



DPRK-PRC TRADE UP 26.7 PERCENT

North Korean trade with China has jumped 26.7 percent during the first eight months of the year, with the bulk of its imports made up of crude oil, and its largest export being coal. Despite the increasingly severe food shortages in the North, food imports from China were actually down 7.5 percent, while on the other hand, fertilizer imports shot up by 162 percent.

The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) looked into the Chinese government's import and export figures and determined that North Korean exports to China during the first eight months of the year were worth 650,000 USD, 20.6% more than during the same period last year, while DPRK imported 1.345 billion USD-worth of goods (30% increase), for trade worth a total of 1.995 billion USD, 26.7 percent more than 2009.

“Mineral fuel and mineral oil” topped the list of North Korean imports (321,000 USD), with crude oil (229,000 USD) and oil (63,000 USD) making up 90.7 percent of imported goods. However, while crude imports were 53 percent more expensive, the amount of oil imported only rose by 2.3 percent; the sharp increase in expenditure was due to climbing international oil prices. The second- and third-largest imports were listed as “nuclear reactor, boiler, and machinery” (127,000 USD) and “electromagnetic machinery, sound and video equipment” (106,000 USD). Other imports included cars and car parts, steel and steel goods, plastic and plastic goods, artificial filament, fertilizer, and grain. A KOTRA official stated that while “nuclear reactor” was listed among the goods imported by the North, there is no way to verify the Chinese statistics.

North Korea's grain import expenditures increased by five percent, to 34,000 USD, but overall



grain imports fell 7.5 percent, to 102,000 tons, due to increased costs. More specifically, rice import expenditures were up 8.4 percent to 16.6 million USD, but the amount of rice imported fell by six percent, to 38,400 tons. Corn expenditures dropped by one percent to 16.3 million USD while the amount imported fell by ten percent, to 62,000 tons. The cost of barley imports grew 190 percent, to 353,000 USD, with the amount of barley brought into the country up 89 percent to 1,011 tons. 277,000 tons of fertilizer were imported, 162 percent more than last year, at a cost of 40 million USD, 85 percent more than 2009. Almost all of the fertilizer was nitrogenous.

North Korea's exports to China were made up largely of mining and fisheries. Coal topped the list (191,000 USD), although the amount sent across the border was 31 percent less than last year. Iron ore was second, and was not only down by 34 percent, it brought in 134 percent less than 2009, as it was worth only 111 million USD. Textiles and accessories worth 81 million USD, steel worth 64 million USD, and mollusks worth 32 million USD were also sent to China.