

## **CELEBRATORY RATIONS ISSUED FOR KIM JONG IL'S BIRTHDAY**

It has been reported that 2-3 day's worth of special rations were issued to parts of North Pyongan and South Hwanghae provinces, including to those North Koreans working in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, to mark the February 16 birthday of Kim Jong Il.

For families with more than four members, 2 kilograms of rice and 2 kilograms of noodles, with corn making up the rest of the rations. Smaller families received a kilogram each of rice and noodles, in addition to corn. Recently, rations have been in very short supply, even on farms, so North Koreans have been very much looking forward to these special rations.

Since last year, the number of guards stationed at farms was increased sharply, along with increasingly more intrusive house searches, as the theft and consumption of food by those living on the farms was banned. Over the past few years, as the state failed to provide steady rations to the farmers and families on the agricultural plots, these farmers began stealing rice from the cooperative farms as a means to maintain their lifestyles.

However, in November and December of last year, inspections were carried out in cities and districts as grain management on farms was strengthened, leading to an increase in theft of foodstuffs. Those caught stealing would be dragged in front of labor authorities and often sentenced to confinement.

The districts receiving these special rations were all specifically chosen by North Korean

authorities. Hweryong City, in North Hamgyong Province, is the hometown of Kim Jong Il's mother, Kim Jong Sook, while the Samjiyon district, in Yanggang Province, is where Kim Jong Il claims to have been born. Kaesong was thought to have been chosen in order to propagandize the rations to the outside world.

One source reported that in 2006, an anti-socialist group emerged in the city of Hweryong, and that leaders of citizen groups were appealing, "It is difficult to live in our mother (Kim Jong Sook)'s hometown...Let's all flee to China," and since Kim Jong Il became aware of the uprising, special rations have been given on holidays and other special occasions. That said, currently, Kim Jong Il's practice of gift giving continues to be aimed at the leading class in the North, with city and district Party secretaries also receiving gifts, along with central Party authorities. Gifts are also provided to state heroes and model laborers.