



GIEWS Country Brief

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Favourable start of 2021 main season and crops in good conditions
- Near-average aggregate food crop production estimated in 2020
- Cereal import requirements in 2020/21 marketing year estimated close to five-year average

Favourable start of 2021 main season and crops in good conditions

Sowing of the 2021 main season food crops, which account for about 90 percent of the annual output, was completed in June and harvesting is expected to start at the end of August. Weather conditions have been overall favourable since April, facilitating planting activities and resulting in above-average vegetation conditions as of mid-June (ASI map).

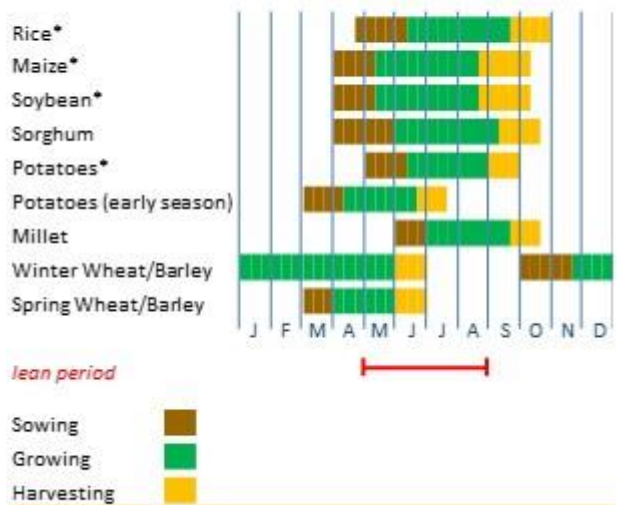
Near-average aggregate food crop production estimated in 2020

Harvesting of the 2020 main season crops was completed in September/October 2020 and, based on official data, the output is estimated close to the five-year average at 5.1 million tonnes (cereal equivalent and paddy terms). A 5 percent increase compared with average levels in the area harvested partially offset yield losses caused by excessive soil moisture and waterlogging, following the passage of several typhoons and heavy rainfall from early August to mid-September 2020. The key producing provinces of South and North Hwanghae, South Pyongan as well as South and North Hamgyong, collectively known as the country's "Cereal Bowl", registered yields well below the five-year average. Rice production is estimated at 2.1 million tonnes (in paddy terms), 10 percent below the five-year average. The output of the main season maize crop is estimated at 2.2 million tonnes, close to the five-year average, while the production of soybeans slightly above-average at 230 000 tonnes. The 2020/21 minor early season winter/spring crops, including wheat, barley and potatoes, have been recently harvested and the output is officially estimated at an above-average level of 466 000 tonnes.

Overall, the 2020/21 aggregate food crop production is forecast at a near-average level of 5.6 million tonnes.

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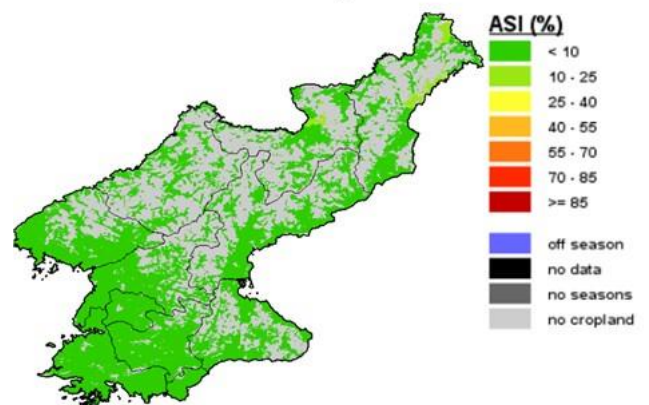
Crop Calendar (*major foodcrop)



Source: FAO/GIEWS, FAO/WFP CFSAM 2008.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea - Agricultural Stress Index (ASI)

from start of season 1 to dekad 2, June 2021



Source: FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation System.

Cereal import requirements in 2020/21 estimated close to five-year average

The total domestic utilization of cereals, soybeans and potatoes structurally exceeds the domestic availability and the total import requirements (in cereal equivalent) are estimated at a near-average level of 1.1 million tonnes for the 2020/21 marketing year (November/October). With commercial imports officially planned at 205 000 tonnes, the uncovered food gap is estimated at about 860 000 tonnes, equivalent to approximately 2.3 months of food use. If this gap is not adequately covered through commercial imports and/or food aid, households could experience a harsh lean period from August to October, when the 2021 main season crops will be available for consumption.

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Cereal Production

	2015-2019 average	2020 forecast	change 2020/21 from average
	000 tonnes		percent
MAIN SEASON	5 216	5 095	-2.3
Paddy	2 351	2 113	-10.1
Maize	2 225	2 214	-0.5
Other cereals	171	161	-5.8
Potatoes	244	377	54.5
Soybeans	225	230	2.2
EARLY SEASON	396	466	17.7
Wheat & Barley	96	146	52.1
Potatoes	300	320	6.7
Total	5 612	5 561	-0.9

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: CBS 2020/2021 early season crop mission forecast