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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Production of 2014/15 early season crops is forecast to decrease significantly
- Main season paddy production in 2014 was reduced but maize output increased
- After three consecutive years of strong growth, aggregate 2014/15 food production expected to remain stagnant
- Higher cereal import requirements forecast for 2014/15 marketing year (November/October)
- With stagnant harvest in 2014/15 food insecurity is likely to remain high

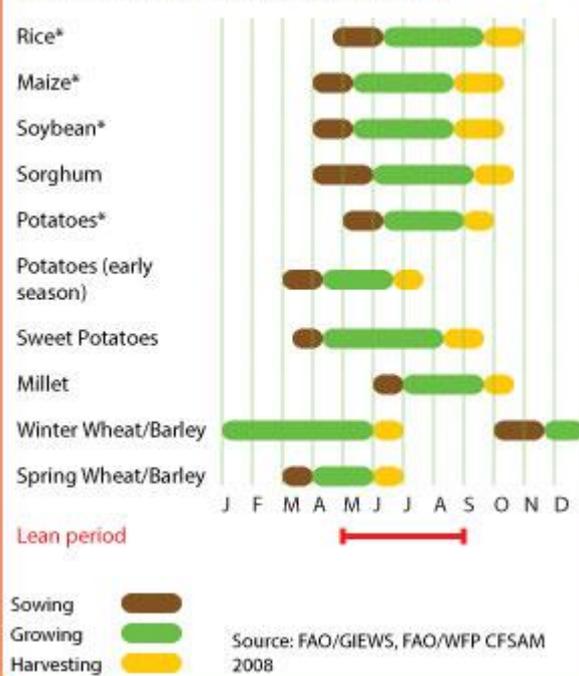
Production of 2014/15 early season crops is forecast to fall considerably

Planting of the 2014/15 minor winter wheat and barley was completed in November, while that of the main early season potatoes will start in March and will continue until mid-April. Remote-sensed data indicates well below-average precipitation (snow and rainfall) between October and mid-February, particularly over the main cereal producing areas, including North and South Pyongan and North and South Hwanghae. If dry weather continues, it will reduce soil moisture levels for the winter wheat and barley crops, expected to break dormancy and resume growth in March. Taking into account official information, FAO estimates planted area to winter wheat and barley to have decreased considerably, mainly as a result of a shortage of seeds, following the reduced harvest of the previous year. FAO forecasts the 2014/15 production of wheat and barley at 60 000 tonnes, some 22 percent below the reduced level in 2013/14. Similarly, the 2014/15 production of the early season potato crop, to be harvested in June-July, is forecast by FAO to decrease to 241 000 tonnes, mainly as result of expected lower plantings. In aggregate, official forecasts from Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) put the 2014/15 early season crops, including potatoes, wheat and barley at 301 000 tonnes (cereal equivalent), 18 percent lower than in the previous season.

After increasing markedly for three consecutive years, 2014/15 food production to remain stagnant

After three consecutive years of strong growth, the aggregate 2014/15 food production is expected to remain stagnant at 5.94 million tonnes (in cereal equivalent and paddy terms). This includes MoA production estimates for the main season and forecast for the forthcoming 2014/15 early season crops from cooperative farms, as well as FAO's estimates of production from sloping land and households gardens. The 2014 paddy rice production, harvested by October, is officially estimated at 2.6 million tonnes, 9 percent below last year's good level. The decrease is the result of a 4 percent decline in plantings and lower yields, following a shortage of water for irrigation due to low winter precipitation and a dry spell during July and August. Despite dry

Democratic People's Republic of Korea Crop calendar (*major foodcrop)



Democratic People's Republic of Korea Cereal production

	2009-2013 average	2013	2014 forecast	change 2014/2013
	000 tonnes		percent	
Rice (paddy)	2,564	2,901	2,626	-9
Maize	1,990	2,247	2,594	15
Wheat	81	57	45	-21
Others	83	105	82	-22
Total	4,719	5,310	5,347	1

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

weather during the cropping season, maize production (including production from cooperative farms, slopping lands and kitchen gardens) is estimated to have grown by some 15 percent from the good level of 2013/14 to about 2.59 million tonnes. With just a marginal increase in the area sown, the higher output reportedly resulted from improved yields, following the Government's efforts to provide supplementary irrigation mainly through mass mobilization of non-farmer workers for hand watering of maize plants.

Higher cereal import requirements forecast for 2014/15 marketing year (November/October)

With total cereal requirements for the 2014/15 marketing year (November/October) set by FAO at 5.49 million tonnes of cereal equivalent, there is an import requirement of 407 000 tonnes. The Government is expected to import 300 000 tonnes of cereals, leaving an uncovered deficit of 107 000 tonnes for the current marketing year. The estimated food gap is larger than the 2013/14 level of 40 000 tonnes reported by the 2013 joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Mission (CFSAM), partly due to higher post-harvest losses following changes in the estimation methodology.

With stagnant harvest in 2014/15 food insecurity is likely to remain high

With a stagnant harvest in 2014, the food security situation in 2014/15 is likely to remain similar to that of the previous marketing year, with most households estimated to have borderline and poor food consumption rates. The 2013 CFSAM found that although acute malnutrition rates have improved in recent years, the chronic under-nutrition remains a public health problem.

