

## **DPRK BANS GOODS FROM MARKETS**

According to the North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity group ([www.nkis.kr](http://www.nkis.kr)), North Korean authorities released a list of goods banned from markets across the country on March 15. The ban goes into effect on April 1. The official list is said to include almost all wares currently being sold in the North's markets, effectively banning market operations and practically outlawing private trade.

It was also reported that notices posted in the Hyesan and Wei Yan markets, in Yanggang Province, included not only a list of over 200 goods banned from sale, but also dictated the price at which allowable goods were to be sold.

Any goods from the United States or South Korea are specifically banned, as well as goods manufactured through inter-Korean projects such as joint ventures or from within the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Medicines and other supplies provided by the United Nations or other international organizations are also banned. Prices on foodstuffs were set, with Chinese millet to be sold at 1800 won, foxtail millet at 1700 won, and adzuki beans at 2100 won. Prices for privately harvested grains, eggs, tofu, poultry, pork, soybean oil, and other goods were also announced.

This measure appears to be in line with ongoing efforts underway since last year to close the North's markets. While its effectiveness remains to be seen, if authorities succeed in shutting down markets, it could further exacerbate the North's critical food shortages. In October of last year, North Korean authorities from regional commerce management offices throughout the country announced a ban on the sale of Chinese and South Korean goods, industrial products, and rice, corn and other grains, but this policy was never enforced.