

Contents

Policies	1
China to boost rural vitalization through four key tasks.....	1
China to advance work related to agriculture, rural areas, farmers with concrete efforts	1
China to promote agricultural sci-tech innovation over next five years	1
China allocates 1.75 bln yuan to assist agricultural production, disaster relief.....	2
Ten-year fishing ban begins in Yangtze River	2
China to increase corn acreage in 2021	2
China issues pilot rules for national carbon emission trading	2
China considers anti-food-waste law to ensure food security	3
China issues action plan on further opening up its market	3
Science, Technology and Environment	3
China to accelerate seeds industry innovation	3
Progress in seeds, yields cultivate food security.....	4
Chinese scientists breed new crop varieties to support food security.....	4
New cattle breed to curb China's dependence on imports	4
China fosters innovation in dryland agriculture.....	4
Chinese team to turn 6.7 mln hectares of saline-alkali land into paddies.....	5
Intelligent technologies drive China's agriculture modernization	5
Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba brings technology into agriculture	5
Researchers release maps of global agricultural production.....	6
Boar cloning base in Hubei aims to achieve independent supply of pork for nation	6
Tech builds promise for future of self-sufficient farms	6
Space-bred seeds offer valuable opportunities	7
China to build gene pool of farm seeds	7
Environment of Yangtze changes course for better	7
Trade and Business	7
China's food industry continues steady profit growth.....	7
E-commerce boosts income of Chinese farmers.....	8
China-EU geographical indicator deal comes into force	8
China gradually opens its markets to Central Asia	8
China, New Zealand ink upgraded free trade deal.....	8
China's 2020 soybean imports climb 13% to record as pig sector demand recovers	9
China's corn, wheat imports in 2020 reach record highs	9

Policies

China to boost rural vitalization through four key tasks

[Xinhua, 13-01-2021] China will focus on four key tasks to achieve rural vitalization, Liu Huanxin, vice minister of agriculture and rural affairs, told a press conference:

- improve its supply of grain and other important agricultural products, focusing on the seed industry and arable land;
- improve rural industries, such as the agricultural product processing industry, to provide more jobs in rural regions;
- water supply, logistics, power grid and transport infrastructure will be upgraded and rural public education, hospital and culture services will be enhanced;
- boost rural governance.

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China to advance work related to agriculture, rural areas, farmers with concrete efforts

[People's daily, 05-01-2021] The central rural work conference of China was held on Dec. 28 and 29, 2020. The conference, convened at such a historical juncture when China is about to enter its 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025) and embark on a new journey of building a socialist modern country in an all-round way, carried great significance.

Rural work is the most arduous task and the most extensive and deepest foundation for building a socialist modern country in an all-round way and achieving national rejuvenation of China.

To consolidate and extend the achievements of poverty alleviation, comprehensively push forward rural revitalization and accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas is a major issue that concerns the overall situation and deserves high attention from the CPC.

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China to promote agricultural sci-tech innovation over next five years

[Xinhua, 19-01-2021] China will promote science and technology innovation in agriculture to support all-round rural revitalization in the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) said.

The CAAS will make great efforts to be more internationally influential in agricultural science, technological innovation, achievement transformation, and international cooperation, and become a high-level talent training base and national high-end think tank, according to a report from the academy.

The seed industry and arable lands will be the focus of innovation, said Tang Huajun, president of the CAAS. The academy will cultivate new varieties of crops, livestock and poultry, promote the construction of the research center for protecting and utilizing crop germplasm resources, and advance basic agricultural research, he added.

The CAAS will also strengthen cooperation and exchanges with foreign agricultural research institutions, international organizations, and regions along the Belt and Road, said the report.

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China allocates 1.75 bln yuan to assist agricultural production, disaster relief

[Xinhua, 08-01-2021] China has allocated 1.75 billion yuan (about 270 million U.S. dollars) from its central budget to ensure agricultural production and alleviate disasters during this winter and next spring, according to the Ministry of Finance.

The fund will be used for reserving fodder for livestock through the winter, preventing and controlling disasters triggered by cold weather, as well as restoring facilities damaged by water-related disasters.

Preparation of backup water sources for possible droughts and implementation of protection measures against droughts and floods shall also be supported by the fund, according to the ministry.

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Ten-year fishing ban begins in Yangtze River

[Xinhua, 01-01-2021] According to the central government's plan, a complete 10-year fishing ban now applies in pivotal waters of the Yangtze, China's longest river, starting on Friday, 1st January.

For decades, urbanization and shipping along the Yangtze River have led to the reduction or disappearance of aquatic habitats. Agricultural fertilizers and pesticides have also led to the river's pollution.

In recent years, the provincial-level regions along the river have stepped up efforts to protect the "mother river" of the Chinese nation. In 2019, Jiangxi Province, located in the river's middle reaches, set up its first cross-region environmental resources court at the national reserve of Poyang Lake. It is the country's biggest freshwater lake in the Yangtze River basin.

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China to increase corn acreage in 2021

[Reuters, 04-01-2021] China will increase the area sown with corn in its main grain regions this year, the agriculture minister has said, reversing several years of declining acreage in response to a growing shortfall.

The expansion is part of a comprehensive plan to ensure food security, according to Tang Renjian, the newly appointed Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, state media Xinhua news agency reported.

Authorities will focus on expanding corn acreage in the northeast as well as areas around the Yellow, Huai and Hai rivers, Tang said in an interview with Xinhua.

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China issues pilot rules for national carbon emission trading

[CGTN, 06-01-2021] China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) on 5 January released pilot rules for the long-awaited national carbon emission trading scheme.

Carbon emissions trading is a form of permit trading. According to the pilot rules, effective from February 1, firms that emit 26,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide or more a year are allowed to trade. Carbon emission credits are allocated to emitters during a specified period and the allowances can be traded through negotiation transfer and bidding.

Since 2011, China has piloted carbon emissions trading in seven provinces and cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen to explore market-based mechanisms to hold greenhouse gas emissions in check.

The country rolled out in 2017 a nationwide carbon emission trading scheme, a step towards a national carbon market that aims to be the world's biggest.

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China considers anti-food-waste law to ensure food security

[Xinhua, 22-12-2020] Chinese lawmakers began deliberating a draft law on preventing food waste to ensure food security.

The 32-article draft was submitted to the ongoing session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for its first reading.

The law is of great significance to promoting a healthy, rational, and green lifestyle and better consumption behavior. It is also essential to accelerating the construction of a resource-conserving and environmentally-friendly society. It will also aid sustainable economic and social development, according to the reasoning submitted to the session.

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China issues action plan on further opening up its market

[CGTN, 31-01-2021] The General Office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee along with China's State Council on 31 January, Sunday published an action plan to guide the building of a high-standard market system in the next five years.

The plan reiterates that China allows foreign capital to have majority control in joint-venture banks, or securities, while asset management companies can be wholly foreign-owned or jointly owned, adding that China is formulating measures in managing bond issuance by overseas institutions in the domestic bond market.

The plan calls for an orderly opening-up of the service industry, with the medical, education and environmental protection sectors taking the lead. Meanwhile, market access restrictions will be reduced.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China to accelerate seeds industry innovation

[GT, 13-01-2021] China is set to accelerate innovation within the seed industry during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) as the nation vowed to turn the tables in tackling challenges in agricultural technology and food security, the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs told a press briefing.

Currently China faces no immediate risk in respect to seed supply. However, China still lags behind some advanced economies in terms of agricultural technology innovation and commercial seed breeding.

As part of China's economic planning, efforts will be made to establish a national-level high quality seed resource bank, as well as some seed industry bases, covering crops, livestock and poultry and marine fishery.

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Progress in seeds, yields cultivate food security

[China daily, 25-01-2021] Cultivating secure, stable and advanced seed varieties is key to China's ongoing efforts to beef up food security, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which ensuring food supplies is crucial to every country.

Although China is largely self-sufficient in seed supplies for major crops such as rice, wheat, corn and soybeans, it still relies on imports of seeds for certain agricultural products and livestock.

China is home to many pig species and is the world's biggest producer and consumer of pork, however, it relies on imported pigs for breeding, as some species boast characteristics such as growth rates that are faster than those of domestic breeds.

The rice yields in China are high, but the quality is lower than varieties from Japan and Thailand. Rice varieties in China need to be further improved to meet people's increasing demand for high-quality food.

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Chinese scientists breed new crop varieties to support food security

[Xinhua, 12-01-2021] Chinese scientists have bred a number of new varieties of major crops during the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), providing solid support for the country's food security, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) said.

A series of significant achievements have been made in genome analysis, cloning of new genes and key breeding technologies for crops including wheat, rice, corn, soybean and coarse cereals.

The CAAS will focus on developing new varieties such as green super rice, water-saving wheat, scab-resistant wheat, drought-tolerant corn, and high-yield and high-protein soybean, providing scientific and technological support for improving the quality and efficiency of the country's agriculture.

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New cattle breed to curb China's dependence on imports

[China daily, 27-01-2021] China is poised to end its reliance on imports for genetic resources for beef production after a five-year effort to cultivate a new domestic breed, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences said.

The new breed, named Huaxi cattle for the time being, is a cross breed of highly productive Simmental, a large breed of cattle of Swiss origin, and indigenous Chinese cattle species, the academy said.

China relies on imports for the majority of its beef cattle germ plasm. Although China's cattle genetic resources are abundant, its cattle do not grow as fast or produce as much meat as their foreign counterparts, including Simmental.

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China fosters innovation in dryland agriculture

[Xinhua, 28-01-2021] China will promote the basic research and application of key technologies for dryland agriculture during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), according to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

Dryland agriculture plays an important role in ensuring food security, ecological protection and poverty reduction in China. It provides 43 percent of the country's grain and more than 75 percent of beef and mutton supply.

China has introduced and cultivated more than 70 drought-resistant and high-yield varieties of crops. A series of agricultural facilities including intelligent irrigation and fertilization system, biodegradable plastic films and soil preparation machines have also been developed.

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Chinese team to turn 6.7 mln hectares of saline-alkali land into paddies

[Xinhua, 16-01-2021] The team of renowned agronomist Yuan Longping said they planned to plant saline-alkali soil rice to transform 6.7 million hectares of saline-alkali land in China over the next eight to 10 years.

The team led by Yuan, dubbed China's "father of hybrid rice," said they had already signed contracts to reclaim 400,000 hectares of saline-alkali land in China and will strive to plant saline-alkali soil rice on one-sixth of the land this year.

China has about 100 million hectares of saline-alkali soil, of which about one-fifth could be ameliorated to arable soil.

Click [here](#) for detail

Intelligent technologies drive China's agriculture modernization

[Xinhua, 01-01-2021] Unmanned transplanters and harvesters, intelligent irrigation control system and leaf age diagnose technique, these technologies are empowering Jiansanjiang, an important grain production base in Heilongjiang Province as a pioneer of China's intelligent agriculture.

The production base piloted six unmanned farms in 2020, with 875 unmanned transplanters covering about 17,600 hectares and unmanned harvesters harvesting 1,000 hectares of rice, soybean and corn.

Apart from the agricultural machinery, the production base also heralds a digital agriculture platform that gathers information on environmental factors, soil fertility and crop growth in different stages, offering scientific guidance for agricultural field management.

As of September 2020, China had set up 18 unmanned pilot agriculture zones for 14 types of crops in 12 provinces and autonomous regions, covering more than 5,300 hectares of farmland.

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Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba brings technology into agriculture

[Fresh Plaza, 19-01-2021] Alibaba Agriculture revealed on January 9 that by the end of the month, Dekopon tangerines will become available on Alibaba's online and offline platforms, such as Hema. The key factor behind this development is the company's newly developed five digital agricultural processing centers across China.

In Shandong, a sorting line for locally grown cherries will start operating in the Alibaba Zibo Digital Agriculture Warehouse this April. In addition, the Alibaba Production Warehouse in Xi'an, the fruit distribution hub for Northwest China, is developing a new robot whose main function is to transport the packed fruits to a location according to instructions and stack the boxes neatly

In recent years, Alibaba has continued to invest in its agriculture department. This year, five digital agricultural collection and processing centers (production warehouses) were put into use, covering the core agricultural production areas in China.

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Researchers release maps of global agricultural production

[Xinhua, 11-01-2021] An international team of researchers has released a set of high-precision maps of global agricultural production, providing data support for sustainable development, according to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS).

Researchers from the CAAS, the International Food Policy Research Institute and other international research institutes collected data on agricultural production in 186 countries. They mapped the spatial distribution of 42 major crops, such as rice, wheat and corn, around the world, including the data on the crops' area, total yield and per-unit yield.

Compared with previous data products, the maps have been improved in terms of accuracy, coverage and availability, providing data support for the assessment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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Boar cloning base in Hubei aims to achieve independent supply of pork for nation

[GT, 05-01-2021] Central China's Hubei Province will be home to the country's first high-end boar selection and breeding demonstration base, where cloning technologies will be applied to protect endangered local boar species. This base is intended to break the foreign monopoly of some top breeds and make China's pork industry independent.

Cloning technologies will be used to salvage and protect precious and endangered local boar species, while breeding research will be carried out to rapidly breed and expand new breeds of excellent pigs, the Hubei Daily reported on 5 January.

Breeder boars are sometimes called "pig chips," and the selection and breeding of breeder boars is the core of the system. However, breeding local boars is expensive and time-consuming, so many companies prefer to directly introduce foreign breeder boars to make profits quickly. This new base will fill the gap.

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Tech builds promise for future of self-sufficient farms

[China daily, 07-01-2020] Unmanned transplanters and harvesters, intelligent irrigation control systems and leaf age diagnosis technologies are empowering Jiansanjiang to become a pioneer of China's intelligent agriculture.

The production base in Heilongjiang province piloted six unmanned farms in 2020, with 875 unmanned transplanters covering about 17,600 hectares and unmanned harvesters collecting 1,000 hectares of rice, soybean and corn.

Apart from the agricultural machinery, the production base heralds a digital agriculture platform that gathers information on environmental factors, soil fertility and crop growth in different stages. The platform also offers scientific guidance on agricultural field management.

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Space-bred seeds offer valuable opportunities

[China daily, 04-01-2020] China's historic 23-day Chang'e 5 mission has not only obtained precious rocks and soil samples from the moon, but has also brought back a group of seeds that traveled the furthest in the nation's agricultural and forestry histories.

More than 30 kinds of seeds, including rice, oats, alfalfa and orchid, were placed inside the multi-module Chang'e 5 spacecraft and orbited around the moon for about 15 days.

Researchers observe and examine several generations of plants grown from space-bred seeds and investigate their mutations — some are positive and desirable while others are negative. Those with positive mutations will be kept and analyzed, and will be introduced to farmers after their certification and approval.

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China to build gene pool of farm seeds

[Xinhua, 28-12-2020] A national gene pool of farm and tree seeds will be jointly formed by teams from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the China Forestry Group Corporation.

This comes after the two teams signed a strategic cooperation agreement on research and development in agricultural and forestry germplasm resources.

In the next five years, the two teams will try to promote and plant about 66,666.67 hectares of high-quality farm and tree crops at home and abroad, aiming to reach an output value of 10 billion yuan (about 1.53 billion U.S. dollars) in the primary and deep processing of domestic high-quality agricultural and forestry products.

Click [here](#) for details

Environment of Yangtze changes course for better

[China daily, 06-01-2021] China's consistent efforts to protect the Yangtze River have helped Asia's longest watercourse turn the corner on conservation, a senior official at the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said.

As a key indicator of the achievement, the Yangtze last year saw the quality of water at all monitored sections in its mainstream rated at Grade II or above. Grade II is the second highest in the five-tier assessment system.

According to the ministry's 2015 environmental quality bulletin, only 45.2 percent of the monitored sections in the Yangtze's mainstream had water quality of Grade II or above.

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Trade and Business

China's food industry continues steady profit growth

[Xinhua, 17-01-2021] China's major food processing companies recorded combined profits of 535.96 billion yuan (about 82.92 billion U.S. dollars) in the first 11 months of 2020, up 6.8 percent year on year, official data showed.

Profit growth at these enterprises, whose annual revenues exceed 20 million yuan from their main operations, was 4.4 percentage points higher than that of all industrial sectors, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

In breakdown, agricultural and sideline products processing companies reported 169.35 billion yuan in combined profits, up 8.9 percent year on year, while that of liquor, beverage

and tea manufacturers rose 5.6 percent year on year to 208.02 billion yuan, MIIT data showed.

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E-commerce boosts income of Chinese farmers

[Xinhua, 13-01-2010] E-commerce has helped bump up the income of Chinese farmers, contributing to the country's efforts on rural vitalization, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

In 2019, rural online retail sales neared 400 billion yuan (about 61.9 billion U.S. dollars).

Conditions for rural e-commerce development, including communication facilities and logistics, have witnessed continued improvements in recent years, with 4G network coverage for 98 percent of villages in the country, according to the ministry.

More than 10 million people have engaged in entrepreneurship and innovation in rural areas so far, serving as an important force supporting the development of the rural e-commerce sector.

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China-EU geographical indicator deal comes into force

[CGTN, 02-01-2021] A landmark agreement between China and the European Union to protect 200 geographical brands of agri-food came into effect on Friday, January 1.

The China-EU Geographical Indications Agreement ensures that 100 EU and 100 Chinese agri-foods are protected from imitations.

The deal is one of the first significant bilateral trade agreements signed directly between the EU and China and is expected to be expanded over the next four years. Both sides are also working on an agreement that includes non-food brands such as Swiss clocks.

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China gradually opens its markets to Central Asia

[Eurasianet, 25-01-2021] China is opening its markets to Central Asia's fledgling food exporters, embarking on a new phase of economic engagement with the region.

For decades, China had an appetite for Central Asian oil and gas and a few commodities, but little else. Beijing is now encouraging more industries to send it their goods. It has signed phytosanitary agreements – approving a growing range of Central Asian foodstuffs – while helping firms secure export licenses and learn the ins and outs of Chinese e-commerce.

This is designed to make the region more economically stable, provide opportunities for Chinese companies and boost Beijing's political influence more than debt-for-infrastructure programs ever could. Because it's directly linked to jobs and foreign currency, market access offers powerful leverage; when Beijing punishes Korea and Australia, for example, it blocks access to its markets.

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China, New Zealand ink upgraded free trade deal

[Reuters, 25-01-2021] China and New Zealand signed a deal to upgrade their existing free trade pact, which will give commodities exports from the Pacific nation increased access to the world's second-largest economy.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern confirmed the signing of the agreement, noting the significance of the deal amid a crippling pandemic and global economic crisis.

New Zealand said the agreement "modernises" the existing free trade agreement with China and ensures it remains fit for purpose for another decade.

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China's 2020 soybean imports climb 13% to record as pig sector demand recovers

[Reuters, 14-01-2021] China's soybean imports jumped 13% to an annual record in 2020, customs data showed, after crushers ramped up purchases amid improved margins and healthy demand from the country's rapidly recovering pig sector.

China, the world's top soybean buyer, bought 100.33 million tonnes of the oilseed in 2020, up from 88.51 million tonnes in 2019, according to the General Administration of Customs.

China has been rebuilding its pig herd, which was ravaged by the deadly African swine fever disease, with the pig population now approaching normal levels, according to state media.

Demand remains very strong, according to a manager with a soybean crusher in northern China.

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China's corn, wheat imports in 2020 reach record highs

[Reuters, 18-01-2021] China's grains imports soared to record highs in 2020, customs data showed on Monday, after tight domestic corn supplies pushed prices to multi-year peaks, driving demand for cheaper imports.

China bought a record 11.3 million tonnes of imported corn last year, including 2.25 million tonnes in December alone, according to General Administration of Customs data.

China also imported a record 8.38 million tonnes of wheat.

China has accelerated buying of global grains in the past year due to healthy demand from a recovering pig sector, and a domestic shortfall in corn supplies.

Imports are expected to remain high this year for similar reasons, buyers and analysts said.

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