



## **SPECIAL RATIONS ISSUED FOR 10/10 PARTY ANNIVERSARY**

On October 7, Pyongyang announced that special rations would be distributed to the people of North Korea in celebration of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Workers' Party (October 10). Daily NK reported that an informant in North Hamgyeong Province had said, "This morning the chairman of my people's unit went door to door announcing that on the 8th and 9th there would be food distribution for the holiday, so we could expect to get the food allocated to us from the state-run store on these two days." When residents asked why the rations were being dispersed, the local people's unit chairman explained that the regime was doling out "liquor and cooking oil because a decree has been handed down from above telling us to deliver [holiday rations] commemorating the Party Delegates' Conference and the founding day of the Party." It was also explained that the event was "twice as delightful" since the Party anniversary and the re-election as Secretary General of Kim Jong Il fell at the same time, and that since Kim Jong Un was named as the successor, the regime was seeking to create a celebratory atmosphere.

Until the 1990s, authorities provided rations along with many forms of propaganda on the birthdays of Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung, on New Year's Day, the anniversary of the founding of the Party, and other significant holidays. After the 'arduous march' of the mid 1990s, however, it became difficult for the state to provide for the people, and the rations slowly disappeared. Holiday rations became the responsibility of local committees, so that residents of some districts would receive corn while another might receive potatoes. Outside of Pyongyang, however, it became difficult to find anyone still receiving alcohol, meat or cooking oil, with these goods reserved only for certain government workers or those in special industries.



When rations are handed out, goods and food are distributed to local stores, at which they are packaged for distribution to each household. Rations are generally distributed one to two days prior to a holiday, although sometimes not actually arriving until the holiday. On a holiday, a line can be seen in front of every state store as families gather to receive their handout.

On February 16, North Korea celebrated both Kim Jong Il's birthday and the lunar New Year with a four-day holiday, but even then most residents received no alcohol. Soldiers and government workers above a certain level might receive one bottle of liquor and a kilogram of meat. This year, the autumn harvest festival Chuseok was advertised as a four-day celebration of the 'biggest national holiday', but this was mere propaganda. With many regions suffering from devastating floods, local authorities were told to handle holiday arrangements on their own.

Daily NK reported that local authorities were told to be ready to clean out their desks if they were unable to provide holiday rations, so at least cooking oil and alcohol rations were expected, but residents were still unsure how much they might receive. In previous years, people each received 100g of oil, but now they would be happy to receive even half that much. A family of four could at least expect about one bottle of liquor and half a bottle (200g) of cooking oil.

Radio Free Asia reported that at least four orders had been passed down for state-run stores and restaurants to distribute holiday rations, and that on September 30, an order was issued to provide one bottle of alcohol, 500g of oil, one kilogram of pork, toothbrushes and toothpaste, soap, laundry detergent, underwear, socks, and a pair of shoes to each household, and for state-run restaurants to provide liquor and food at state-set prices (cheaper than prices in local markets) for ten days.