



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 through June 2015 as a continuum of the previous PRRO 200114. The project was designed to assist about 2.4 million people, mainly children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in 87 counties of DPRK with 205,800mt of mixed food. In partnership¹ with the DPRK Government, WFP supported 14 food production factories which produce fortified biscuits and Super Cereal for children and women.

Given the extent and continuation of the poor funding situation for the operation, a more systematic targeting and further prioritization of the existing resources was warranted. Therefore, DPRK Country Office has conducted a budget revision to realign both the beneficiary groups and food ration to meet the most vulnerable. This budget revision incorporates a reduction in the number of people to be assisted under the PRRO from 2.4 million to 1.8 million in 87 counties within 9 provinces for 2014-2015 with 137,238 mt of mixed food commodities. Five out of the seven biscuit factories were phased out from the project during the first half of 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS

- From 19 to 21 May 2014, Ms. Ertharin Cousin, WFP Executive Director visited the DPRK and held useful meetings and discussions with government officials. She visited the Rice Milk Blend/Corn Soya Milk (RMB/CSM) factory in Pyongyang and WFP beneficiaries at a baby home, nursery, city hospital pediatric ward and household in Pyongsong City of South Pyongan Province. She also met the UN Resident Coordinator and heads of UN Agencies in Pyongyang.
- During the second quarter of 2014, several donor missions including Swiss, Norwegian ambassadors, Head of Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and OCHA visited the WFP assisted areas. WFP country office took the ambassadors and diplomats of ASEAN countries in Pyongyang to Pyongyang RMB/CSM factory and child institutions and households in Sariwon City of North Hwanghae Province.
- Due to pipeline break and delayed arrival of dried skimmed milk (DSM), serious shortfall of commodities continued during the reporting period even for the Super Cereals production. As a result, only 18 percent of kindergarten children and 41 percent of pregnant and lactating women were provided with Super Cereals in June 2014. The overall beneficiary figure represents 54 percent of the eligible caseload but the distributed food rations were only 26 percent of the total entitlements during the quarter.
- Faced with constant resource limitations since the PRRO began in July 2013, WFP DPRK conducted a budget revision exercise in May 2014 and reduced the beneficiary caseload from June 2014. The shortfalls from July 2014 to June 2015 has been reduced to 67,000 mt, valued at US\$ 68 million.
- Under the budget revision, some 500,000 primary school students have been removed from the current project. Only 112,000 primary school students in the two northern most provinces of Ryanggang and North Hamgyong will continue to receive biscuits.
- In addition, 700,000 children from other child institutions will not receive biscuits and cereals under the revised budget allocation. They will continue to receive Super Cereal, pulses and vegetable oil, subject to availability.
- With the completion of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) training in the two remaining counties of Kosan and Sepho counties in April 2014, all seven WFP operational counties in Kangwon Province are now under the MAM pilot programme to treat children under five years. As of the reporting quarter, the MAM pilot supports 452 nurseries covering 3,229 children.
- 290.50 mt of wheat was distributed to Food for Community Development (FFCD) participants in Kusong, Kaesong, Songchon, Anju and Haeju Counties that carried out one FFCD activity each during the 1st quarter of 2014.
- Household consumption of protein remains a concern as the proportion of households not consuming any

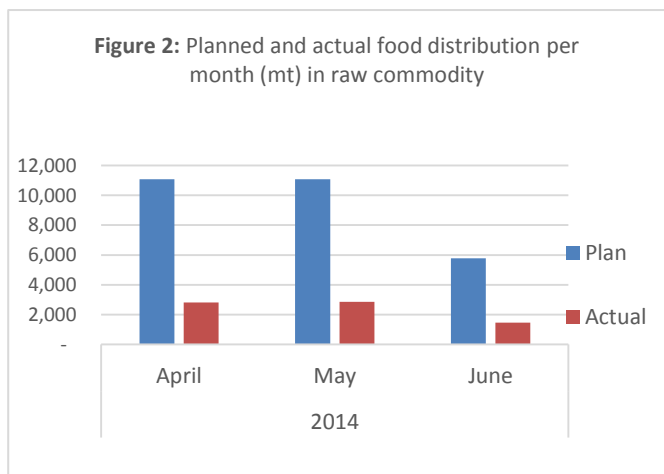
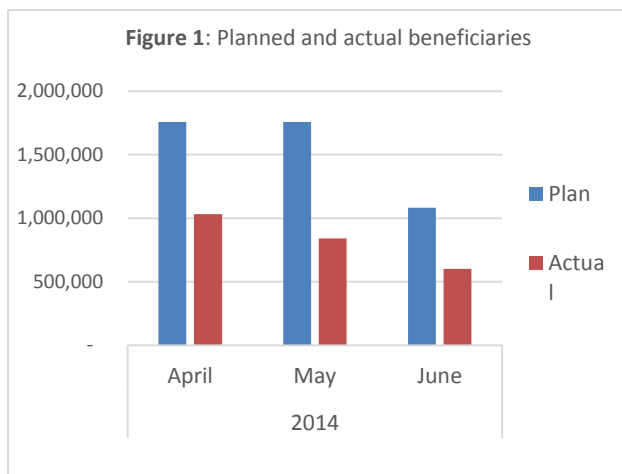
¹ The Government provides the facility, staff and utilities while WFP provides raw food material, micronutrient mix, packaging material, spare parts for the machinery and technical support.

kind of protein foods at least once during the week before the monitoring visit has further increased from 29 percent during the previous quarter to 42 during the current quarter. Although this level of protein consumption will have a negative impact on the nutritional status of the target beneficiaries, it must be noted that food consumption outcome reflects seasonal patterns and households are in a better situation during first harvesting of early crops and after the main harvest.

- Child chronic malnutrition and poor dietary diversity among children, women and households remains the main concern. Super Cereal, biscuits, pulses and oil are much needed to improve the local diet to supplement the poor dietary intake among the target groups.
- WFP conducted 745 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.
- Staff members from the DPRK CO participated in the Monitoring and Evaluation, Strategic Results Framework and Nutrition Workshop organized by the Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand, in April and May 2014.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

From April to June 2014, WFP reached a monthly average of slightly over 1 million beneficiaries with total of 2,520 mt of food², only 25 percent of the planned during the quarter (Figures 1 & 2). The beneficiary caseload represents 63 percent of the eligible beneficiary caseload.



June 2014 caseload was reduced due to realignment of beneficiaries as per budget revision exercise.

LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

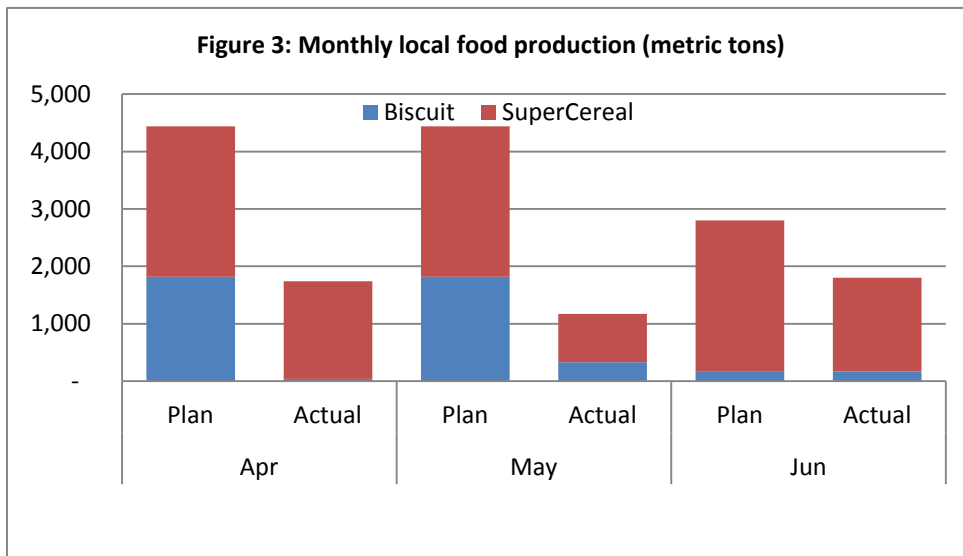
In a partnership with the DPRK Government and WFP, nine factories³ produced altogether 4,706 mt of fortified food during the quarter; on average 1,568 mt per month. Of the total production, 11 percent was fortified biscuits and 89 percent Super Cereal. As shown in Figure 3, production was only 35 percent of the production target due to resourcing shortfalls.

Biscuit production had been stopped in five out of the seven factories due to lack of resources. Two biscuit factories in the northern provinces (Ryanggang and North Hamgyong) are functioning with less production quota, only for the primary school children.

Production of Super Cereal was lower than planned due to pipeline break and delayed arrival of the Dried Skimmed Milk (DSM).

² Either as direct distribution or provision of raw food commodities to factories for local food production purpose.

³ 2 biscuit and 7 Super Cereal factories



The Arrival of DSM has been further delayed to August 2014. As a consequence, the production of Super Cereal was reduced significantly during the second quarter. The current available stocks will allow WFP to produce Super Cereal until December 2014 with major interruptions during the coming third quarter.

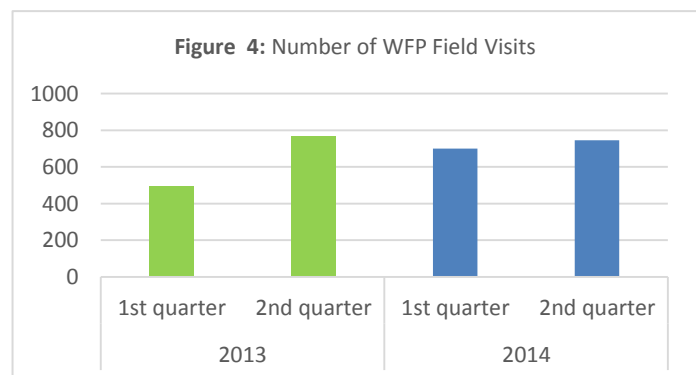
MONITORING FINDINGS

MONITORING STATISTICS/SUMMARY

As per the Letter of Understanding between WFP and the Government of DPRK, WFP international staff⁴ undertakes regular monitoring visits to project implementation sites (institutions, households, Food for Community Development project sites), warehouses, food production factories and distribution sites. During this quarter, WFP teams covered each of the operational provinces with almost 745

Randomly selected field visits⁵ (Figure 4). WFP teams conducted on average 248 visits per month.

The number of monitoring visits during this quarter decreased slightly compared with the same quarter in 2013. This was mainly due to low project resourcing status and therefore decreased number of monitoring visits. However, it is slightly higher than in the first quarter of 2014 because of better road access. The monitoring visits help to ensure that the WFP food reaches the right places and intended beneficiaries.



CHILD INSTITUTIONS

During the quarter, WFP staff visited almost 300 child institutions including nurseries, kindergartens, primary schools, baby homes, child centers and boarding schools. An additional 23 were visited for moderate acute malnutrition project monitoring.

⁴ Including Korean speaking international Food Aid Monitors

⁵ One planned FFCD monitoring visit was postponed from 5th to 23rd May due to Provincial level meetings.

Overall, the attendance rate at day-institutions remains above 96 percent, without any significant differences between institution types. WFP supported meals are highly appreciated by the children and the institution staff acknowledges the importance of the additional food on children's learning capacity and overall health status. During the visits taking place around the meal times, WFP monitoring staff witnessed food being consumed and/or cooked. Stock records and overall record keeping was also checked and in case minor corrections were required, those were raised during the visits.

Due to lack of resources, none of the below institutions received cereals or pulses during the second quarter of 2014.

Children at orphanages (baby homes, child center, and boarding school) are always prioritized for food assistance due to their vulnerability. WFP supported the institutions with Super Cereals at full rations for the quarter, biscuits for two months and oil for one month.

Children at nurseries received Super Cereal by 75 percent, 40 percent for oil and 25 percent for biscuits versus the planned quantities for the quarter. In June 2014, only North Hamgyong and Ryonggang provinces received biscuits for nursery children.

Children in kindergartens: Due to lack of resources, 48 percent the children received Super Cereals with half ration. Twenty one percent of the children received biscuits during the quarter with reduced rations. In May 2014, only children from North Hamgyong and Ryonggang received biscuits. No biscuits were distributed to kindergartens in June 2014.

Primary school children received only 18 percent of their entitlements for biscuits for the second quarter. In April 2014, biscuits were provided only for 14 days (instead of 26 days) to only 39 percent of the eligible school children. In May 2014, only two percent of the children received full ration of biscuits. Only North Hamgyang and Ryonggang provinces received biscuits for primary school children in June 2014. The main reason was lack of resources and priority of assistance given to younger children and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

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

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

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

Cereals removed from the food basket from June onwards as per budget revision exercise.

TREATMENT OF MODERATE ACUTE MALNUTRITION AT NURSERIES

WFP started a pilot programme to treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among 6-59 months children in the WFP assisted nurseries in Kangwon Province in October 2013. The health staff measure children's height and weight every month and those identified as being moderately malnourished, receive 100 grams per day ration of Super Cereal as a take-home ration on a monthly basis until they have gained enough weight and are no longer acutely malnourished. The children receive their regular WFP supported meals at nurseries that consist another 100 grams of Super Cereal in addition to other available food items.

WFP has carried out MAM implementation trainings in Thongchon, Chonnae, Wonsan, Munchon and Anbyon counties during the earlier two quarters. With similar trainings completed by WFP in Kosan and Sepho counties in April 2014, all seven WFP operational counties in Kangwon Province are now under the MAM pilot. As of the second quarter of 2014, the MAM pilot programme supports 452 nurseries with a total caseload of 3,229 children. This represents 44 percent increase in the case load compared to the first quarter mainly as a result of

the additional inclusion of the two counties. Some 23 MAM monitoring visits were conducted during the quarter and the findings show that the pilot implementation is progressing as planned with greater awareness and improved screening within the various nurseries.

Preliminary outcome analysis shows that the international sphere standards on nutrition programming is showing very promising results that indicates 92 percent cure rate, 6 percent default rate and no death and low non-response case.

PEDIATRIC HOSPITALS/WARDS

During the quarter, WFP staff visited around 109 pediatric hospitals or wards. Health Officials reported that the main illnesses⁶ among the children were respiratory infections (82 percent), diarrhea (79 percent), and indigestion (45 percent); very typical findings for the summer months. Quite similar to the previous quarters, 28 percent of patients were children under 2 years, 36 percent between 2 and 5 years while the remaining 36 percent were children between 5 and 16 years; without any differences between boy and girl admissions.

Monitoring findings suggest that 20 percent of the children under 5 years of age admitted in the visited hospitals were acutely malnourished. The reported 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 stable nutrition situation among young and sick children.

The WFP provided food is prepared for the daily on-site meals for the pediatric in-patients. With the limited food stocks in the country, no cereal and pulses were distributed however, the supply of Super Cereal was based on the planned rations during the quarter and oil for 31 days in May 2014.

⁶ Each visited hospital reported the main admission illnesses; percentages are based on the illnesses present at that moment. E.g. the 72 percent of children with diarrhea means that 72 percent of visited hospitals listed diarrhea being among the main illnesses; not 72 percent of the children having diarrhea.

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

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

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

Cereals removed from the food basket from June onwards as per budget revision exercise.

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. Due to late arrival of DSM for Super Cereal production, only 41 percent of women received Super Cereal in June 2014.

WFP staff visits to a household with a pregnant or breastfeeding woman benefiting from WFP's assistance during the quarter confirmed that the women were pleased to receive the WFP food and expressed that the food was 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.

FOOD SECURITY

WFP staff visited over 140 households and held some 116 discussions with county officials during the quarter as part of the regular monitoring. Like during the past quarters, discussions with the visited households indicated that food security and nutrition situation has improved from last year. This observed improvement could be a result of the Public Distribution System (PDS) ration and WFP's food assistance.

According to the government sources, the average PDS rations remained at 420 grams per person per day in April 2014 and then it was reduced to 410 grams per person per day in May and June 2014. Compared to the previous quarters, the ration was on average 20 grams lower during this quarter and remained far below the government target of 573 grams per person per day. During the quarter, the average PDS ration composition in the visited WFP operational counties consisted mostly of different rations of maize and rice.

Household food consumption

A typical Korean diet consists of cereal, vegetables, and condiments (such as bean paste) which lacks both macro and micronutrients. In line with the previous quarters, all the households monitored⁷ consumed three meals per day but 39 percent did not consume any kind of protein source (meat, fish, eggs, pulses) a week before the visits. Compared to the past three quarters, the proportion of household's not including protein in their diet has increased. On average animal-based protein and pulses were each consumed 1.1 days per week and the finding has been somewhat stable throughout the quarters, except during the fourth quarter of 2013 when the monitoring findings showed an increased pulse consumption frequency at an average 3 days per week. This could be the result of the WFP pulse distributions carried out during that period. Oil, cereals and vegetables (kimchi) were consumed pretty much on a daily basis.

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 consumption⁸.

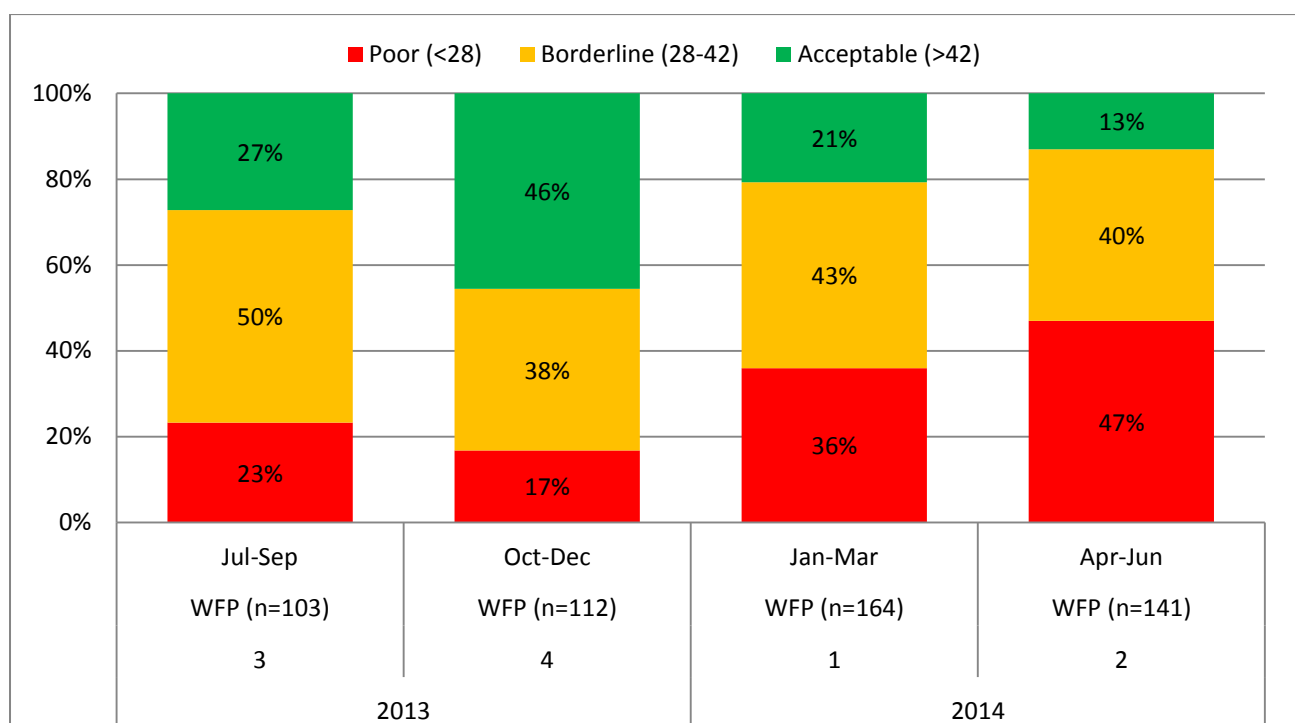
⁷ WFP monitored either pregnant or breastfeeding women's households

⁸ 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.

As shown in Figure 5, household food consumption during this quarter has decreased compared to the findings during previous quarters. With seasonal worsening trend during the first months of this year, there are now more households with poor food consumption. Overall, 87 percent fall in the borderline and poor consumption categories. The increased proportion of households not consuming protein foods during the quarter is likely to explain the poor situation now compared to 2013. The drop in acceptable food consumption from 46 percent during the fourth quarter of 2013, to 21 percent and 13 percent during the first and second quarters of 2014 respectively, also reflects seasonal patterns and availability.

As mentioned also in the past reports, households tend to shift between the consumption categories during the time of the year with the best situation during first harvesting of early crops in August and after the main harvest in October. The reduced soya bean harvest in 2013/2014 has also put more pressure on the already fragile food consumption, especially for protein foods.

Figure 5: Household food consumption category between 3rd quarter of 2013 and 2nd quarter of 2014



Coping strategies

Although the visited households reported consuming 3 meals per day as in previous quarters, 80 percent of the visited households also used some kind of coping strategies: mostly relying on support from others and eating cheaper less preferred food. The proportion of households using coping strategies has increased by 35 percent compared to the previous quarter. One explanation could be due to food shortfalls during the lean season and also as a result of the dry spell reported during the spring this year.

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