

- According to media sources, the price of imported beef will rise in September by 20% in order to cut consumption of imported beef. At present, the cost of pork and imported beef is almost the same.

- South Korea will participate in construction of a special economic zone in the Tumen River region in northeast North Korea, media sources claim. Working level delegates from South Korea will attend a United Nations Development Program sponsored conference in Pyongyang in October to discuss the projected five year US\$ 3 billion project.

- Press reports maintain inter-Korean trade has increased to US\$ 94 million in the first seven months of 1991. South Korea is importing mining and agricultural products from the North.

- According to the German economic weekly Wirtschafts Woche, South Korean industry ranked 14 out of 16 among industrial countries with regard to competitiveness. Korea scored low in areas of product quality and environmental protection, and at the bottom for national credibility and openness, labour productivity, interest rates and inflation.

- Regulations on chain store businesses have been relaxed in order to permit Korean retailers to compete with foreign chains, media sources report. Separate retail stores may join into chains and can sell general industrial commodities such as electronic appliances, furniture and garments.

TAIWAN

- Press reports indicate that authorities on Taiwan are becoming concerned about the increasing trade ties with China. Hong Kong Customs statistics show Taiwan's indirect trade with the mainland totalled US\$ 4.043 billion in 1990, including US\$ 3.278 billion in exports to China, and US\$ 765 million in imports.

Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs warned that the country's overall external trade has greatly declined if the brisk trade with Hong Kong is excluded. Taiwan's total exports were US\$ 36.1 billion in the first half of 1991. However, the MOEA said Taiwan's trade

surplus only amounts to US\$ 600 million if trade with Hong Kong is not included.

- Wang Yung-tsai, President of the Formosa Plastics Group, announced that the group will build a naphtha crackling complex in the Mailiao section of the proposed offshore industrial zone in Yunlin county, southern Taiwan. Wang told a press conference that Formosa Plastics will invest up to US\$ 3.3 billion in the cracker project. Construction is expected to take three years to complete.

- According to media sources, the Directorate General of Posts has selected 12 Post Offices in Taiwan to process remittances between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The service allows remittances of up to US\$ 5,000 each time by telex or air mail via Citibank in Hong Kong. No direct remittance is allowed between Taiwan and mainland China at the present stage of the program.

VIETNAM

- Direct air service to Ho Chi Minh City by Taiwan-based China Airlines has been postponed. Media sources say the last minute change was linked to the Vietnamese Defence Minister's visit to China.

ONGOING AND UPCOMING/ A VENIR

- Foodex, Osaka '91 - Sept.
- Mining Equipment Seminars - Beijing, Nanjing, Changsha, Sept. 1-5.
- Japan Food Service Show - Sept. 1-6
- Tokyo International Gift Show - Sept. 3-5.
- Seoul Instrument '91 - Sept. 13-17.
- Japanese Sporting Goods Buyers Mission to CSGA - Sept. 14-24.
- Beef Mission from Taipei - Sept. 23-27.
- Building Products Mission from HK, Sept. 28-Oct 8.
- Software Mission/Tokyo and Software Show '91/Osaka - Sept. 29-Oct. 9.

The North Asia Bulletin is produced Relations Division in a single bilingual. L'Asie du nord est un hebdomadaire relations avec l'Asie du nord qui para bilingue. Editor/éditeur Randal Hylar fax-613-996-4309.

