

APPENDIX H

AGRICULTURE IN CHEJU PROVINCE

The isolated island of Cheju is slightly larger than Oahu in area, and located some 50 miles off the southern-most tip of the mainland. Volcanic in origin, Cheju was until recently the poorest province of Korea. It remained a distinctive subculture of Korean society, with a separate, essentially unintelligible, dialect of Korean and a society more matriarchal in practice than the mainland. A site for exiles from the court as well as outcasts and criminals, it was wracked by a peasant and communist rebellion in 1948 that significantly lowered the male population ratio and fostered continued poverty.

The normalization of relations with Japan gave Cheju an early opportunity for change. Japanese regarded Cheju as an island retreat close to home as well as inexpensive, and Cheju residents in Japan returned often with significant funds for local investment.

Fishing still remains as the mainstay of the island's economy. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on both the tourist and livestock industries. As a result, the relative importance of farming activities has recently somewhat declined.

The island's climate is warmer than that of the mainland. The yearly average temperature is 15.8°C with the monthly average varying between 7.5°C and 28.6°C . The island has the highest precipitation in Korea, which averages about 2000 mm per year. The climate is suitable for growing citrus fruit, particularly on both the northern and southern coasts, and for cultivating pineapples on the southern coast. The total area of the island is 1,825,000 hectares (ha) out of which the cultivated area covers 53,162 ha, accounting for only 2.7 percent of the total area. Because of its volcanic origin, the cultivable area is mostly limited to the coastal belt around the island. Paddy fields cover less than 2 percent of the cultivated land with the remaining in upland fields.

Cultivated area per capita of the farming population in Cheju was 0.22 ha in 1979, which is slightly above the national average of 0.2 ha. Because of the climatic condition, the land utilization ratio on the island is 146 percent, exceeding that of the mainland by about 16 percent. Many farmers also engage in off-farm activities (fishing, livestock, or tourism). Per hectare yields in many crops are also higher relative to those on the mainland. These factors have contributed to increased farm income in Cheju at a rate faster than that on the mainland in recent years.

Both white and sweet potatoes are important cash crops. Cheju is the only province in Korea in which white potato production is increasing, due mainly to the export market found on the mainland, particularly during the winter months. In 1979 there were about 1,000 ha of white potatoes and 12,000 of sweet potatoes. The productivities of these two crops were