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Also available on the Internet at the following address:

1 Information is as of November 2000
HIGHLIGHTS

- Overall, global paddy production in 2000 is forecast to decline by 14 million tonnes to 594 million tonnes, about 2 percent less than the last season. The contraction in output was brought about by relatively low prices of rice, unfavourable weather conditions and, in some instances, government policies that have led to a cut in the area under rice.

- In Asia, weather problems in October and November caused delays in planting and harvesting especially in Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. As a result, the 2000 paddy output in the region is expected to fall by about 12 million tonnes from the previous season, to 542 million tonnes. Despite such a reduction, most countries continued to face very low prices. As a result, some changes in policies have been announced. For instance, in India, the Government is considering selling rice from its bulging stocks at subsidized prices, for export by state trading agencies. Indonesia is planning to introduce a ban of private traders’ imports except during the lean period. At the same time, an increase in the minimum purchase price for unmilled rice is being considered. Once approved, the new rice policy is expected to take effect in January 2001.

- In Africa, the 2000 season is about to end with a small overall contraction, driven by the negative performance of the sector in Southern Africa. In particular, weather related problems caused rice output to drop in Tanzania, Madagascar and Mozambique, while civil war continued to affect negatively the sector in Sierra Leone. In Egypt, the largest rice producer in the region, a small increase in output is foreseen, following favourable growing conditions.

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, the 2000 rice season is virtually concluded and the 2001 season is well advanced. Low prices since 1999 have caused a contraction in planting and production in 2000, especially in Argentina. In Central America, a large expansion in the area should foster a substantial output increase in Nicaragua despite flood problems associated with hurricane “Keith”. Current indications for the 2001 season point to a further contraction in paddy production in the region, mainly reflecting another drop in Argentina where producers are anticipated to shift to more profitable crops.

- Among the developed countries, the United States is expected to record a sizeable drop in output during the current season as low prices have induced a cut in plantings. Similarly, flood in Italy contributed to an 11 percent decline in the 2000 rice production in the EC. After the contraction experienced during 2000, paddy output in the 2001 season should recover in Australia, based on current indications of planting and yields, with the expansion driven by favourable returns to rice producers.

- Weak import demand compared with last year and low prices have continued to feature the international rice market in the last months of 2000. At an estimated 22.5 million tonnes in milled equivalent, global rice trade in 2000 would be 2.4 million tonnes lower than in 1999, with the contraction resulting from a drop in the international demand following favourable crops in major importing countries. International rice trade in 2001 is currently put at 24.2 million tonnes, 1.7 million tonnes more than the level currently anticipated for 2000.

- The arrival of new rice crops to the market will likely continue to exacerbate the downward pressure on the prices of rice. The FAO Export Price Index for Rice (1982-84=100) which has been falling since the beginning of the year improved slightly by one point since the last report to an average of 95 points in November, still one of the lowest levels in several years. Assuming normal weather worldwide and no unforeseen demand or supply shocks, an immediate price recovery is not anticipated. Moreover, world prices of rice could slide further should India go ahead with its plan to boost exports by drawing down stocks. Implementation of the import restrictions announced by Indonesia would affect international prices in the same direction.

- FAO’S forecast for world rice inventories for the marketing season ending in 2000 remains unchanged from the last report at 62 million tonnes, about 5 million tonnes above their opening level. Closing stocks for the marketing seasons ending in 2001 are expected to fall by about 11 percent from their opening levels to 55.3 million tonnes. China (Mainland) should account for the largest stock drawdown in line with the Government policy. Rice inventories in India could also decline should the government implement the proposed subsidised rice export plan.
1. PRODUCTION

THE 2000 WORLD PADDY PRODUCTION FORECAST CONTINUES TO POINT TO A DECLINE

Global rice production for 2000 is anticipated to decline by 14 million tonnes to 594 million tonnes, 2.3 percent less than the last season. The contraction is attributed to low prices of rice relative to the other crops, bad weather and, in some cases, to government policies that have led to a reduction in rice plantings. In the Northern Hemisphere, harvesting of the 2000 main season paddy crops is proceeding in a number of countries. Flood waters have receded in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Viet-Nam and the process of assessing flood damage to agricultural infrastructure and rice supply is underway. In the Southern Hemisphere and the equatorial belt, the 2000 paddy season is virtually complete and the 2001 season is well advanced. Current indications for that season point to a reduction in planted area and yields, which should result in a fall in paddy output for the second consecutive year.

1.1 ASIA

Regional Paddy Output is Expected to Fall due to Lower Area and Unfavourable weather

The recent floods, caused by typhoons, heavy rains and cyclones resulted in unfavourable growing conditions for paddy in a number of countries in Asia. In addition, there are reports of food shortages in a few countries of the region emanating from drought conditions. The adverse weather conditions also caused delays in planting and harvesting in some of the affected countries. As a result, the 2000 regional rice production is expected to contract by about 11.7 million tonnes from the previous season to 542 million tonnes.

Northern Hemisphere

In China (Mainland), gathering of the single-rice crop is almost finished while harvesting of the late double-rice crop is near completion. Expectations for the 2000 paddy production point to a drop of about 10 million tonnes from last year, to 189 million tonnes, much of which was induced by the Government’s policy of reducing production of lower quality varieties. In the Philippines, harvesting of the main season rice crop is well advanced. Despite the adverse weather conditions earlier this year and more recently in October, the country is expected to gather 12.2 million tonnes of paddy, 230 000 tonnes more than last year, reflecting an increased use of good quality seeds and fertilisers. In addition, floods in traditional maize areas induced farmers to switch to rice production. In Thailand, harvesting of the main rice crop is in progress. Severe rains in the last decade of October reportedly delayed rice maturation and harvest in the central parts of the country. In addition, over 600 000 hectares of rice in the north-eastern parts of the country were negatively affected by floods during August and September. At the same time, due to the good weather conditions in other regions, this season output forecast has been raised by 200 000 tonnes from the last report to 23.5 million tonnes. Planting of the second-season crop is scheduled to begin in January.
In Japan, where the 2000 paddy season is generally concluded, rice output has been revised upward by about 90,000 tonnes from the last report to 11.8 million tonnes. At that level, production would be up by 3 percent from the 1999 season, despite a 2 percent reduction in planted area, as favourable growing conditions boosted yields. In the Republic of Korea, harvesting of the 2000 paddy crop has been concluded. The country benefited from good growing conditions that prevailed especially during the critical maturation period. Accordingly, the Government has adjusted the 2000 rice production estimate upward by about 300,000 tonnes to 7.2 million tonnes, close to the previous year’s output. It is reported that the shorter stem rice varieties, which are more resistant to typhoon damage, are becoming increasingly popular among farmers. In the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the 2000 paddy season was affected by weather-related problems, as has been the case during much of the late-1990s. The paddy season was characterised by insufficient rainfall during the critical months of June and July, delaying planting and, eventually, forcing farmers to switch to other crops. According to the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Mission to the country in October, the 2000 paddy production is estimated at 1.69 million tonnes, 27 percent below the previous year. Consequently, the country continues to depend heavily on international food assistance to meet its basic food needs. In Viet-Nam, harvesting of the 10th Month crop, which had been delayed by floods in some parts of the country, is underway both in the Red and Mekong Deltas. A shrinkage in the 10th Month paddy output is expected as farmers gradually switched to the shorter term rice varieties, shrimp farming and other crops. However, FAO’s anticipates the 2000 rice output at 32.6 million tonnes, up by about 600,000 tonnes from the last report and similar to the 1999 outcome. This assumes a good winter-spring crop, whose planting is just getting started. In Cambodia, the recovery from the worst flood in 70 years will take time and many areas are still under water. Latest estimates indicate that about 374,000 hectares of rice land were damaged or destroyed by the floods and, accordingly, the 2000 rice season has been revised downward to 3.6 million tonnes, 400,000 tonnes down from the previous report. At that level, the output would be 600,000 tonnes off the Government’s target of 4.2 million tonnes. The Government of Laos estimated that over 42,000 hectares of paddy were totally destroyed by floods. As a result, the Government expects the 2000 rice production to be slightly lower than the original anticipation of 2.2 million tonnes. Although India received ample monsoon rains, the distribution was very uneven and drought conditions prevailed in some south-western regions. Some states, in particular Gujarat, Rajasthan, central Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are facing drought problems for the second year in a row. While the extent of the drought-related damage to rice crops is not yet known, planting of the Rabi (summer) crop has been delayed in some parts of the country. Harvesting of the main Kharif rice crop is in progress and output is forecast to drop by about 3.5 million tonnes from the previous year to 110 million tonnes. The overall 2000 total paddy production is expected at 130 million tonnes, down by 2.5 million tonnes from the previous year. The Government announced in October that it would pay the full procurement price of 5100 rupees per tonne (US $112 per tonne) for common varieties and 5400 rupees per tonne (US $118.7 per tonne) for Grade A varieties to the Punjab farmers, a rice-surplus state, although their paddy did not meet the minimum quality standards set for procurement. In order to do this, the maximum content of damaged grain was raised to 8 percent and the moisture to 18 percent compared to the preset levels of 3 percent and 16 percent, respectively. This treatment is expected to be extended to rice procurement in other rice-surplus states such as Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, a
development which could further exacerbate the current large stock and storage cost problems facing the Government. In order to reduce inventories, the Government has reportedly authorised sales of rice from its bulging stocks at subsidised prices, for export by state trading agencies. In Bangladesh, harvesting of the 2000 Aus crop is complete and gathering of the main season Aman crop is nearing completion. Output from the Aman crop is expected to reach 15.8 million tonnes, slightly above 1999. The country’s third “Boro” rice crop, is being planted and, assuming favourable growing conditions, Bangladesh’s overall paddy output for the 2000 paddy season could reach 35 million tonnes, up by 1 million tonnes from the previous season. In Afghanistan, a very serious food crisis has arisen. Civil conflict combined with two consecutive years of drought have disrupted the country’s agricultural activities, including rice production. The 2000 rice output is forecast at 156 000 tonnes, 124 000 tonnes less than last year. In view of the precarious food supply situation, the Government has requested food relief assistance from the international community.

Southern Hemisphere

In Indonesia, planting of the 2001 main paddy season is well advanced and is expected to be concluded in January of next year. The 2000 paddy output forecast remains unchanged at 52 million tonnes, about 1 million tonnes more than last year. As part of a general change to the country’s rice policy, there is a proposal to increase the minimum purchasing price for dry unmilled rice from Rp. 1 400 per kilogram (about US$ 149 per tonne) to Rp. 1 500 per kilogram (about US$ 160 per tonne). Once approved, the changes would take effect from January 2001. In Malaysia, planting of the 2001 main season-crop is in progress. The Government recently announced various food policy changes aimed at promoting sustainable production and reducing import dependency. In Sri Lanka planting of the 2001 main season Maha crop is underway with the arrival of the north east monsoon. The estimate for the 2000 paddy output has been revised upward to 2.8 million tonnes, up by 200 000 tonnes from the previous forecast but 90 000 tonnes less than the previous year.

1.2 AFRICA

Harvesting of the 2000 Crop is Well Underway in Many Countries and Rice Output Is Expected to Drop

Northern Africa – In Egypt, harvesting of the 2000 rice crop is about to end and paddy output is anticipated to reach 5.9 million tonnes, 300 000 tonnes less than previously reported. Paddy production would still be slightly above last year’s outcome, mostly reflecting higher yields due to favourable growing conditions.

Western Africa – Harvesting of the 2000 rice crop is progressing well in the region and the season in general benefited from good growing conditions despite a few isolated weather-related problems and civil conflicts. Rice harvest prospects point to an above-average production in some countries. In Nigeria, the largest rice producer in the region, paddy production is expected to be close to last year’s production of 3.4 million. The 2000 paddy output in is forecast at about
1 million tonnes, up 64 000 tonnes from last year, reflecting a slight expansion in planted area. In Mali, a slight increases in planted area and average yields could help boost rice output by about 10 percent to 895 000 tonnes in 2000. By contrast, a reduced rice harvest is anticipated in Sierra Leone, as persistent civil war problems continues to disrupt agricultural activities and food supply in the country.

**Eastern Africa** - Paddy harvest is complete in Tanzania, the major rice producing country in the sub-region. Output for the year has been revised downward to 615 000 tonnes following reports of drought last October. However, at this level, the country’s paddy output will still be above the level of the 1999 season, reflecting an increase in plantings and a slight recovery in yields.

**Southern Africa** - Planting of the 2001 paddy crop is well advanced in the region. Average to above average precipitation from the second half of October improved soil moisture and benefited early-planted rice crop in the northern and central parts of Madagascar. The 2000 paddy season was affected by serious weather-related problems and paddy output plummetted by as much as 15 percent to about 2.2 million tonnes. The 2000 paddy season in Mozambique was also badly influenced by cyclones and tropical storms during the first part of the year. As a result, rice output is estimated to have dropped by 25 percent to 140 000 tonnes in 2000. Significant rehabilitation efforts have been made, which have reportedly helped restore part of the country’s agricultural infrastructure recently damaged by floods.
1.3 LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Harvesting in Central America Nears the End as Planting in Many South American countries Continues

In Central America, harvesting of the 2000 paddy season is underway. Normal rains have resumed after the long July dry spell (canicula) in some countries, while others have been affected by heavy rains and floods caused by hurricane ‘Keith’. In El Salvador, rains arrived too late in the season to prevent damage from drought. As a result, a smaller paddy output is anticipated. In Haiti harvesting of the 2000 second paddy crop is about to end. The outlook for this year’s irrigated paddy output, which forms the bulk of the country’s production, is anticipated at 90 000 tonnes, 11 000 tonnes less than the previous year, as a lack of irrigation water led to reduced planting and yields. Although Nicaragua was hit by the canicula and subsequently by hurricane ‘Keith’, which brought heavy rains and floods, the country’s 2000 paddy output is forecast to expand by 14 percent to some 300 000 tonnes, reflecting a 15 percent increase in cultivation. In South America, planting of the 2001 paddy season is well advanced in most countries but there are indications that rice area could decline further, resulting in lower output for the second consecutive season. The contraction in the area should be caused mainly by the low rice prices, relative to the other competing crops, that have prevailed since 1999. In Brazil, the largest rice producer in the region, available information suggests that both rice area and output could contract by about 4 percent. The reduction in rice area could be as high as 33 percent in Argentina and 20 percent in Uruguay. In Bolivia, the other major rice producing country in the sub-region, the decline should be smaller, at 7 percent.

1.4 OTHER REGIONS

Harvesting in the US and the EC is Complete. Planting of the 2001 Season Crop Is Advancing in Australia

Oceania – In Australia, planting of the 2001 season is in progress and there are indications that area could expand by 20 percent and production by 27 percent to 1.4 million tonnes. It is not yet clear whether the floods that hit New South Wales, the main rice producing state, had any major impact on the crops.

North America – In the United States, harvesting of the 2000 paddy crop is virtually complete in all rice producing States. Output is estimated at 8.7 million tonnes, a 7 percent drop from last year, as low rice prices have encouraged a switch to other more lucrative crops, resulting in a 12 percent contraction in area.

Europe – In the EC, harvesting of the 2000 paddy crop has come to an end. In Italy, flood problems in October affected the 2000 rice output which is currently estimated at 1.2 million tonnes, 197 000 tonnes less than the previous year. The paddy harvest is also complete in Spain, where the
2000 rice production is estimated to have fallen to 750,000 tonnes, down 95,000 tonnes from last year. Overall, the anticipated output for the EC has been revised downward by about 200,000 tonnes to 2.4 million tonnes in 2000 from the previous report. The EC rice producers, led by Italy and Spain, continue to manifest their opposition to the EC’s plan to scrap the rice intervention system. According to the rice farmers, the plan does not protect farm incomes and could spark a flood of imports from countries outside the Community.

2. INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN RICE

International Rice Trade in 2000 to Fall by 10 Percent but Improvements are Expected in 2001

Global rice trade in 2000 is forecast at 22.5 million tonnes, up by about 100,000 tonnes from the previous report but 2.4 million tonnes lower than in 1999. At this level the international rice trade would be 19 percent below the record established in 1998. For 2001, rice trade is anticipated to increase by 7.6 percent from the 2000 forecast to 24.2 million. The bulk of the expected increase would originate from greater sales to Indonesia, the Philippines, China (Mainland) and some countries that have experienced weather-related problems.

The latest revisions to the 2000 rice trade denote mainly adjustments in the trade expectations for a few countries. On the import side, estimates for Afghanistan were adjusted upward by 30,000 tonnes to 150,000 tonnes as the country needs to boost imports to make up for the current domestic food shortage. Japan’s imports were also revised upward by 50,000 tonnes to 750,000 tonnes based on imports to-date. The projected imports by the Philippines were increased by 100,000 tonnes from the last report to 800,000 tonnes, based on commitments made by the Government so far. The expected purchase volume by Indonesia, the world’s leading rice importer, is unchanged from that reported previously at 2.2 million tonnes. The Government is reportedly considering to change its rice policy with the aim of stepping up protection to its domestic producers. The proposed policy, which is planned to be implemented in 2001, calls for a ban of private imports except during the lean period of October through January of each year. During those months, private imports could be subject to a higher import tariff. Currently, this is fixed at Rp 430 per kilogram (about US$ 45 per tonne). Anticipated shipments in 2000 to the other major importers, Brazil and Bangladesh, were left unchanged from the last report at 700,000 tonnes and 500,000 tonnes, respectively. At those levels, both countries would be importing considerably less than in 1999, owing to good harvest in the last couple of years.

Export forecasts for Viet-Nam were reduced by 200,000 tonnes from the last report to 3.6 million tonnes. The weak demand on the international market, the severe weather-related problems and increasing competition from smaller regional rice producers have negatively affected the country’s share of exports in the international low-quality rice market. Expected sales by the United States were revised downward by 100,000 tonnes to 2.8 million tonnes, despite the recent allocations of rice under the food aid and credit programmes, as demand from the country’s traditional customers remained weak. By contrast, forecast exports by China were raised by
300 000 tonnes to 3.4 million tonnes. At this level, the country’s share of the international market would reach 15 percent, up from 11 percent in 1999. Despite some export activities recorded during October and November, shipments in 2000 from Thailand are likely to remain at the previously forecast level, which also corresponds to the Government’s target, of 6 million tonnes. 

continues to have difficulty to compete with rice from other regions. However, this could change drastically, should state agencies be authorized to export rice at subsidised prices. The country is currently forecast to export 1.3 million tonnes of rice in 2000, unchanged from the last report but 50 percent down from 1999.

Forecast for world rice trade in 2001 has been raised by 1 million tonnes from the previous report to 24.2 million tonnes. If realised, the trade would be about 7.6 percent higher than the volume estimated for 2000. Indonesia would again be the leading importer with purchases expected to reach 2.6 million tonnes. However, the country’s actual purchases in 2001 will largely be influenced by the new rice policy provisions being discussed. Imports by China (Mainland), the Philippines and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea are expected to rise by about 200 000 tonnes each. Other notable importers that could buy more next year include Brazil, Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Cote d’Ivoire and Nigeria. From the export side, Thailand, Viet-Nam, India and China are anticipated to sell more rice in 2001 while exports from the United States could remain close to the volume anticipated for 2000.
3. INTERNATIONAL PRICES

After a Short Respite, the Prices of Rice Continued to Fall

The combination of relatively weak international demand, global rice surplus and the arrival of new rice supplies to the market continues to exacerbate the downward pressure on international prices of rice. As a result, the FAO Export Price Index for Rice (1982-84=100) fell by one point to an average of 95 points in November, still one of the lowest levels in several years. This came after the Index experienced its first increase of the year, a one point gain in October, when prices temporarily reacted to the weather problems in Vietnam and Thailand.

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<tr>
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Source: FAO

N.B.-The FAO indices are calculated using the Laspeyre formula. In this table, two groups representing “High” and “Low” quality rice are shown.

- The Rice Export Price Index is calculated for 15 export prices.
However, contrary to the general trend, prices for the higher quality rice increased between September and November. Over the period, the price of the high quality Thai 100% B improved by US$ 8 per tonne to US$ 190 per tonne following new sales contracts. In addition, prices were supported by expectations of increased purchases by the Islamic Republic of Iran and stock hoarding by farmers with a hope of better prices through Government intervention. In the United States, prices of the high quality US No.2/4 % long grain rice continued to recover to an average of US$ 294 per tonne, up by US$ 26 per tonne from September, but down US$ 3 from the same period last year. The improvement in the US prices is attributed to the recent inclusion of rice in the international food aid and credit programmes.

By contrast, over the September to November period, the price of many of the lower quality rice varieties fell further. The price for the low quality fully broken rice (Thai A1 Super) dropped by US$ 12 per tonne over the period to US$ 130 per tonne, the lowest level since February 1987.

For the rest of the year, prices are not expected to change drastically from the currently reported levels, barring any unforeseen demand or supply shocks. However, prices could get some upward support during the first few months of 2001 when more information regarding the expected
production drop in the Southern Hemisphere becomes available. However, should India’s plan to boost rice exports by drawing from its stocks succeed, world prices might continue to slide also next year. The ban of private imports for most of the year announced by Indonesia would depress them further.

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<th>1 month ago</th>
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1/ Please note that the series has changed as prices for Pakistan’s Irri 15-20% are no longer available.

Source: International rice brokers, rice merchants and national sources.

... not available
n.a. not applicable

4. STOCKS

Global Rice Inventories Could Drop by Over 10 Percent in 2001

FAO’s latest forecast for world rice stocks for the marketing seasons ending in 2000 remains unchanged from the last report at 62 million tonnes, about 5 million tonnes above their opening levels. However, world rice inventories at the end of the marketing seasons ending in 2001 are expected to fall by about 11 percent from their opening levels to 55.3 million tonnes, since utilisation is anticipated to outpace production. China (Mainland) should account for the largest stock draw-down in line with the Government policy to reduce stocks and the associated financial burden. Rice inventories could also drop in India should the Government implement the proposed subsidised rice export plan. A slight drawn-down in rice stocks is also expected in the United States.