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Policies

China's 'No.1 central document' charts road map for advancing rural vitalization

[GT, 03-02-2024] China's central authorities have unveiled a detailed "roadmap" for effectively advancing the national rural vitalization in its "No.1 central document" for 2024, the first policy statement the central government releases at the beginning of each year that focuses on agricultural and rural issues. The document also prioritized food security, guarding against poverty and farmers' income growth among other tasks.

While the annual document once again focuses on rural vitalization and agricultural modernization, there are also new highlights, including calls for accomplishing a number of practical things that can tangibly benefit the public, signaling that emphasis has been placed on effectiveness and benefits for farmers, experts said. The document also signaled greater support for market entities to participate in rural vitalization, experts noted.

The document urges focusing on improving development of rural industries, rural construction and rural governance, strengthening technology and reform drivers, stepping up measures to increase farmers' income and better executing the fight to advance comprehensive rural vitalization. It also called for accelerating agricultural modernization so as to better advance Chinese modernization.

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China's rural revitalization embraces better opportunities

[Xinhua, 31-01-2024] China's rural revitalization and the building of a robust agricultural industry are embracing better opportunities as Chinese modernization forges ahead, agriculture minister Tang Renjian said.

The country has consistently scaled up its policy support for agriculture, rural areas and farmers, resulting in improvements in agricultural productivity and the accelerated unleashing of investment potential, Tang said during a seminar regarding the advancement of Chinese modernization.

Efforts must focus on securing the supply of grain and key agricultural products, while bolstering the growth momentum in areas and populations that have shaken off poverty, the minister said.

It is also imperative to promote technological innovation in the agricultural industry, and explore more approaches to expanding farmers' incomes, Tang added.

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China's State Council mulls measures to advance rural revitalization

[GOV.CN, 22-01-2024] China's State Council on Monday 22 January held an executive meeting to mull measures to advance rural revitalization on all fronts.

The meeting, chaired by Premier Li Qiang, also reviewed and adopted a guideline for promoting the high-quality development of the instant delivery industry, and made arrangements for facilitating new industrialization with artificial intelligence.

The meeting stressed the importance of prioritizing the development of agriculture and rural areas, accelerating the development of modern agriculture, consolidating the foundations of food security, and promoting relatively fast income growth of farmers in multiple ways.

Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development

[NBSC, 29-02-2024] Statistical Communiqué of China on 2023 National Economic and Social Development reveals:

- In 2023, the sown area of grain was 118.97 million hectares, an increase of 0.64 million hectares compared with that in 2022.
- The total output of grain in 2023 was 695.41 million tons, an increase of 8.88 million tons over the previous year, up by 1.3 percent.
- In 2023, the output of cotton was 5.62 million tons, down by 6.1 percent over the previous year, that of oil-bearing crops was 38.64 million tons, up by 5.7 percent, that of sugar crops was 115.04 million tons, up by 2.4 percent, and that of tea was 3.55 million tons, up by 6.1 percent.
- The total output of pork, beef, mutton and poultry in 2023 was 96.41 million tons, up by 4.5 percent over the previous year. At the end of the year, 434.22 million pigs were registered in the total stocks, down by 4.1 percent compared with that at the end of 2022, and 726.62 million pigs were slaughtered, up by 3.8 percent over the previous year.
- The total output of aquatic products in 2023 was 71.00 million tons, up by 3.4 percent over the previous year.
- In 2023, the number of high-standard farmland newly developed and upgraded was 5.74 million hectares and 1.64 million hectares of farmland was newly equipped with water-saving irrigation systems.

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China sees improved living environment in rural areas

[China daily, 28-02-2024] China has made remarkable progress in improving the living environment in rural areas, the country's agricultural ministry said.

The country stepped up efforts to strengthen the weak links in public infrastructure in 2023, and over 95 percent of villages have launched clean-up campaigns, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

In 2023, over 73 percent of China's rural households had access to sanitary toilets, while the rural residential sewage treatment rate reached over 40 percent.

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China's work-for-relief programs create over 2.5 mln jobs for low-income population in 2023

[GOV.CN, 16-01-2024] China's work-for-relief programs created more than 2.53 million jobs for the low-income population, which resulted in a per capita income increase worth more than 14,000 yuan (around 1,968 U.S. dollars) for them, according to official data.

The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's top economic planner, said that over the past year, the NDRC, together with other government departments, continued to promote work-for-relief programs by increasing special-purpose central government investment support and providing guidance to local regions to push forward the work-for-relief approach in major engineering projects as well as agricultural and rural infrastructure projects in different localities.

Through these efforts, employment channels for low-income rural populations, as well as for those who face difficulty in finding employers in urban and rural regions, were created, it said.

Work-for-relief programs refer to a support policy in which the government invests in the construction of infrastructure projects, and those who work on such projects receive remuneration, thereby replacing direct relief.

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China's agricultural ministry sets 2024 grain output at more than 650 million tons

[ECNS, 20-02-2024] China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs vowed to step up efforts to achieve a bumper grain harvest in 2024 and ensure grain output reach more than 1.3 trillion jin (650 million tons) in a bid to safeguard the country's food security.

The ministry said that it will assign grain, soybean and oil crops to individual provinces, and will stabilize the sowing area of grain crops to above 1.77 billion mu (118 million hectares), according to a statement posted on the ministry's website.

The authorities urged for enhanced efforts to increase the output of soybeans and oil crops, and ensure that the planting area of soybeans be stabilized above 150 million mu and that of oil crops will steadily grow.

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Clear targets bring 'Beautiful China' within reach

[China daily, 28-02-2024] In the first weeks of this year, China's central government issued a policy document clarifying what is meant by building a "Beautiful China", and setting a broad range of environmental targets through 2035 and even beyond.

The document covers everything from controlling pollution to protecting habitats and reducing climate emissions. Many of the goals are ambitious, which is very timely, given the urgency of the environmental crises facing the world.

China is placing a high priority on the green transition, even in the face of major economic headwinds. It is recognized that the economy and environment are no longer a trade-off. The green transition is becoming a real economic driver, with green sectors such as renewable energy, batteries and electric vehicles accounting for a major share of economic growth.

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China still a priority destination for foreign investment

[GT, 08-01-2024] While foreign investment into China has been declining since the second quarter of 2023 due to a downturn worldwide, Chinese officials and analysts remain confident that China is still a top destination for global investors, thanks to measures to expand market access and improve the business environment.

China's top policymakers have made stabilizing foreign capital inflows a top priority for economic work in 2024 and pledged opening-up measures in several areas. With these policies taking effect, China's attractiveness for global investors will be further boosted and more foreign businesses will enter the Chinese market, contrary to claims of "foreign capital fleeing China," officials and analysts said.

The Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said that it will foster new engines for foreign trade, including digital trade, further expand market access and create world class business

environment in 2024, according to a statement released after a national commerce meeting conference.

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China willing to work to move forward multiple initiatives and achieve results with WTO

[China daily, 26-02-2024] China is willing to work with all parties to achieve more pragmatic results at the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, said the country's top commerce official.

During his meeting with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, director-general of the WTO in Abu Dhabi, Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao said that China supports several key initiatives, according to an online statement of the Ministry of Commerce.

These initiatives include the restoration of the normal functioning of the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism, the formulation of a work plan for agricultural negotiations, addressing the concerns of least developed countries and net food-importing developing countries regarding food security, and promoting the conclusion of the second phase of the agreement on fisheries subsidies, according to the statement.

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Science, Technology and Environment

World's first cloned Tibetan sheep born in NW China's Qinghai

[GB, 28-02-2024] Chinese scientists have successfully cloned the world's first Tibetan sheep in Northwest China's Qinghai Province, hoping to improve the breeding efficiency of the species by preserving their superior individuals.

The research team from Northwest A&F University and the animal disease prevention and control center in Xining, capital of Qinghai, have jointly cultivated a cloned Tibetan sheep, which adopted somatic cell cloning technique. This was done in a bid to improve the breeding efficiency of the species by cloning their highly productive individuals.

The joint research team selected three excellent breeding rams and one ewe of the breed of Oula sheep, including a top-tiered ram weighing more than 200 kilograms, to produce 43 cloned embryos. After the cloned embryos were transplanted into the surrogate sheep, their pregnancy rate reached 58.1 percent at first test and 37.2 percent after 120 days. A group of lambs are expected to be born soon.

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China aims to further lower soybean meal use, reduce hog capacity

[feedstrategy.com, 24-01-2024] The level of protein in China's animal feed is "more than sufficient," according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), and authorities there continue to work to lower the use of soybean meal.

According to reports, China's soybean imports were up 11.4% in 2023, despite efforts to increase domestic production. Much of that goes toward animal feed manufacturing, driving up demand for imported soybeans.

In 2023, MARA announced a series of measures aimed at reducing soybean imports. Key to the three-year action plan were investigations into alternative feed proteins, greater use of grass and other forages, and a controlled reduction in soybean inclusion by 0.5% per year.

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China approves protein from industrial gas as aquafeed

[Fish Farmer, 31-01-2024] The new feed is being manufactured in China by Calysseo, a joint venture between Calysta and feed giant Adisseo. Calysseo hopes to deliver its feed product to customers in China shortly.

The country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) has formally given Calysta's single cell protein full approval for use in fish and shrimp feeds after an extensive evaluation process.

Calysseo's first production plant is in Chongqing, already producing sustainable FeedKind protein for the aquaculture industry, giving producers access to an alternative to plant or animal sources for aquafeed diets. The protein is produced by harnessing the power of a naturally occurring microbe that converts methane into a nutritious feed ingredient, FeedKind.

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Intelligent agriculture propels rural revitalization

[Xinhua, 16-02-2024] Rural farming has long been closely associated with cattle, plows and toil. Today, there are also agricultural robots and all sorts of other intelligent equipment, marking a significant shift in agricultural practices.

At the Diantian Farm in rural Shanghai, this transformation is noticeable. Here, robots operated by engineers have replaced conventional farming cattle.

Over the past seven years, engineers working at the Diantian rural cooperative have been engaged in research and development, resulting in the creation of over 60 types of agricultural robots capable of performing tasks ranging from planting to harvesting.

The agricultural robots at Diantian Farm are equipped with China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS). The BDS has facilitated more than 100,000 sets of agricultural machinery automatic driving systems in China.

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China sees progress on circular agriculture through effective pilot programs

[CGTN, 29-01-2024] China has achieved phased results in promoting the concept of circular agriculture, a model integrating planting and breeding with better processing techniques to push forward the green development of the country's agricultural sector, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Monday.

Since the project was piloted in 2021, the central government has allocated more than 7.4 billion yuan (over \$1 billion) to promote the overall collection and utilization of straw treatment, as well as livestock and poultry manure across 299 counties in China's major agricultural regions.

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Farmers find ways to make use of leftover rice straw

[China daily, 27-02-2024] while Chinese people enjoy the pleasure of harvesting rice, an annoying problem often gets in their way — the leftover rice straw.

In 2022 alone, Southwest China's Chongqing, for instance, produced 10 million metric tons of straw, which is nearly on par with its output of grain.

In recent years, Dianjiang county in Chongqing has explored multiple ways to make use of the straw.

At Zhushihua Renewable Resources Utilization Co in Zhoujia township, Dianjiang, the farmland has stacks of straw.

The high-quality straw has been purchased by liquor factories to make yeast for distillers, while straw of lesser quality will be processed into cushions, which glass and steel factories badly need.

In addition, Dianjiang also seeks to process straw into animal feed or organic fertilizers.

The utilization of rice straw has delivered real gains to local farmers.

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Research marks a step toward carbon-neutral future

[China daily, 26-02-2024] A Chinese-led team has developed a carbon dioxide electrolysis system whose equipment has a longer life span and higher conversion efficiency. This could not only help tackle climate change but also dispose of hazardous spent lead-acid batteries.

The new method, which is designed to convert carbon dioxide into formic acid, can carry on nonstop for at least 5,000 hours with a conversion efficiency of more than 93 percent, according to the team's study that was published in the journal Nature on Jan 31.

Formic acid has a wide range of uses in chemical, energy and agricultural sectors. It can, for example, work as a preservative in animal feeds, or be used for tanning leather.

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Pilot carbon sink trading yields profit, eco benefits in rural China

[GOV.CN, 26-01-2024] There was considerable excitement among the locals when Junying Village of the city of Xiamen, east China's Fujian Province, raked in over 14,000 yuan (about 2,000 U.S. dollars) in exchange for the two-year carbon sink production of its tea gardens.

On May 5, 2022, the municipal property rights exchange center of Xiamen put China's first agricultural carbon sink trading platform into operation and issued the country's first pair of agricultural carbon offset tickets to two villages in Tong'an District -- one to Junying Village and the other to the neighboring Baijiaoci Village.

Xiamen-headquartered Yinlu Group, a leading food company in China's canning and beverage industry, bought the agricultural carbon sink generated by the two villages, which meant buying extra carbon emission quotas to achieve ultimate carbon neutrality.

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Biodiversity protection boosted by latest plan

[China daily, 22-01-2024] China has further enhanced its top-level design for biodiversity conservation with a 2023-30 national strategy and an action plan that vows to restore at least 30 percent of the nation's degraded ecosystems by the end of this decade.

The action plan includes measures that aim to relieve the country from biodiversity loss.

One of the priorities is to beef up the country's capability in biodiversity surveying and monitoring.

By 2030, the country will strive to see ecosystems in key areas, key species and important genetic resources covered by regular surveying and monitoring, it said.

The document said China will improve a mechanism known as "ecological compensation" to better protect the environment, thus helping the areas shouldering key ecological functions, source regions for important water bodies and protected natural areas be compensated economically for their efforts.

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North China wetland sees more endangered migratory birds

[Xinhua, 19-02-2024] Over 300 oriental white storks, a species under first-class national protection, recently arrived at Nandagang wetland in Hebei Province, north China, tripling the number observed in the same period last year, according to the wetland's management office.

Listed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, oriental white storks have strict requirements for their living environment. Only wetlands with abundant food, ample water sources and a high-quality ecological environment can become their habitats.

Due to improved ecological conditions, more than 100,000 migratory birds were monitored in Nandagang wetland in 2023, compared to 20,000 in 2019.

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Trade and Business

China's agricultural, industrial logistics report steady expansion in 2023

[China Daily, 29-02-2024] China's agricultural and industrial logistics logged steady growth in 2023, industry data shows.

The total value of agricultural product logistics came in at 5.3 trillion yuan (\$745.69 billion) last year, up 4.1 percent year-on-year, according to the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing.

The figure for industrial products climbed to 312.6 trillion yuan, up 4.6 percent year-on-year, with that growth being 1 percentage point higher than that of 2022.

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China's foreign trade of agricultural products stable in 2023

[Gov.cn, 30-01-2024] China's foreign trade of agricultural products remained generally flat year-on-year in 2023, official data showed.

The country's total foreign trade value of farm produce stood at \$333.03 billion last year, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

In breakdown, China's exports of agricultural products edged up 0.9 percent year-on-year to \$98.93 billion, while its imports of such products dipped 0.3 percent to \$234.11 billion.

The country's trade deficit came in at \$135.18 billion last year, down 1.2 percent from 2022, the data showed.

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China indoor farming market analysis indicates surge to \$7.5 billion by 2028

[Globe Newswire, 31-01-2024] The "China Indoor Farming Market - Forecasts from 2023 to 2028" report reveals an expansion trajectory, with the market projected to swell at an impressive CAGR of 10.99% from 2021 to 2028. This uptrend is set to take the market's valuation from US\$3.643 billion in 2021 to an estimated US\$7.559 billion by 2028.

The detailed analysis of the China indoor farming market indicates a robust growth pattern driven by the convergence of technological advancements, government support, and an urgent mandate to address food security in light of urbanisation and arable land challenges. This industry accounts for an innovative approach to agriculture, designed to bolster local food production despite the constraints of traditional farming practices.

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China's embrace of GM crops will have global implications

[Think China, 22-02-2024] Despite China's efforts to make genetically modified organisms (GMO) technology a key plank of China's food security, China has yet to meaningfully translate its research efforts into successful commercialisation, say academics. If China manages to overcome the various obstacles to commercialising GM crops, the global landscape of GMO governance, production and exports will be greatly changed.

Being the world's largest agricultural producer, a major food importer, a leading agricultural investor, and a key player in global agricultural technology cooperation, China's acceptance of GMOs will have far-reaching implications for other countries.

On one hand, more food-exporting countries will be willing to grow GM crops as China approves more GM varieties. On the other hand, with more Chinese domestic investment in agribiotech domestically and growing outward agricultural expansion through the Food Silk Road, China's farming practices and GM seed adoptions will inevitably affect those of regional countries and beyond.

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China, Brazil cement agricultural cooperation

[GB, 22-02-2024] Chinese agricultural companies have ratcheted up collaboration with Brazilian counterparts through mergers and acquisitions, reflecting closer economic relations and China's imperative to secure and diversify food supplies, as the two countries celebrate their 50th anniversary this year.

As part of the latest efforts to deepen cooperation, Chinese companies such as Syngenta and Yuan Longping High-Tech Agriculture Co have made their moves this year in lining up to acquire stakes in Brazilian seed companies, according to media reports.

Chinese experts have said that the latest moves by the Chinese industry conglomerates showed their strong willingness to expand supply chain cooperation with the South American country in a wide range of areas, including trade, investment, business operations, technology interactions and more.

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New research reveals changing dairy habits in Chinese consumers

[Diary News, 22-02-2024] Recent research conducted as part of the Riddet Institute's NZ Milk Means More research program has unveiled noteworthy insights into the evolving landscape of Chinese dairy consumption.

Surveying 1,000 Chinese milk consumers aged between 45 and 75 in major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Shenyang, the research sheds light on the changing dynamics in this significant market.

This research underscores the dynamic nature of China's dairy market, with a notable shift in consumer preferences and a growing openness to diverse dairy products, providing valuable insights for industry stakeholders and businesses aiming to navigate this evolving landscape.

Initially, the popularity of UHT milk prevailed across the nation due to a lack of cold chain distribution and home refrigeration. Nevertheless, the research indicates a growing interest in imported milk, often in powdered form, particularly observed in the city of Guangzhou.

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Agrovision signs agreement for large-scale berry farming operations in China

[Agrovision, 19-02-2024] Agrovision, one of the world's fastest growing producers and year-round suppliers of premium super-fruits and the only large-scale berry company to claim 100% vertical integration, announced that it has signed an agreement with the Longhua Residents Committee, Midu County, to introduce large-scale farming operations in the Yunnan province of China. The agreement for a 33-hectare berry plantation begins the first of several agreements for a total 2000 hectares. The new Yunnan farming operation serves to advance the company's promise of premium super-fruits, 52-weeks a year, of domestically grown, premium berries.

Agrovision grows the finest varieties at scale for consistent, year-round supply; and leverages select global microclimates, genetics and innovation across the supply chain, to bring to market new premium super-fruit varieties that offer a superior eating experience. The Yunnan province, with warm tropical days and cold nights, offers an optimal growing microclimate for Agrovision's leading blueberry varieties with the first berry production for sale expected locally throughout China in Q1 2025.

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