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Report Name: Grain and Feed Update

Country: Korea - Republic of

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Report Category: Grain and Feed

Prepared By: Yoona Jeon

Approved By: Shoshana Griffith

Report Highlights:

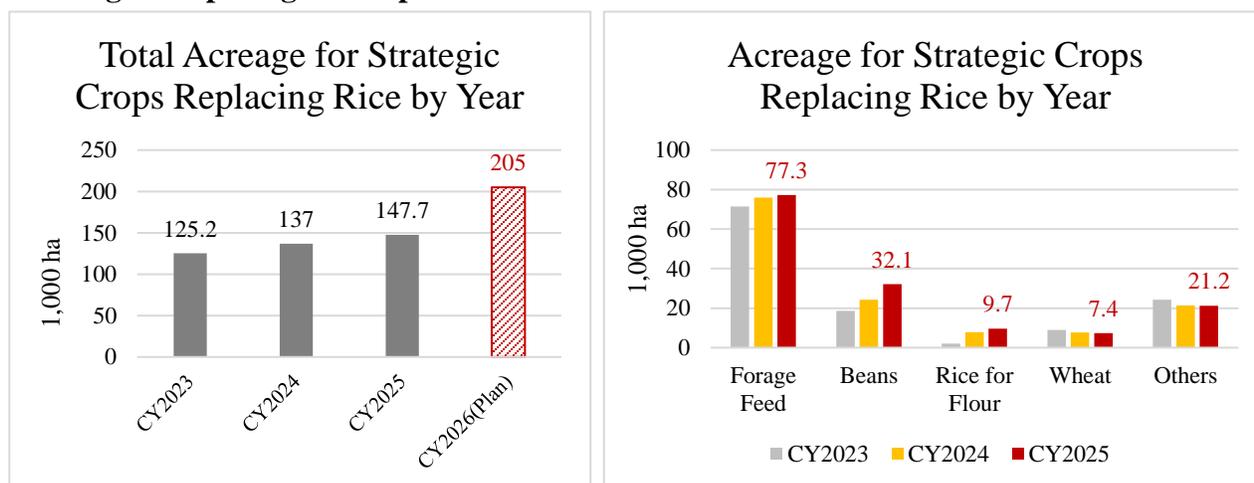
The Korean government's crop diversification policies made progress mitigating rice oversupply in calendar year (CY) 2025. These efforts aimed to substitute rice acreage with other crops and will expand further in CY 2026. Although table rice consumption continues to decline in favor of wheat-based bakery products and noodles, rice consumption for food processing jumped nearly 7 percent from CY 2024 to CY 2025, reflecting consumer preferences for convenience foods and record K-Food exports. Domestic rice prices rose steeply in 2025, and remained at historic highs even through the new crop harvest. Nonetheless, auctions of imported U.S. table rice remain suspended as of January 2026, meaning that for more than two years, U.S. rice has been absent from consumer-facing marketing channels in Korea.

Rice

Rice Production

Milled rice production for marketing year (MY) 2025/26 is projected to remain steady at 3.5 million metric tons (MMT), consistent with the December 2025 [Grain and Feed Update](#). The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) continues to focus on diversifying rice production to prevent rice oversupply as table rice consumption continues to decline in Korea. The Ministry reported that strategic crop direct payments for rice acreage substitution reached a record high in calendar year (CY) 2025, covering 147,700 hectares – an 8-percent increase over the previous year. Forage feed, primarily produced during the winter, represents 52 percent of the total area, followed by beans, rice for flour, and wheat. The Ministry also announced plans to expand the strategic crop area to 205,000 hectares and introduced a new category of rice for supply stabilization. The new rice category is intended for processing, but MAFRA will have discretion to convert it to table rice if necessary to manage supply.

Figure 1
Strategic Crop Program Expansion



Source: MAFRA press release

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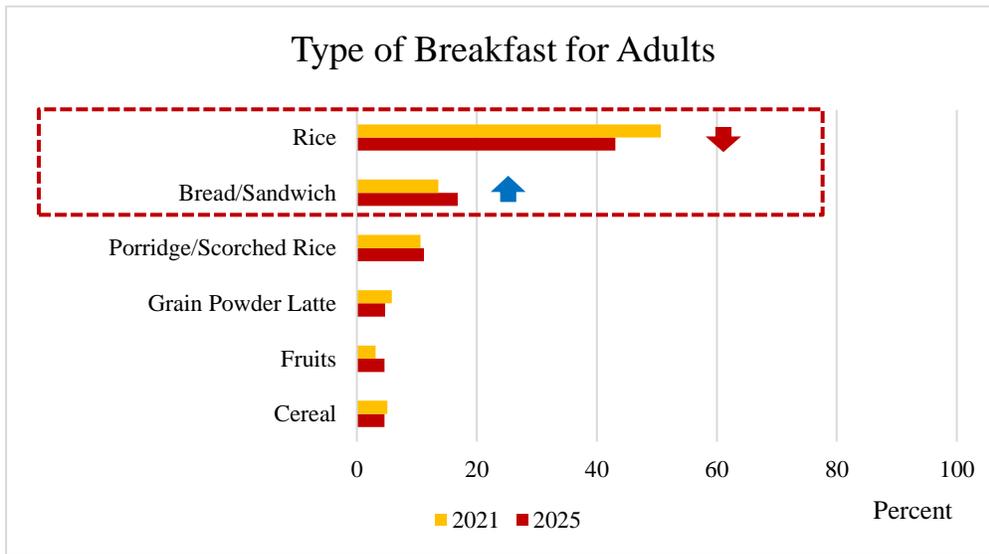
Several local media outlets reported that MAFRA will enact an Act on Food Security in the first half of 2026, supported by a dedicated task force established on December 22, 2025. The Act aims to provide a stable, long-term legislative framework for food security and will include measures to increase the national self-sufficiency rate. Notably, the legislation would broaden the definition of food security beyond grain self-sufficiency to include vegetables, fruits, and livestock. The long-term self-sufficiency target will likely increase from the current goal of 55.5 percent by 2027.

Rice Consumption

The Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI) recently published its annual consumer behavior survey, which included responses from 3,237 households with individuals aged 13 to 79. The December 2025 survey found a continued shift away from traditional rice-based breakfasts

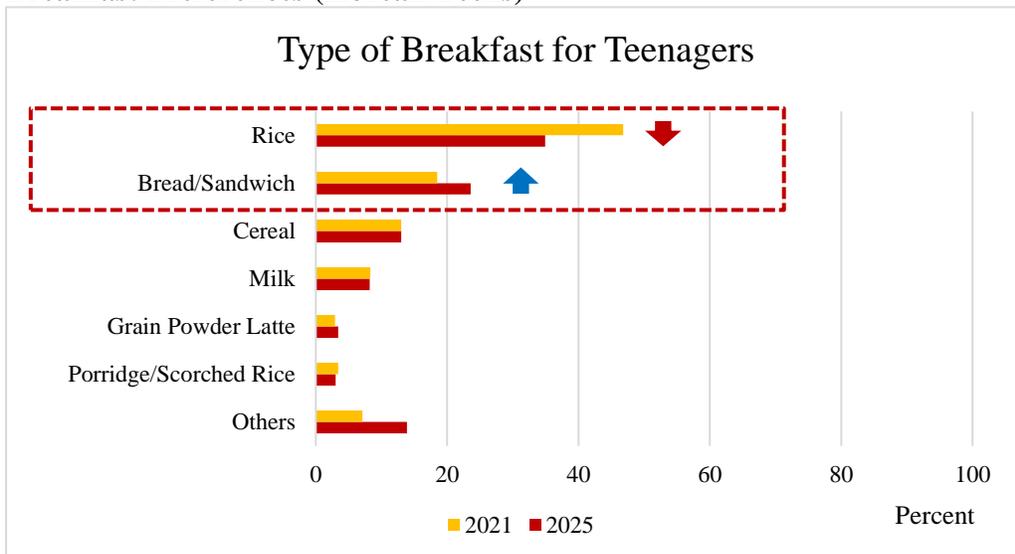
among both adults and teenagers, with bread and sandwiches increasingly replacing rice. Respondents indicated an intention to further reduce rice consumption in the coming year, citing a preference for more convenient meal options, such as home meal replacements, to save preparation time. Survey participants also noted that they would consider increasing rice consumption if it were shown to support weight management and blood sugar control. However, most respondents did not currently associate rice with these health benefits, instead valuing rice for its taste and digestibility.

Figure 2
Breakfast Preferences (Korean Adults)



Source: Consumer Behavior Survey Result 2025 by Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI)

Figure 3
Breakfast Preferences (Korean Teens)



Source: Consumer Behavior Survey Result 2025 by Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI)

Analysis by KREI noted evolving patterns of rice consumption, with a shift toward more convenient eating habits anticipated in CY 2026. Traditionally, Korean meals feature a bowl of rice accompanied by several side dishes, but consumers are transitioning to simpler formats. Foods like noodles, bread, fruit, and salads – once considered snacks between meals – are increasingly replacing traditional rice-based meals.

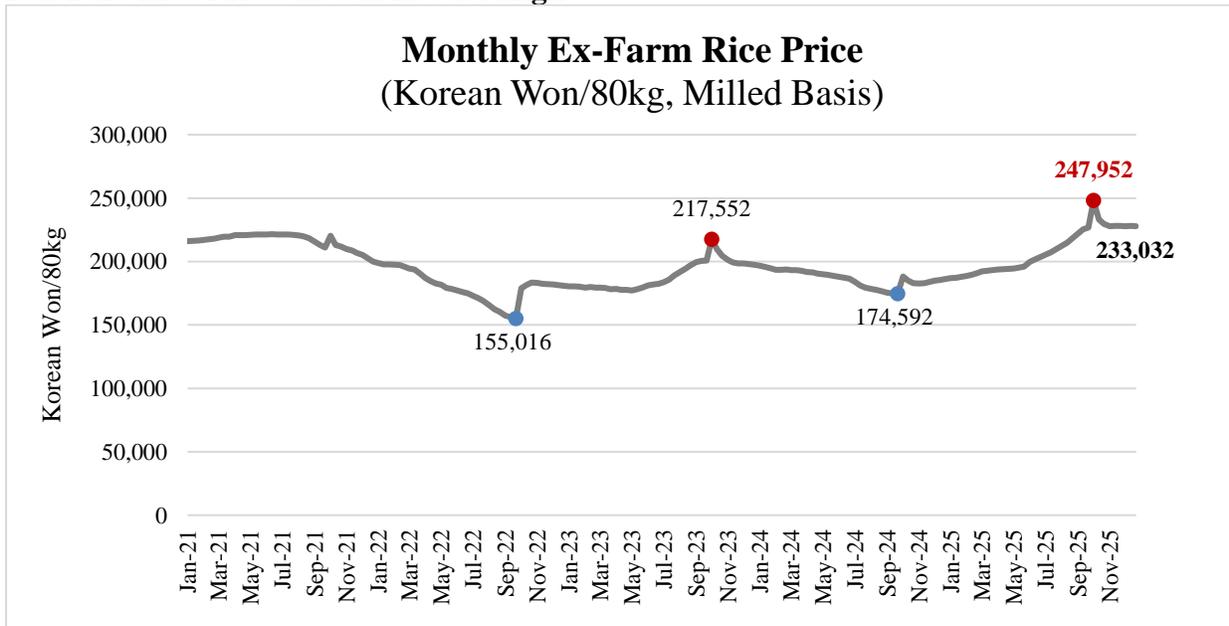
Post Seoul has revised MY 2025/26 rice consumption up slightly compared to the previous estimate, driven by significant growth in the rice processing sector, which offsets declining direct food use. In January 2026, the Ministry of Data and Statistics (MODS) reported that rice consumption in the processing sector rose to 932,000 MT in CY 2025, up from 873,000 MT the previous year. While demand for rice used in processing continues to support overall consumption, rice consumption for direct food use is expected to decline further due to shifts toward more westernized diets and higher rates of skipping breakfast.

For MY 2024/25, FAS/Seoul has revised consumption downward by 200,000 MT, reflecting reduced rice for feed use in preliminary data provided by the Korea Feed Association (KFA).

Price

According to MODS, domestic rice prices during the 2025 harvest season (October to December) reached a historic high. This record price is attributed to lower beginning stocks in MY 2025/26 and the Korean government’s proactive measures to boost the rice price through isolating surplus volumes of the new crop beyond estimated consumption.

Figure 4
Fall 2025 Rice Prices Reach Record High



Source: The Ministry of Data and Statistics (MODS)

Table 1
Price in Harvest Season per Crop Year (From October to December)

Price in Harvest Season per Crop Year (Korean Won per 80kg)					
Crop Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	YoY Change (Percent)
Average Price	181,819	202,797	184,700	230,940	+25

Source: The Ministry of Data and Statistics (MODS)

Rice Trade

Imports

In accordance with WTO commitments, Korea imports 408,700 MT of rice annually on a Most Favored Nation (MFN) basis at the current duty level of 5 percent under the TRQ regime implemented in 2015. At the end of 2019, Korea allocated 388,700 MT of country specific quota (CSQ) within the TRQ for five trading partners (the United States, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Australia) following negotiations to resolve a WTO dispute on rice tariffication. The remaining 20,000 MT is allocated on an MFN basis and is also available to the five countries with CSQs. Tariffs outside the quota remain prohibitively high at 513 percent. (Note: The FAS/Seoul import forecast of 430,000 MT in MY 2025/26 reflects the delivery schedules of rice tendered through the WTO TRQ scheme and does not imply any change to TRQ volumes.)

As of December 2025, Korea has fully utilized its 2024 WTO rice import quotas. Of the total 408,700 MT (milled basis) allocated, 132,304 MT were designated for U.S. table rice and brown rice. The Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Corporation (aT) exclusively manages distribution of imported table rice through weekly auctions. However, auctions for U.S. table rice have been suspended since November 2023, when the Ministry halted distribution at the start of the local rice harvest season. Currently, only auctions for imported table rice from Thailand, under the 2024 TRQ, are ongoing.

According to rice tender results published by aT, approximately 90,000 MT of U.S. table rice from the 2022 crop year remain in storage, awaiting the resumption of weekly auctions. Additionally, 40,000 MT of U.S. table rice is scheduled to arrive in Korea between February and September 2026 under the 2025 WTO CSQ allocation. This situation raises concerns about increasing stock burdens and the extended absence of U.S. table rice in domestic marketing channels.

Table 2**Status of aT Auctions for Table Rice under the 2024 TRQ**

Status of aT Selling Auctions for Table Rice under 2024 TRQ						
(Metric Tons, Milled Basis, as of January 7, 2026)						
Commodity (Period of Auctions)	USDA Grade	Total Table Rice TRQ	Auctioned Off	Balance	Auctioned Off (%)	Auctioned Price ^{1/}
U.S. Medium Grain	#1	40,000	0	40,000	0	N/A
Thai Long Grain (Nov. 25, 2024~)	#1	2,900	2,787	113	96	2,718
	#1 ^{a/}	200	200	0	100	4,971
Vietnamese Long Grain (Aug. 26, 2024, ~ Apr. 11, 2025)	#1	900	900	0	100	2,344
Total	-	44,000	3,887	40,113	9	N/A

Source: Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Corporation (aT)

1/ Weighted average in Korean Won per Kg

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Table 3**Status of aT Auctions for Table Rice under the 2023 TRQ**

Status of aT Selling Auctions for Table Rice under 2023 TRQ						
(Metric Tons, Milled Basis, as of January 7, 2026)						
Commodity (Period of Auctions)	USDA Grade	Total Table Rice TRQ	Auctioned Off	Balance	Auctioned Off (%)	Auctioned Price ^{1/}
U.S. Medium Grain	#1	40,000	0	40,000	0	
Thai Long Grain (Sep. 11, 2023, ~ Aug. 26, 2024)	#1	3,100	3,100	0	100	2,230
Vietnamese Long Grain (Jun. 3, 2024, ~ Aug. 19, 2024)	#1	900	900	0	100	1,848
Total	-	44,000	4,000	40,000	9	N/A

Source: Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Corporation (aT)

1/ Weighted average in Korean Won per Kg

Table 4
Status of aT Auctions for Table Rice under the 2022 TRQ

Status of aT Selling Auctions for Table Rice under 2022 TRQ						
(Metric Tons, Milled Basis, as of January 7, 2026)						
Commodity (Period of Auctions)	USDA Grade	Total Table Rice TRQ	Auctioned Off	Balance	Auctioned Off (%)	Auctioned Price ^{1/}
U.S. Medium Grain	#1	10,000	0	10,000	0	-
Thai Long Grain (Jul. 4, 2022, ~ May 15, 2023)	#1	3,000	2,903	97	97	1,416
Vietnamese Long Grain (Apr. 24, 2023, ~ Sep. 4, 2023)	#1	1,000	997	3	100	1,731
Total	-	14,000	3,901	10,099	28	N/A

Source: Korea Agro-Fisheries and Food Trade Corporation (aT)

1/ Weighted average in Korean Won per Kg

Exports

In CY 2025, Korea's rice exports reached a record 190,795 MT, up 39 percent from CY 2024 and more than triple the CY 2023 volume. Most of this increase reflects Korea's expansion of rice aid provisions totaling 150,000 MT to 17 countries, marking the highest volume in its history. According to MAFRA, the increased aid aims to help address the global food crisis caused by climate change and geopolitical disruptions. These rice aid exports have been delivered through World Food Programme (WFP) donations and are expected to continue rising in the coming years. Commercial rice exports also increased, notably to Turkey and Southeast Asia (Myanmar, Malaysia, and Laos).

On January 12, 2026, [MAFRA announced](#) in a press release that Korean K-Food Plus exports reached a record value of \$13 billion in CY 2025 and the Ministry will target \$16 billion of K-Food Plus exports in 2026. K-Food Plus refers to a combination of agri-food products (K-food) and agro-industry products such as farm inputs, agricultural equipment, pet food, veterinary medical products and others. Leading agricultural export items included ramyeon (\$1.5 billion), prepared food (\$0.7 billion), sauces (\$0.4 billion), and kimchi (\$0.2 billion). The United States was the top export destination, with a value of \$1.8 billion, followed by China (\$1.6 billion), Europe (\$0.8 billion), and other markets. According to several [local media](#) outlets (in Korean), MAFRA plans to further expand export items in alignment with official development assistance programs. This includes supporting research and development of new rice-based products, such as nutritionally fortified foods and convenience foods.

Table 5
Rice Export Volume Increases and Diversification of Destinations

Rice Exports by Country				
(Calendar year, Metric Tons)				
Country	2023	2024	2025	YoY Change (Percent)
Turkey*	9	20,009	25,011	+25
Cuba	0	0	24,600	N/A
Yemen	18,000	18,000	23,424	+30
Kenya	11,000	21,002	23,271	+11
Bangladesh	2	15,001	20,064	+34
Mauritania	0	6,720	13,020	+94
Ethiopia	13,000	13,582	12,000	-12
Madagascar	0	10,002	9,984	-0
Myanmar*	3,250	3,000	5,000	+67
Namibia	0	0	4,896	N/A
Afghanistan	2,502	4,896	4,032	-18
Others*	13,042	25,363	25,493	+1
Total	60,805	137,575	190,795	+39

Source: The Ministry of Data and Statistics (MODS).

* Denotes commercial sales (not WFP donations). Other commercial markets include Malaysia (2,774 MT), Laos (2,503 MT), the United States (2,219 MT), Japan (664 MT), and others below 500 MT.

Table 6
Production, Supply and Distribution: Rice

Rice, Milled Market Year Begins Korea, Republic of	2023/2024		2024/2025		2025/2026	
	Nov 2023		Nov 2024		Nov 2025	
	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post	USDA Official	New Post
Area Harvested (1000 HA)	708	708	698	698	680	680
Beginning Stocks (1000 MT)	1427	1427	1205	1208	751	971
Milled Production (1000 MT)	3702	3702	3585	3585	3540	3540
Rough Production (1000 MT)	4898	4898	4783	4783	4692	4720
Milling Rate (.9999) (1000 MT)	7558	7558	7495	7495	7544	7500
MY Imports (1000 MT)	395	404	328	330	408	430
TY Imports (1000 MT)	413	422	325	340	408	430
TY Imp. from U.S. (1000 MT)	192	196	0	0	0	0
Total Supply (1000 MT)	5524	5533	5118	5123	4699	4941
MY Exports (1000 MT)	129	129	192	192	130	200
TY Exports (1000 MT)	138	138	200	191	130	200
Consumption and Residual (1000 MT)	4190	4196	4175	3960	3810	3860
Ending Stocks (1000 MT)	1205	1208	751	971	759	881
Total Distribution (1000 MT)	5524	5533	5118	5123	4699	4941
Yield (Rough) (MT/HA)	6.9181	6.9181	6.8524	6.8524	6.9	6.9412
(1000 HA) ,(1000 MT) ,(MT/HA)						
MY = Marketing Year, begins with the month listed at the top of each column						
TY = Trade Year, which for Rice, Milled begins in January for all countries. TY 2025/2026 = January 2026 - December 2026						
OFFICIAL DATA CAN BE ACCESSED AT: PSD Online Advanced Query						

Note: Official USDA data is based on the January 2026 WASDE data

Attachments:

No Attachments