



## May 2001

On 21 May, WFP participated in a Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) organised visit to observe the affects of the prolonged dry weather conditions in Unpha and Pongsan counties in North Hwangae Province.

There was concern that there had been no rain in the more southern parts of the country for some 80 days and that the rainfed double crops, i.e. those that do not benefit from irrigation, will be severely affected. The mission visited three locations and saw wheat and irish potatoes that were showing severe signs of water stress. According to agronomists participating in the mission, those fields visited could be considered a total loss. However, those areas under irrigation crops were healthy and growing well. See box for mission's observations. At this stage, only the double corps that are harvested in June are affected. The main crops of rice and maize, being planted now, are not necessarily affected.

In addition the mission visited Unpho Reservoir, reportedly the largest in the area and built to contain a maximum capacity of 300 million cubic metres. The reservoir normally holds 175 million cubic metres, but capacity at the time of the visit was only reportedly 50 million cubic metres of water. This is considerably lower than expected given the high snowfalls this year. At this time last year the reservoir was reported to contain 65 million cubic metres.

During this visit extensive handwatering of crops was observed. According to WFP Emergency Officers this has been ongoing during the month. People are being mobilised – not only during the week, but also on Saturdays and Sundays - to go to the fields and hand water the crops.

In addition to their regular monitoring activities during May, WFP Emergency Officers have been monitoring the agricultural situation. They have been provided guidelines produced in conjunction with a UNDP agricultural expert to assist in the process. Each week they report back on

### **Observations by the inter-agency Mission to observe the affects of prolonged dry weather conditions in North Hwangae Province**

- The rainfed double crops seen showed severe symptoms of drought and can be considered a total loss. Crops planted under irrigation were in good condition;
- Lowland potato plants under rainfed conditions were underdeveloped and up to 30% of the fields showed symptoms of severe water stress;
- It was reported that water tables were lowered and wells were drying and this was affecting domestic water supplies;
- Lack of rainfed water has seriously delayed the maize transplanting operation;
- Normal transplanting of rice was observed in irrigated paddy fields.

rainfall levels and information on the agriculture situation gleaned from local counterparts and this is shared with the wider community. Generally the picture remains similar all over the country with delayed planting and dry soil with handwatering replacing the vital rainfalls. Kitchen gardens and private plots tended by individuals and families however, are reportedly flourishing.

A comprehensive picture of the agriculture situation in DPRK will be available following the 12<sup>th</sup> joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply mission scheduled to visit the country 24 June - 3 July 2001. The mission is expected to assess the results of the double crop and its impact on the food availability for the 2000/2001 season.

### Access

Access: 167  
No Access: 43  
Total counties 211

WFP has been informed that the 2 counties - Rajin and Sonbong - in the north east (access but no humanitarian programme) will henceforth be considered one county. A new district – Puyun - in Chongjin city means that the total number of counties remains 211.

### *Resourcing and Pipeline*

Pledges received this month include 4,000 Mts. of corn soya blend, valued at US\$1.7 million, from the United States.

WFP also wishes to acknowledge a pledge of US\$308,319 from Finland and US\$ 127,000 from Friends of WFP which were received in April.

The incoming WFP food pipeline remains steady. Following a recent contribution by the US, requirements of oil, pulses and CSB are fully met although there is no shipping schedule yet available. Sufficient cereals have been pledged to cover requirements until the third quarter of 2001. Major contributors are Japan, ROK and the US.

#### Local Food Production

The five noodle factories ordered from China arrived in DPRK during May and were delivered to the five locations: Pyongyang, Sinuiju, Wonsan, Hamhung and Chongjin. During June-August technicians from China will co-

ordinate the installation and production is expected to begin in July in the Sinuiju Noodle factory. This will bring the total number of WFP supported local food production facilities in DPRK to 16. Further plans are being made to start biscuit production in two recently renovated factories in Wonsan and Hyesan, which will increase the number of facilities to 18 in 6 locations.

WFP Local Food Production Factory Locations		
Location	Facility	No
Pyongyang	Biscuits	2
	CSM/CMB/RMB	3
	Noodle	1
Sinuiju	Biscuit	1
	Noodle	1
Wonsan	Biscuit*	1
	Noodle	1
Hamhung	Biscuit	1
	CSM/CMB	2
	Noodle	1
Chongjin	Biscuit	1
	CSM	1
	Noodle	1
Hyesan	Biscuit*	1
Total		18

\* Production expected to begin in August

#### Monitoring

WFP Emergency Officers carried out 220 monitoring visits during May. In addition to their regular duties, WFP Emergency Officers participated in the UNICEF/DPRK government Vitamin A campaign.

#### Monitoring and Evaluation - A New Approach

The process of streamlining and simplifying the monitoring system used by Emergency Officers during field visits continues. The checklist system previously used has been revised to move toward a more assessment-oriented qualitative, rather than quantitative, system.

In addition to collecting information on food movements, Emergency Officers will make more use of field observations and joint assessments of need with FDRC counterparts.

Training sessions are currently being planned for June to include interviewing skills, making good use of the new data base, observation and assessment skills, basic information on nutrition and agriculture.

The new concepts were discussed in a meeting between senior officials from the FDRC and WFP on 7 May. The

new system is expected to come on-stream in July and will be continually evaluated.

#### Food for Work

In line with inter-agency cooperation, the WFP FFW Unit is continuing its discussions with the NGOs Triangle and Children's Aid Direct to implement joint projects later in the summer. These projects will most likely be in the agriculture sector.

Some 13 projects for implementation over the summer are currently being considered. As previously reported, most of these will concentrate on areas prone to flood damage.

#### PDS Distributions and Coping Mechanisms

Reports from Emergency Officers are that the PDS distributions have been reduced to a meagre 150 g of cereals per person per day. PDS distributions using the bi-lateral contributions from the ROK are expected to end in May.

Alternative food in most areas is not being distributed through the PDS but people are reportedly being encouraged to produce their own alternative food and search for wild foods such as mountain herbs and grasses.

The prolonged dry weather conditions this year are causing concern for the double crops – the wheat barley and potatoes harvested in June – that sustain the PDS until the main crop becomes available in September. This could cause extreme hardship for the people, especially those who do not benefit from WFP food assistance.

#### Shipping and Logistics

During May a total of 135,000 Mts. of commodities arrived. The final tranche of the ROK contribution of 100,000 Mts. of maize was delivered and despatched to the counties. A consignment of 30,000 United States wheat arrived and the cargo discharged at Nampo.

Japanese rice arrivals continued, bringing the total amount to 200,000 Mts. One shipment was delayed after a collision with a Chinese fishing trawler. There was no injury reported nor damage to the cargo.

Generally during the month the rate of discharge was high – at close to 2,000 Mts. per day. However, later in the month this slowed as large quantities of fertilizer began to arrive.

