

DPRK TAKES MEASURES TO RESTRICT MARKET TRADING

North Korean authorities appear to have taken some action on their recent decision to strengthen market restriction policies.

According to information weaned from statements made by contacts within North Korea, the DPRK cabinet passed a measure to turn the North's markets into '10-day Markets', allowing them to open only on the 1st, 11th, and 21st day of each month beginning in 2009.

This information came from a lecture meeting for North Korean authorities, but it appears that workers in the Market Management Office have also been telling average citizens about similar measures since November. Some North Korean residents believe this is an effort to close general markets and convert them into farmers' markets from next year.

There are some that expect strong opposition from North Korean residents that will make the likelihood of effective enforcement slim. There was much talk at the beginning of this year, as well, of transforming general markets into 10-day markets or farmers' markets, but ultimately, such measures could not be enforced. Some believe that if current general markets are transformed into farmers' markets, rioting could ensue.

As most goods circulating in general markets are in some way tied to the authorities, there is some doubt as to whether these authorities would abandon their personal profits in order to crack down on market trading. It has been reported that as of yet, there have been no significant shifts in the North's major regional markets, and they are open daily and running

smoothly.

Since November 10, there have also been rumors that all personal trade would be banned, but it appears that there has been no actual enforcement of this measure, either.