

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

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POLAND: Food Shortages Continue

*Food shortages in Poland--although less acute than in March--remain troublesome, with consumption of meat and dairy products down by over 10 percent this year. [REDACTED]*

Poland's urban population has been hit hardest as farmers retain more food for their own use rather than shipping it to urban areas. In addition, a larger proportion of total supplies are now handled through private outlets and black markets, causing higher prices and long lines for urban consumers. The shortages result basically from the sharp drop in Polish agricultural production last year, but the situation was aggravated by panic buying and hoarding earlier this year. [REDACTED]

Because of difficulties in rebuilding herds, meat shortages will continue for at least several years. The meat rationing system implemented in April brought some improvements, but it has encountered many snags. Consumers face long delays in registering for ration books and frequent changes in regulations. [REDACTED]

Despite these problems, rationing has been extended to butter and grain products other than bread and will be applied to infant food products on 1 July. Informal local rationing of a variety of other foodstuffs is widespread. [REDACTED]

New crops probably will bring some relief by July. If the weather is favorable, an above-average grain harvest seems likely, but the outlook for nongrain crops is mixed. A recent article in the official Polish press projecting another poor grain harvest may have been designed to make the case for continued large food aid from the West. [REDACTED]

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