



## Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200532 “Nutrition Support for Children and Women” in DPR Korea

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The two-year project started in July 2013 and it will continue until June 2015 as a continuum of the previous PRRO 200114. The project assists about 2.4 million people, mainly children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in 87 counties of DPRK with 205,800mt of mixed food. In partnership with the DPRK Government, WFP supports 14 factories which produce fortified biscuits and Super Cereal for children and women.

The Government provides the facility, staff and utilities while WFP provides raw food material, micronutrient mix, packaging material, spare parts for the machinery and technical support<sup>1</sup>.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- WFP has faced serious shortfall of commodities disrupting direct distribution of oil and pulses to young children and women. WFP food distributions were between 33 and 40 percent compared to the planned distribution quantities during the quarter.
- WFP supported biscuit factories that produce fortified biscuits for young children at WFP's operations, were suspended from mid-May until mid-August. With current resources, biscuit production will continue until around the end of 2013 when the biscuit micronutrient premix stocks are exhausted.
- WFP's current and forecasted food stocks will last to produce Super Cereal until March 2014 distribution with limited oil and pulse distributions to children's institutions and women.
- Without contributions, further reduction in ration size and/or food baskets are expected which will reduce the nutritional impact on the beneficiaries. WFP may also reduce beneficiary numbers and/or categories.
- In July, 500,000 primary school children were cut from WFP food assistance and no Food for Community Development activities took place to address emergency preparedness or response in particular by protecting agricultural land and rehabilitating flood-affected infrastructures took place due to limited resources.
- WFP conducted 599 field visits during the quarter. The visits confirmed the delivery of WFP food at project sites and utilization. During the visits, it was revealed that beneficiaries very much appreciated the food they received but more food variety was consistently requested.
- Household consumption of protein remains a concern as only one-quarter of the visited households consumed some kind of protein foods at least once per week. This level of protein consumption will not meet nutritional requirements of the target beneficiaries. WFP was able to distribute pulses to selected child institutions and women only in September.
- Child chronic malnutrition and poor dietary diversity among children, women and households remain the main concerns. Super Cereal, biscuits, pulses and oil are much needed to improve the local diet to supplement the poor dietary intake among the target groups.
- The government reported increased production of early crops; 180 percent compared to 2012 production. Main harvest findings released in the 2013 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) report indicated that overall crop production in 2013/14 is estimated to increase by about 5 percent.
- WFP conducted end-of-project review for PRRO 200114<sup>2</sup> in July to assess the project outcomes. The review analyzed the M&E data and therefore the report supplements these quarterly M&E bulletins. The report will be ready in December- 2013.

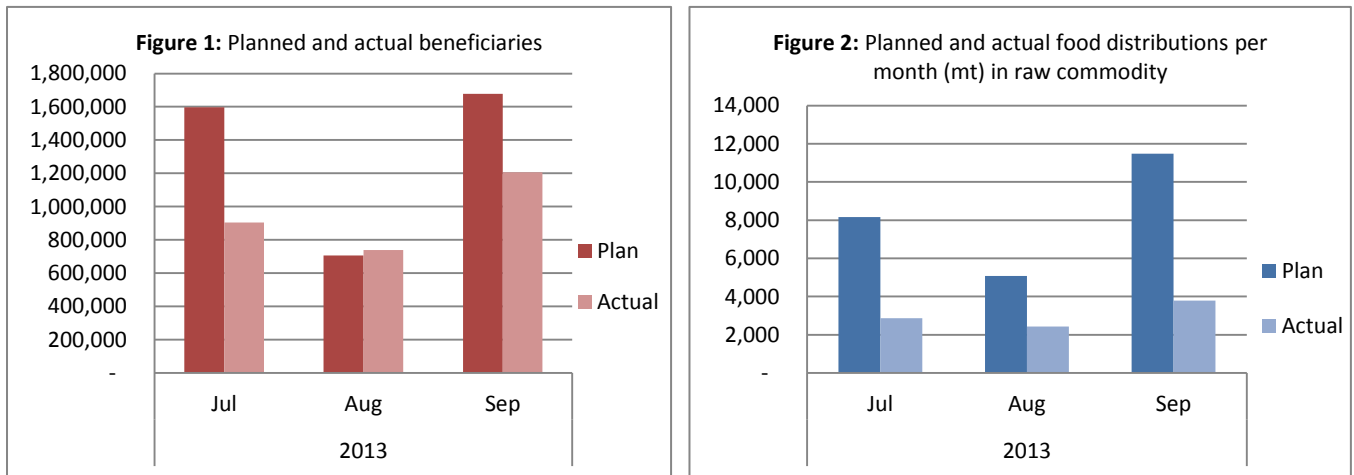
<sup>1</sup> WFP organized a workshop for the factory staff and managers in May

<sup>2</sup> Focus on the project duration from July 2012 to June 2013. PRRO 20014 was implemented during those months in 85 counties.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

From July to September 2013, WFP reached a monthly average of 1.33 million beneficiaries with total of 10,489 mt of food<sup>3</sup> during the quarter (Figures 1 & 2). The beneficiary caseload represents 72 percent of the eligible beneficiary caseload but the provided food rations were only 35 percent of the total entitlements. The food items missed were mostly biscuits (in July), oil and pulses.

WFP released 457mt maize to 38,076 flood-affected people in August.



Note: The reduced beneficiary caseload in August was due to school breaks at kindergartens and primary schools.

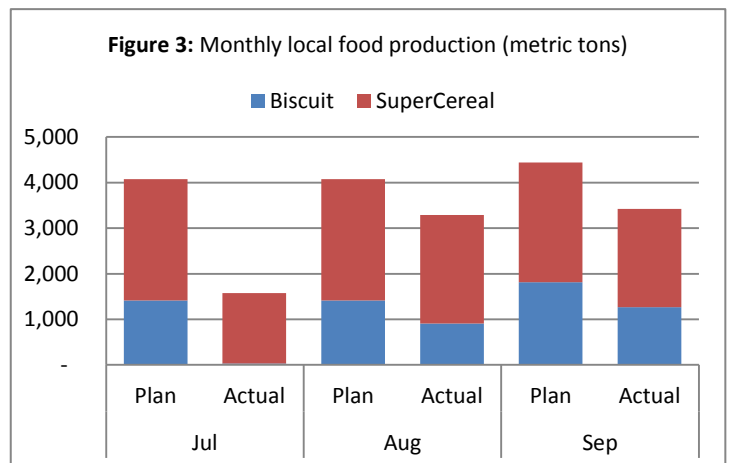
### LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

In a partnership with the DPRK Government and WFP, 14 factories<sup>4</sup> produced altogether 8,294mt of fortified food during the reporting period; on average 2,765mt per month. Of the total production, 27 percent was fortified biscuits and 73 percent Super Cereal. As shown in Figure 3, production was below the production target due to resourcing shortfalls.

In view of the foreseen shortfalls in food pipeline, WFP took a difficult decision to suspend biscuit production effective from mid-May— except the factories in the Northern parts as these areas are traditionally more food insecure. Biscuit production re-started in August and will continue until the available vitamin-mineral premix stock for biscuit production is exhausted in December. New premix will only be ordered when more contributions are available as the lead time to receive the order is up to 6 months and WFP does not want to take a risk

to stock premix if the food to produce biscuits is not available. If the current level of resourcing shortfalls continue to prevail, the production priority will always be Super Cereal as it is provided to the most vulnerable (young children and pregnant/breastfeeding women), whereas biscuits are provided mainly for primary school children.

As a result of the suspension, biscuit production in July was only 30 mt against the 1,417 mt planned production. The currently available food stocks will allow WFP to produce Super Cereal until March 2014 distribution.



<sup>3</sup> Either as direct distribution or provision of raw food commodities to factories for local food production purpose.

<sup>4</sup> 7 biscuit and 7 Super Cereal factories

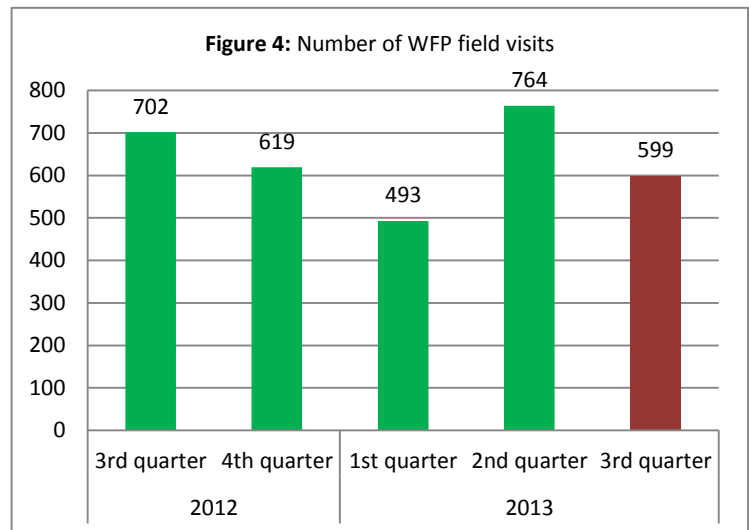
## MONITORING FINDINGS

### MONITORING STATISTICS/SUMMARY

As per the Letter of Understanding between WFP and the Government of DPRK, WFP international staff<sup>5</sup> undertakes regular monitoring visits to project implementation sites (institutions, households, Food for Community Development project sites), warehouses, factories and distribution sites. WFP conducted an end-of-project review and a joint WFP-FAO CFSAM during the reporting period. During this quarter, WFP teams covered each of the operational provinces for the 599 random field visits<sup>6</sup> (Figure 4). WFP teams conducted on average 200 visits per month.

The number of monitoring visits during this quarter reduced slightly compared with the same quarter in 2012. This was mostly linked with lower availability of monitoring staff. During the quarter, WFP DPRK operation received food aid monitoring support from WFP Cambodia Country Office but the manpower was lower than before – negatively affecting WFP’s ability to monitor.

However, the conducted monitoring visits and the assessments ensured the staff that WFP food reaches the right places and intended beneficiaries.



### CHILD INSTITUTIONS

During the quarter, WFP staff visited 192 child institutions including nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, baby homes, child centers and boarding schools.

Overall, the attendance rate at day-institutions remained at 96 percent, without any significant differences between institution types.

As mentioned in the highlights sections, some 500,000 primary school children did not receive biscuits during the quarter due to the suspension of biscuit production until mid-August. In July, primary school children only in the Northern provinces received biscuits. At the same time, children at nurseries received only 20-35 percent of the monthly food rations. For example, no oil or pulses were distributed to child institutions in July and August but in September, orphanages in the five North Eastern provinces received these items and nursery children in three South Western provinces received some vegetable oil.

Children like the cooked meals provided at the institutions and WFP staff witnessed consumption in the institutions which were visited during lunch break. During the visits, the main food item requested by the institution staff was oil as it would make food easier to cook and make it tastier and more palatable for the children. They are hopeful that more food items will be provided to diversify children’s diet and to ensure better nutrition outcomes. The institutions have received cereal and vegetables (kimchi) from the state.

<sup>5</sup> Including Korean speaking international Food Aid Monitors

<sup>6</sup> Two planned monitoring trips were cancelled during the quarter because of flooding or late inclusion of a new operational county in the project.

**Table 1:** Planned food rations for children (g/person/day)

Food item	Resident institution			Day institution		
	Baby home (0-5yrs)	Child centre (5-6yrs)	Boarding school (7-16yrs)	Nursery (6-mo-4 yrs)	Kindergarten (5-6yrs)	Primary school (7-10yrs)
<b>Super Cereal RMB</b>	100					
<b>Super Cereal CSM/CMB</b>	100	100	100	100	100	
<b>Biscuit</b>	30	60	60	30	60	60
<b>Pulses</b>	50	50	50	50	50	
<b>Oil</b>	25	25	25	25	25	
<b>Cereal</b>	50	150	200	50	150	

RMB: rice-milk-blend, CSM: corn-soya-milk blend, CMB: cereal-milk-blend

## PEDIATRIC HOSPITALS/WARDS

During the reporting period, WFP staff visited 116 pediatric hospitals or wards. Health Officials reported that the main illnesses<sup>7</sup> among the children were diarrhea (93 percent), respiratory infections (71 percent), and indigestion (48 percent). Thirty percent of patients were children under 2 years, 38 percent between 2 and 5 years while the remaining 32 percent were children between 5 and 16 years. Similarly to the previous quarter, slightly more boys were admitted than girls (54 vs 46 percent, respectively).

Monitoring findings suggest that 13 percent of the children under 5 years of age admitted in the visited hospitals were acutely malnourished; a reduction from the suggested 19 percent the same time a year ago. The found prevalence is only for sick children and not representative for the general population and the definition of malnutrition may not always be consistent, but the figure can indicate still a positive improvement in child nutrition.

The WFP provided food is cooked for daily on-site meals for the pediatric in-patients. Due to the low in-country food stocks during the quarter, pulses and oil were available for the in-patients only during September when WFP provided two months' supply of these two food items in the five North Eastern provinces.

**Table 2:** Planned food rations for child patients in pediatric hospitals/wards (g/person/day)

Food item	In-patients (6mo-16yrs)
<b>Super Cereal RMB</b>	100
<b>Super Cereal CSM/CMB</b>	100
<b>Pulses</b>	50
<b>Oil</b>	25
<b>Cereal</b>	150

RMB: rice-milk-blend, CSM: corn-soya-milk blend, CMB: cereal-milk-blend

## PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN

Pregnant and breastfeeding women are entitled to receive mixed food (Super Cereal, pulses, and oil) from WFP from the second trimester of pregnancy until 6 months after childbirth, depending on the availability of commodities. On average, during the quarter, the pregnant and breastfeeding women were receiving only some 20-35 percent of the planned ration quantity. First time during this project, pregnant and breastfeeding women in North Hamgyong and Ryanggang provinces received pulses in September, but only half of their entitlements. Given the priority for Super Cereal production, all of the women received their Super Cereal rations in full.

WFP staff visited 116 households which had either a pregnant or breastfeeding woman benefiting from WFP's assistance during the quarter. In addition, another 105 households were visited in July as part of the PRRO 200114 review but this data & analysis will be included in a special report and not part of this report. During the field visits, it was revealed that the women were pleased to receive the WFP food and expressed the food having a positive impact on their own and their children's health and nutritional status. In the following part on household food security, the data is based on the monitored pregnant and breastfeeding women's households.

<sup>7</sup> Each visited hospital reported the main admission illnesses; percentages are based on the illnesses present at that moment. E.g. the 93 percent of children with diarrhea means that 93 percent of visited hospitals listed diarrhea being among the main illnesses; not 93 percent of the children having diarrhea.

## FOOD SECURITY

WFP staff visited 133 households and held 110 discussions with county officials during the quarter. Like during the past quarters, discussions with the visited households indicated that food security and nutrition situation has improved from last year, mostly due to Public Distribution System (PDS) ration and also due to WFP's food assistance.

The Government released data on 2013 early crop production was 372,100mt, of which 80 percent attributed to potatoes and remaining 20 percent was wheat and barley. It is a 180 percent increase compared to 2012 production level, but at the same time, it is 78 percent of the target production set by CFSAM 2012.

According to the government sources, The PDS rations remained at 390 grams per person per day in July but reduced slowly to 310 grams in September; similar to the year 2012 trend. The ration falls below the government target (573 grams/person/day). During the quarter the average PDS ration composition in the visited WFP operational counties contained some 42 percent maize, 27 percent rice, and the remaining 31 percent attributed to early crops (wheat, barley, potato).

### Household food consumption

A typical Korean diet consists of cereal, vegetables, and condiments (such as bean paste) which lacks both macro and micronutrients. During the quarter, all the households monitored<sup>8</sup> ate three meals per day but 26 percent did not consume any kind of protein source (meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses) a week before the visits. The proportion of households without any protein consumption is on increase since the last quarter, when 15 percent of monitored households consumed no protein during a week before the visit. On average animal-based protein and pulses were consumed 1.6 days and 1 days per week respectively. Oil, cereals and vegetables (kimchi) were consumed pretty much on a daily basis. WFP remains concerned about the worsening trend of quality food consumption as lack of sufficient consumption of protein will be a challenge to adequate growth of a baby/child. The CFSAM being fielded during September-October 2013 will assess more in depth about protein intake both at household and at child institution level to understand better the quantity and quality of protein rich foods consumed.

The 2012 National Nutrition Survey found poor dietary diversity among children 6-23 months and their mothers; only 26.5 percent of the children and half of their mothers consumed at least 4 food groups which is considered a nutritionally diverse diet.

Household food consumption is calculated based on the frequency and nutritional value of the food consumed by the households during the week preceding the interview visits. Based on their diet, households are categorized as having poor, borderline or acceptable consumption<sup>9</sup>.

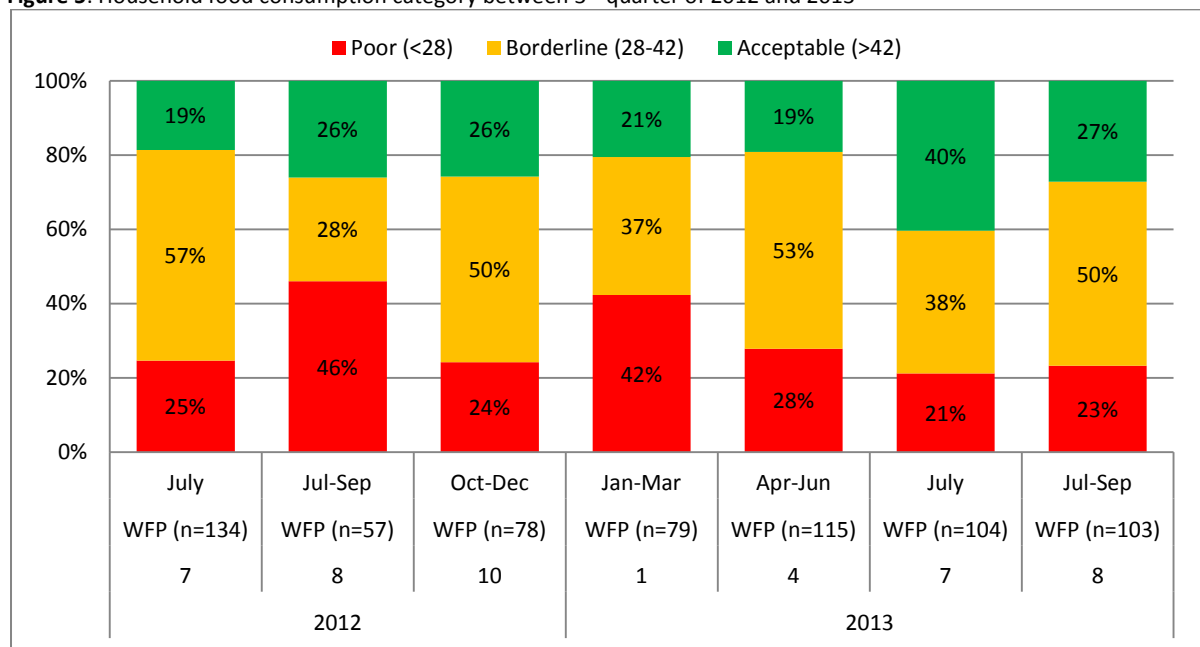
As shown in Figure 5, household food consumption has improved compared to a year ago but still almost three-quarters of the households fall in the borderline and poor consumption categories; shifting between the categories during the year. In the past year, food consumption dropped during the first months of the year but with the current improved levels in food consumption, the drop may be lower in 2014; all depends on the main harvest and availability of proteins for households. However, the situation remains fragile and considerable improvement in the percentage of households with acceptable consumption can only happen if frequency of protein consumption increases.

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<sup>8</sup> WFP monitored either pregnant or breastfeeding women's households

<sup>9</sup> Poor food consumption is likely to lack both macro and micronutrients needed for healthy and active life, borderline consumption may lack some nutrients while acceptable consumption should meet nutritional requirements fully.

**Figure 5:** Household food consumption category between 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2012 and 2013



## Coping strategies

Although the visited households reported consuming 3 meals per day as in previous quarters, 76 percent of the visited households during the quarter used some kind of coping strategies: mostly relying on support from others and eating cheaper, less preferred food. Only six percent were reducing meal serving sizes and only three percent had reduced the number of daily meals – and only rarely. Trend analysis indicate that relying on relatives remains somewhat similar levels (around 60 percent) throughout the year while reliance on less preferred/cheaper food trend is more volatile; mostly peaking in July and having minor peaks during random quarters.

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## CONTACTS

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