages in the South Hwanghae Province, every one of them, but the most tragic, wretched area was Chondang County. I don’t know what percent of the population is dead. In a village named Hwayangri in Chondang, a man who went mad with hunger boiled his own child and ate his flesh and got arrested.”

Cannibalism, Illicit Sales

What was particularly shocking in our recent news gathering trip was the numerous testimonies that hit us about cannibalism. All the residents of the Hwanghae Provinces that we interviewed talked about cannibalism, or illicit sales of human meat, occurring somewhere close by.

“In my village in May, a man who killed his two children and tried to eat them was executed by a firing squad. While his wife was away on business he killed his eldest daughter, and because his son saw what he had done, he killed his son as well. When his wife came home, he offered her food saying “we have meat”. But the wife, suspicious that her children were missing, notified the Ministry of Public Security (the police), which led to the discovery of part of their children’s bodies from under the eaves.” (Mr Lim)

“There was an incident where a man was arrested for digging up the grave of his grandchild, and eating the remains.” (Mr Gu, reporter)

At the same time, the North Korean authorities seem to be imposing severe punishment for actions such as cannibalism or selling human meat.

In Haejyu, the largest city in the South Hwanghae Province, a criminal who killed eleven people and sold the meat as pork was executed by a shooting squad in May.” (Mr Lim)

Other than these, we heard many testimonies related to cannibalism. Rumours spread of such hideous cannibalism incidents because the police became involved and the incidents became public. All of the people we talked to also said that up till then, they had never heard of any cannibalism cases in the past.

The Death Toll in the Tens of Thousands

In that case, how many people lost their lives in the Hwanghae Provinces in 2012 since the beginning of the year?

“In my village, out of the 60 households in one working team, about one tenth died. The situation in the neighboring farming villages is probably similar.” (Mr Lim)

“In the urban area where I live, the number of deaths is probably fewer than in the farming villages. But observing the farming villages in the suburbs, in a village with 300 households, there were always about three households in mourning.” (Mr Park)

“Officers in a farming village told me, since the beginning of 2012, the death rate has been 30 people out of every 1000. They say this is thirty times as high as a normal year.” (Mr Kim)

There are no accurate statistics on the deaths due to starvation. We were only able to interview six residents of the Hwanghae Provinces, and in response to our question “About how many people do you think have died?” the best answer they could give us was through hearsay and personal impressions. It is clear that our information gathering has its limitations. However, from the dreadful starvation information from the local residents that we met individually, I regret to say that we are convinced there is no mistake a considerable number of deaths due to starvation have occurred across a wide area of the Hwanghae Provinces. We would also like to add that it was a common thread across all of their testimonies that with the arrival of June, there were harvests of potatoes, wheat, spinach and other vegetables, and the number of deaths caused by starvation decreased.

According to a nationwide population survey jointly conducted by a United Nations organization and North Korean authorities in 2008 (editor’s note: many question the accuracy of the numbers, saying the size of the population may have been “topped up” by more than ten percent), some one and a half million people are said to live in the farming village area in the breadbasket South Hwanghae Province. Even if we assume that the death rate was one percent, that means more than ten-thousand people have died. When we include the farmers of the North Hwanghae Province and the people living in urban areas at the bottom of the pyramid, that means the number of deaths will be higher by several fold. One should refrain from making casual references as to how many people

may have died, but we estimate that since the beginning of 2012 in the Hwanghae Provinces, tens of thousands of people have died at a minimum. If you follow this series to the end, we believe you will be convinced that our estimates are not foundationless. This is no longer a “food shortage”, it is a “famine”. And it is a “famine” brought about by the government.

As we mentioned before, while huge numbers of people were dying of hunger in the Hwanghae Provinces, at that very time in Pyongyang there were major events unveiling Kim Jong-un as the hereditary successor of the regime. What indeed was the relationship between Kim Jong-un’s appearance and the famine? Why did the phenomenon of so many people dying of hunger occur in the breadbasket area?

(TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 2)



A group of young soldiers who are going to be transferred to the rear-echelon because of malnourishment. Some skinny soldiers stagger and can hardly walk. The troop commander told them to stay behind the wall so as not to be seen by the public. (Taken by Gu Gwang-ho, July, 2011. South Pyongan Province) (C)ASIAPRESS

[2012 Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces] PART2

Mass Starvations Occurring in the Breadbasket

Searching for causes of starvation among farmers

Food producing farmers are starving to death. This is shocking news, and as reporters, we began to look into the causes upon hearing the stories. The residents of the Hwanghae Provinces that we spoke with said that “All of the food has been taken away for the programs ‘Food for the Army’ and ‘Food for the capital’.” In addition, Kim Jong-un’s ‘Leadership debut’ was accompanied by enormous waste, and the food producing region had to bear an excessive burden. This caused many farmers to run out of food. Let’s explore the statements about the source of starvation. (Lee Jin-su, ISHIMARU Jiro)

How food is taken from the heroic farmers

At a collective farm in the Hwanghae Provinces in the bread-basket region of North Korea, over the last five or six years, the army and farmers have fought over the harvest. The fight consists of the army trying to secure food supplies for army units, while the farmers try to conceal some of the food produced in order to avoid starvation. In 2012, the situation developed into an extremely serious one.

“In farming villages, officials, local police and public prosecutors go out and threateningly collect the “Food for the army”. When visiting the farmer’s houses, they turn over everything in the houses, prying and searching for hidden food.”

Mr. Park, who is involved in the operation of a hospital in a suburb of XX County in South Hwanghae Province, gave the above firsthand account. The leaders threaten residents with pointed metal bars, eagerly trying to gather even just a little bit more food supplies.

Gu Gwanho, an inside reporter with the Asiapress North Korean reporting team, visited a farming region in the Hwanghae Provinces three times during 2012, and commented on what he saw in February.

“Usually at that time, you can see sheaves hanging to dry around the village; but during this time I did not see any. To stop the villagers from stealing some of the harvest during the drying process, thus reducing the army’s portion, the army came and took the produce soon after the food was harvested.”

In an area around a farming village in South Hwanghae Province, Kim, a mid-level official who is responsible for communicating the party's policy, has been present many times during the savage seizure of the harvest. He made the following comments.

“Armed soldiers guard the threshing floor so the farmers could not take away any food. When the threshing is done, all of it is taken away. And it is not only the army that is doing this. The village officials know where the farmers have hidden food, so they go into the houses, look everywhere including the toilets, and take away the food they find. They do this fully understanding that once the food is taken, the farmers will not have any food left. By orders from superiors, if the officials do not collect a set amount of food, they will lose their jobs.”

Food is taken right from the point of production. In the villages in the Hwanghae Provinces, violent seizures of the harvest are spreading. In this way, the unusual situation of farmers struggling with starvation in a bread-basket region is occurring.

Structural exhaustion in the Hwanghae Provinces' farming villages

Farming villages in the Hwanghae region, and especially in Southern Hwanghae Province, play an important part as a base for food supply for not just the army, but also for city workers. Starting with the soldiers on the frontlines facing the South Koreans, food supplies sent to units in every area as “Food for the army” and food supplies sent to Pyongyang as “Food for the capital” are priorities for food rations.

In North Korea, where collective farming persists, the amount of food that is collected by the state is fixed, and anything remaining after that is collected goes to the farmers – this becomes their income.

For over ten years now, stagnation of North Korea's collective farming production has become very serious. Traditionally, based on the collective farms production planning, fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, green houses, tractors, fuel and other items were issued from the state. Due to financial deterioration, this is being reduced year by year, and in the future, it will become normal for farmers to be required to provide these items on their own.

Furthermore, there is a lack of electricity to run the water pumps for the fields and the threshing machines, so the harvest from the breadbasket region of Hwanghae continues to decrease. As we have reported earlier, the North Korean government is struggling with economic problems and a

worsening foreign currency reserve situation. The army is a non-productive organization, and malnutrition is spreading among the soldiers at the bottom of the organization.

Because of this, the burden being placed on farmers continues to increase. Although the volume harvested continues to decrease, the amount collected by the state is set by regulations. The amount promised to the farmers, or their distribution, continues to shrink, and in addition, they are increasingly required to bear the cost of necessary farming items.

The party official mentioned before, Kim, commented as follows. “During the rice planting and seed sowing season in spring, much of costs of the seeds and fertilizer are borne by the farmers, and they must come up with the money to pay for it. But do the farmers have money? They are forced to borrow money from the collective farm officials, with the promise to pay it back in the autumn after the harvest is collected. Of course, interest is charged.” This relationship is similar to that between the landowners and peasants during the feudal era.

In this way, farmers are forced to live just barely eking out an existence. In order to just keep their heads above water, they pilfer some of the food during harvest or during threshing. However, this small resistance by the farmers is being targeted through the violent “Collection from the source” campaigns aimed at the Hwanghae region, as mentioned above.

During the summer of 2012, a region in the Hwanghae Provinces was especially affected by damage from typhoons. Lim, the farming village official from XX County of South Hwanghae Province, reflected on the situation at that time.

“Heavy rains in 2011 eroded a lot of the fields and resulted in substantially reduced production. Because of this, farming villages in Hwanghae Provinces ran out of food just over a month after the harvest.”

Through the state taking an unsustainable portion of the harvest, it has triggered the large number of people starving to death in the bread-basket region of the Hwanghae Provinces. During the Arduous March in the latter half of the 1990s, when 1 to 3 million people starved to death, farming villages in the Hwanghae Provinces had the lowest incidences of starvation of all of the regions in North Korea.

Waste from excessive political emphasis leads to further spread of damage

On December 19th, 2011, after ruling with absolute power for 17 years, Kim Jong-il passed away.

During the period up until the end of this April, there were back-to-back political observances in North Korea. Kim Jong-il's funeral, the successor Kim Jong-un's debut as a leader, self-called "Rocket" launch the 100th anniversary of the late Kim Il-sung's birthday, and other similar national events occurred one after the other. During this string of events, large numbers of residents were mobilized, and enormous amounts of money were used. This led to continuous unproductive "political waste".

The smooth transfer of power to Kim Jong-un was the top priority of the regime during that period. As such, a top priority was preserving the food supply for the People's Army, necessary for maintaining the system, along with Pyongyang residents, which include numerous party members, officials and city residents with high loyalty to the regime. A female who was visiting relatives in China in August made the following statements to a group of reporters.

"From the beginning of 2012, the food supply to the central parts of Pyongyang was more stable than it had been for the last few years. Every month, without fail, workers received 14 kilograms (about 31 pounds) while others received 7 kilograms (about 15.5 pounds) of food distributions."

Limited supplies gathered were likely for priority rations for Pyongyang

Along with the announcement of the country's "passage through the gate for a strong and powerful state" to prosperity on April 15th, since the previous year the rapid pace of development in Pyongyang used up precious foreign currencies, resources and labor in a clear example of "political waste". Rush construction of non-essential facilities such as the construction of high story apartments capable of housing 100,000 households, an immense amusement park, facilities for dolphin shows and other similar non-essential facilities were built one after the other. In order to complete these projects, workers are mobilized from across the country to form "Storm Troops". These troops were made up of members from work organizations, university students, and construction laborers, and a large amount of food distribution supplies are necessary to feed the workers.

Produce from the harvest is taken from the farmers of the Hwanghae Provinces in order to pay for this "political waste". If the precious foreign currencies used for the development of Pyongyang were used to import food supplies and farming implements and other items necessary to run the farms, it is likely that the large number of casualties from starvation in the Hwanghae Provinces would not have arisen in 2012.

With Kim Jong-il's death, the farmers were delivered a blow. The inside reporter Gu had the following to say.

“The famers in the coastal regions of South Hwanghae Province, use the off-season from October to March to collect clams, fish and seaweed. This is used for food or money in order to give them a lifeline to keep them going until the spring. However, during the two months after Kim Jong-il's death, in accordance with toughened regulations, it was forbidden to go out to the shore.”

As the Korean Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea includes a marine border in South Hwanghae Province, the province is often affected by political jitters. In addition, in recent years many refugees have fled to South Korea over the water. The wave of regulations being strengthened around the country after the death of Kim Jong-il also reached South Hwanghae. For the farmers, in addition to their crops being exploited, the loss of the source of secondary income became the final blow.

Measures taken by Kim Jong-un are nonsense – the famine is man-made

Was Kim Jong-un's regime aware of the severe famine in South Hwanghae Province? The answer is “yes”. Kim, a mid-level party official in the province made the following statements.

“In April, Kim Jong-un received reports that ‘The farmers in the Hwanghae Provinces are immobilized due to starvation and the farm work is not being done.’ I heard from superiors that Kim quickly instructed the army to take countermeasures.”

Upon receiving the instructions, it distributed some of the food from the storage reserves kept for wartime.

“During the busy farming season in June, rations of 500 grams (about 18 ounces) of corn were distributed from the ‘Number two warehouse’, in which goods are stockpiled for wartime. However, only the farm employees received the food, and there were households that had to share that amount with the whole house. Even this ‘assistance’ stopped after a few days.” (Lim, a farming village official)

When other residents of the Hwanghae Provinces were asked, they responded that the countermeasures towards the break out of the famine were limited to “500 grams (about 18 ounces)” distributed across “a few days”. The response of the supreme leader was so utterly insufficient, there

is no choice but to call the instructions nonsense. The direct cause of the famine in the Hwanghae Provinces was the usurpation of additional food from the farmers for the “Food for the army” and “Food for the capital” programs. The countermeasure instructions given to the army are so haphazard they cannot rightly be called countermeasures to a famine.

It was the view of all interviewed that there would be no additional help from the state towards the farmers struggling under the famine.

As we have seen up until now, the “Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces” of 2012 was caused by the violent exploitation of the food production, putting too much strain on the already exhausted farmers. Furthermore, as the string of political events continued, the plight of the farmers was ignored, increasing the extent of the tragedy. The “Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces” is definitely due to man-made reasons. Kim Jung-un’s regime has stumbled right from its beginning.

It seems since June, the Famine in the Hwanghae Provinces has passed a peak for now. However, crop failure for the fall harvest of fiscal 2012 is being predicted from inside North Korea, and many are lamenting upcoming hardships. We would like to call out to the international community to pay special attention to the food situation of the residents of the Hwanghae Provinces.

The amount of Crop Import

2010	63,908,000 USD
2011	125,634,000 USD
2012 (January-May, Import from China)	43,098,000 USD

[Source:The Korea International Trade Association(KITA)]

PROFILES:

ISHIMARU Jiro 石丸次郎

Ishimaru was born in 1962 in Osaka, Japan. He is the Osaka office representative for ASIAPRESS. He studied abroad in Seoul for two and a half years and then in '93 traversed the entire 1400 kilometer China-North Korean border. He has made reports from inside North Korea three times, and has been to the border region more than eighty times. Up to now he has interviewed more than 800 North Koreans. Ishimaru is the publisher and chief editor of Rimjin-gang

Gu Gwang-ho 具光鎬 구광호

Gu Gwang-ho is in his thirties and lives in Pyongyang.

He started his journalistic activities in 2011 after having training several several times as a reporter by ASIAPRESS North Korea Reporting Team. He has made series of reportings in Pyongyang and South Pyongan Province successfully so far.

His remarkable video report on starving People's Army soldier in 2011 was aired by many TV stations over the world.