

Starvation in North Korea

When Kim Il-Sung died in 1994 and was replaced by Kim Jong-Il, there was a period of paralysis in government, poor harvests, terrible technology, highly inefficient and completely state-run agriculture and industry. It was a perfect storm that people say caused the deaths of 1-1.5m people.

Since 1998, people have been fed but the diet is very poor - low in meat, poor quality grain, no fruit and sporadic famine. So their calorie intake must be very low and it's no surprise they have stunted growth. You don't see a fat North Korean except their leader.

There has been no industrialization so there are nearly medieval agricultural conditions, very low in fertilizer and very low productivity because people are so weak. It's a vicious circle and no trade with the outside world to bring food in.