

Directive of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Conscientiously Carrying Out Grain Planning and Supply Work in the Countryside

Date: March 1954

(1) Since the winter of 1953, the Party has widely publicized the General Line for the Transitional Period in the countryside, and on this basis launched the planned grain procurement campaign, achieving great results. Except for a few provinces, the grain procurement plan has been completed or over-fulfilled. The development of the campaign has been basically healthy and normal. This has created a good beginning for the long-term implementation of the policy of unified grain purchase and sale (统购统销), which plays an important role in guaranteeing the socialist industrialization of the country and promoting the socialist transformation of agriculture. This is a great achievement and the main aspect of the grain campaign.

(2) However, there were indeed some shortcomings and mistakes in the planned grain procurement work, which have produced certain adverse effects and consequences in the countryside. The main problems were: some grain-deficient peasants sold grain, some peasants sold more than their actual surplus, and some village cadres and activists took the lead in overselling grain, leaving themselves with insufficient grain for food. The planned supply work failed to keep up in time, causing discontent. In addition, in some places, the propaganda of the General Line and grain policy was not comprehensive or appropriate, and small producers were prone to egalitarian misunderstandings of socialism. As a result, some peasants (mainly better-off middle peasants) became worried and mentally unsettled, taking a less active attitude toward production. In some areas where these problems were more serious, there was a state of social unrest. If hostile elements incited further trouble, it could trigger mass disturbances — as seen in the grain riots in Fengcheng County, Jiangxi, and the incident in Jianli County, Hubei, where masses obstructed grain transportation (materials on these incidents have been reported separately). Such mass disturbances are serious in nature and must attract the close attention of Party committees at all levels. The adverse impacts caused by shortcomings in grain procurement must be actively remedied. Otherwise, the Party's and the people's government's prestige will be seriously affected, ties between the Party and the masses will be weakened, the worker-peasant alliance will be undermined, and the unified grain purchase and sale policy will be obstructed in the future.

(3) The key to solving the problem lies in doing a good job in the planned grain supply work in the countryside. Solving the food problem for grain-deficient peasants is the most important issue left over from the procurement campaign and a prerequisite for enabling peasants to focus on production. Once this is done, counterrevolutionary remnants will not succeed in stirring up trouble. Therefore, all localities must focus on spring plowing and production as the central task, thoroughly investigate and resolve the problems left over from grain procurement, and carry out grain supply work. For truly grain-deficient households — whether they were originally grain-deficient or have oversold grain — sufficient and timely supply must be guaranteed. April and May are traditionally the lean months of spring famine, so action must be taken quickly. Using approximate control figures and democratic public appraisal, quickly determine the amount of grain to be supplied to grain-deficient households, have it approved by the county or district, and issue grain purchase certificates immediately, designating supply points and providing grain according to the approved quantity. Within the approved amount, households may buy in installments or all at once, without restriction. The practice of allowing purchase for only a few days at a time — which is not even adopted in the cities — is even harder to implement in the countryside and should not be used. To avoid queues and excessive travel to buy grain, more supply points and distribution stations should be established, and rural supply and marketing cooperatives should take responsibility for grain supply. In addition, the

grain needs of rural and urban flour mills, noodle shops, small restaurants, and mule-and-horse inns should also be met appropriately. In places where the originally planned supply quota is truly insufficient, report to higher Party and government levels for readjustment at the county, provincial, or regional level to meet necessary supply needs (the Central Financial and Economic Commission has approved requests from all major regions to increase sales by 3.2 billion jin). At the same time, patient persuasion and education must be given to peasants who are not truly grain-deficient but still wish to purchase grain, so as not to waste state reserves. In short, we must avoid the tendency of overly strict restrictions and complicated procedures that alienate the masses, but also guard against the tendency to expand supply indiscriminately. In cotton and other industrial crop areas, grain supply has become one of the key factors determining whether planting plans can be fulfilled. Particular attention must be paid to delivering grain there in time, and grain purchase certificates must be issued to grain-deficient households before the sowing season, so they are reassured and willing to plant cotton and other industrial crops. As for the price differential between grain purchase and sale, it must be kept within 5.6 percent, and facts about storage losses, handling fees, state taxes, and interest on peasants' grain savings should be explained to the masses to show that the state does not profit from the price difference and that peasants do not suffer a loss.

(4) Even after unified grain procurement, there is generally still surplus grain in rural areas, and some grain is offered for sale. State-owned companies and supply-and-marketing cooperatives must pay attention to purchasing this marketable grain to help regulate rural supply. State-managed grain markets should be established in market towns to allow peasants and consumers to trade directly under government regulations. Peasants exchanging grain privately outside these markets — as long as they are not selling to grain merchants — should not be prohibited. Doing this adjustment work well will ensure the needs of grain-deficient households are met under the unified marketing system, while also reducing the state's sales burden and increasing state reserves.

(5) Grain transport must follow the regulations of the Ministry of Grain (to be issued separately) to avoid disrupting national grain allocation. In places where problems have already arisen and the masses obstruct transport, shipments must stop until supply work is completed and public sentiment stabilizes before resuming. In areas where supply work is not yet complete, speed up supply. Grain needed for local grain-deficient households should be kept locally. In places with weak work foundations or many problems, thorough explanations must be given to the masses before transporting grain out of the area.

(6) In areas where serious coercive mistakes were made during unified purchase and sale work and where the masses are deeply dissatisfied, appropriate methods should be adopted to publicly review and admit mistakes in a suitable setting. In general, responsibility for mistakes should be borne by the leading organs, and grassroots cadres should not be excessively blamed. This was an unprecedented task, had to be completed, and was on a very tight schedule, so certain shortcomings and mistakes were inevitable. However, in cases where a few cadres acted with favoritism, injustice, or other egregious behavior that the masses cannot forgive, they must personally admit their mistakes and apologize, and in some cases receive necessary disciplinary action.

Finally, we must be vigilant against counterrevolutionaries who seek to use grain issues to sabotage, and must consistently and systematically expose their crimes among the masses. If disturbances unfortunately occur, we must first work to educate the masses, expose and isolate counterrevolutionaries, and quell the incident without allowing it to spread. Punishment of counterrevolutionaries who incite unrest should generally be carried out only after the masses have been enlightened and the counterrevolutionaries are isolated.