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Policies

China to bolster financial, insurance support to agriculture, rural areas

[Xinhua, 22-04-2020] China will ramp up financial and insurance assistance to sectors related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers, according to a circular issued by the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission.

To secure the supply of major farm produce, the commission encouraged commercial banks to strengthen financial support for grain production, circulation, processing, storage, import and export and consumption, and offer good financial services to the animal husbandry industry.

Further financial assistance should be offered to family farms, rural cooperatives and people returning or moving to the countryside to set up businesses, said the circular.

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China's agriculture upgrade to accelerate in next decade

[Xinhua, 20-04-2020] The transformation and upgrading of agriculture in China will significantly accelerate in the next 10 years, and the level of agricultural modernization will steadily improve, according to a report released on 20 April.

The China Agricultural Outlook (2020-2029) released by the China Agricultural Outlook Conference 2020 summarized and reviewed the market situation of 18 major agricultural products in 2019, made projections on production, consumption, trade and price in the next 10 years, and analyzed existing uncertainties.

The focus of China's agriculture development will shift from increasing production to improving quality. The production and supply of green, ecological, high-quality and safe products will increase significantly, the report said.

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China's rural collective property rights system pilot reform to cover all agricultural counties

[Xinhua, 28-04-2020] The pilot reform of the rural collective property rights system aims to cover all agriculture-related counties this year, an official report said.

To promote the reform of rural collective property rights system is an important task of comprehensively deepening rural reform and is also crucial for the implementation of the rural vitalization strategy, said the report submitted to the ongoing regular session of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

Since 2015, the government has organized four batches of rural collective property rights system pilot programs in 15 provincial regions, while other provincial regions also independently selected some counties and villages to carry out provincial-level pilot programs.

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Policy tools to help nation come out of the epidemic shadow

[China daily, 21-04-2020] China has plenty of room to use macroeconomic policies to cushion the impact of the novel coronavirus outbreak; and the country's long-term fundamentals for better economic development remain unchanged, the top economic regulator said on 20 April.

In fact, China's business is gradually back to normal with the help of government measures to fight the coronavirus epidemic, as major industrial enterprises had an average work resumption rate of 99 percent by April 14.

In the next step, China will shorten a negative list that is off limits for foreign investors, pursuing higher-level opening up in the fields of services, manufacturing and agriculture.

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China releases regulation on control of crop diseases, pests

[Xinhua, 02-04-2020] China's State Council has released a regulation on the prevention and control of diseases and pests affecting crops. The regulation will go into effect on May 1.

In order to ensure food security and agricultural product quality, and protect the environment, the regulation provides detailed rules on the prevention and control measures from four aspects.

The regulation defines responsibilities, improves the prevention and control system, standardizes specialized prevention and control services and encourages green measures.

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China excludes dogs from draft list of edible animals

[China daily, 09-04-2020] The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has excluded dogs from its draft list of edible terrestrial animals.

The draft was published on 8 April at the ministry's website to solicit public opinions.

The draft has proposed as edible species the 18 traditional forms of livestock including pigs, cattle, chickens and ducks, alongside 13 special species including ostriches, silver foxes and minks.

The ministry said excluding dogs - an essential human companion animal - is a common global practice and is considered a sign of civilization.

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China's agriculture ministry outlines spending priorities for 2020

[Xinhua, 02-04-2020] China's agriculture ministry outlined spending priorities for 2020 during a teleconference, according to a statement released on its website.

As COVID-19 has been basically curbed, the country will ramp up financial support this year to stabilize the production and supply of agricultural produce, and make all-out efforts to ensure fiscal funds and subsidies for spring plowing, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

Financial institutions were urged to offer greater assistance to key agricultural areas and entities, while favorable credit policies such as re-lending for anti-virus firms and re-loans for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises should be put in place, the ministry said.

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China's agriculture sector withstands COVID-19 epidemic

[Xinhua, 28-04-2020] China's agriculture sector logged robust performance in the first quarter of the year despite the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, an official said.

Wei Baigang, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, said at a press conference that the country recorded a 3.5 percent year-on-year increase in the added value of the country's planting industry and had sufficient daily food supplies.

China has favorable conditions to achieve a bumper summer grain harvest as the spring planting has proceeded smoothly, said Wei, noting that agriculture-related enterprises have all returned to their normal capacity.

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Plowing work a positive sign in agriculture

[China Daily, 20-04-2020] Spring plowing in China is seeing promising momentum, with the area planted with grain accounting for 21 percent of the annual plan, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs revealed on 19 April.

Wheat production in Southwest China along the Yangtze and Yellow rivers is expected to see an increase in the coming harvest season.

In response to concerns that the pandemic could disrupt supply chains and fuel price surges in imported soybeans — a major source of feed for pigs and chickens — the ministry said China's soybean reserve was big enough to ensure fodder supply.

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No food shortages in China, meat & soybean imports 'worrying'

[CGTN, 20-04-2020] China is not running out of food so people don't have to buy more than they need, an expert has told CGTN, amid concerns of shortages after some countries imposed restrictions on exports of agricultural products. And while there's plenty to go around, thanks to the country's reserves, China's dependence on imports for meat and soybean could eventually spell trouble if epidemic measures further disrupt supply chains.

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China gets go-ahead to start trading hog futures

[Reuters, 21-04-2020] China is set to become the second market in the world after the United States to trade live pig futures after the securities regulator said on 24 April the Dalian Commodity Exchange could launch a contract in the world's top pork producer.

The new contract, which has been under discussion for more than a decade and awaiting a green light for three years, comes as Beijing tries to jump start its economy amid growing worries about a long and deep contraction.

China Securities Regulatory Commission said in a statement on its website that it would help players in its most valuable agricultural market - worth nearly 1 trillion yuan (\$141 billion) - manage risk, while helping the sector to develop.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China's BeiDou satellites help precise fertilizer distribution

[Xinhua, 31-03-2020] China's BeiDou navigation system is helping farmers apply fertilizers and pesticides more precisely, according to a report by Science and Technology Daily.

An intelligent fertilizer-pesticide distributor, assisted by the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System and big data technology, has been working in the wheat field in Hancun village in Jiangdu county, east China's Jiangsu Province.

Through the remote network technology service platform, the machinery can provide high precision fertilizer distribution. When the movement of the machinery deviates from the target path, the system can correct the deviation in real-time.

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China improves sci-tech services for agriculture against COVID-19

[Xinhua, 02-04-2020] China has called on sci-tech experts to improve their services for spring plowing and the resumption of agricultural production amid the COVID-19 outbreak, an official with the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) said.

So far, the sci-tech experts have helped set up 11,500 enterprises in rural areas, transforming an average of 26,000 advanced technologies annually and benefiting over 65 million farmers.

Experts in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality launched an emergency research project to safeguard the supply of fresh food, fruits and vegetables as well as the harvest of spring tea.

The government of south China's Guangdong Province has appointed nearly 1,000 sci-tech experts to provide thousands of local farmers in poor villages with technological guidance for spring plowing amid the outbreak.

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Chinese researchers develop high-resolution digital soil atlas

[Xinhua, 06-04-2020] Chinese researchers have developed a high-resolution digital soil atlas for the whole country, which will play an important role in arable land conservation, pollution control and environmental quality assessment.

The research led by the Agricultural Resource and Regional Planning Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences has combined the soil information data investigated and collected since the 1980s.

The digital soil data can accurately reflect the spatial and temporal distribution characteristics of soil quality and the changing trend of soil and environmental quality, which is of great importance to policy-making on soil resource utilization and environmental management.

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Major rice producer promotes double-cropping rice to ensure food security

[Xinhua, 28-04-2020] In Hunan, a major rice producer in China, farmers planted double-cropping rice in most plain areas and even mountain areas with relatively poor farming conditions, to ensure stable grain yields.

However, with the rice-planting cost rising and the market price of rice dropping in recent years, more and more mountains switched to grow single-cropping rice. In Hunan's Dongting Lake plain, one of China's major commodity grain production bases, large areas of fertile land were used for crayfish farming for a better income.

Nationwide, the country also saw a falling planting area of double-cropping rice. In March, according to figures released by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the planting area of double-cropping rice in 2019 was about 9.3 million hectares, down about 2.3 million hectares compared to 2012.

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China's shrimp farmers 'terrified' as deadly virus threatens to destroy lucrative seafood industry

[SCMP, 12-04-2020] Shrimp farmers in China are watching with growing horror as a mysterious virus decimates aquaculture farms in the southern province of Guangdong,

slashing output of the popular seafood and threatening the livelihood of tens of thousands of households.

The virus, known as Decapod iridescent virus 1, or Div1, was first detected as early as 2014, but came back with a vengeance last spring and again in February this year, affecting about a quarter of the area under shrimp production, local farmers said.

The spread of the disease, which is not known to be harmful for humans, has left the shrimp industry in Guangdong fretting over whether it will face mass deaths of a similar scale to the African swine fever crisis, which wiped out as much as 60 per cent of China's pig herd.

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China cracks down on swine fever prevention as it urges higher production

[Reuters, 01-04-2020] China will closely monitor swine fever prevention measures as it pushes farmers to restore hog production to achieve its full-year target, the agriculture ministry said April 1.

Despite improvement in China's containment of African swine fever, it still takes time to restore pork output from hog stocks, the ministry told local governments in a video conference, adding that frequent transportation of piglets and breeding sows has raised the risk of resurgence of the disease.

The ministry also asked local governments to conduct strict investigations into the transportation of animals and crack down on irregularities, such as the sale of pigs that have died from the disease.

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African swine fever cases in April

1 April, Sichuan province

Click [here](#) for details

2 April, Gansu province

Click [here](#) for details

5 April, Chongqing City

Click [here](#) for details

12 April, Gansu and Shaanxi provinces

Click [here](#) for details

17 April, Jiangsu Province

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21 April, Sichuan province

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Trade and Business

China's meat imports surge 70 pct in first two months

[Xinhua, 04-04-2020] China's meat imports surged during the first two months of the year to cope with rising domestic demand, official data showed.

Meat imports soared 69.6 percent year on year to 1.25 million tonnes during the first two months, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Imports of pork and pork entrails skyrocketed 98.2 percent from a year earlier to 720,000 tonnes.

China approved 997 new meat companies from the start of the year to March 24, including 450 pork firms, data also showed.

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China's pork imports triple in March while new swine fever cases continue to emerge

[Pigsite, 14-04-2020] China, the world's biggest consumer of pork, brought in 391,000 tonnes last month, up from 127,218 tonnes in March 2019, according to Reuters calculations based on data from General Administration of Customs.

Shipments of pork in the first quarter came to 951,000 tonnes, nearly double the same period last year, the customs data showed.

The deadly African swine fever (ASF) disease reduced China's pig herd by at least 40 percent in 2019, slashing pork output and sending prices of the country's favourite meat to record highs. China confirmed two new cases of the virus in the northern provinces of Gansu and Shaanxi, the country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said in a statement on 12 April.

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China sees higher 2020 soybean, pork imports amid industry challenges

[Reuters, 20-04-2020] China expects to import more soybeans and pork this year following the novel coronavirus outbreak and African swine fever, which has decimated its pig herds.

Soybean imports are forecast at 92.48 million tonnes this year, rising to 96.62 million tonnes in 2025 and 99.52 million tonnes in 2029, an official from the agriculture ministry told a video conference on the outlook for agriculture released on 20 April.

Pork imports this year are seen rising to 2.8 million tonnes, a 32.7% increase from the previous year.

China is a key buyer and consumer of soybeans and pork globally, and typically imports millions of tonnes of soybeans per year to crush for meal to feed its livestock.

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Value of China's farm imports from U.S. were \$5.05 bln in Q1

[Reuters, 14-04-2020] China brought in 35.56 billion yuan (\$5.05 billion) worth of farm goods from the United States in the first three months of 2020, according to customs data.

China brought in 7.81 million tonnes of soybeans from the U.S. in the first quarter of 2020, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Shipments of U.S. pork to China during the same period of time came in at 168,000 tonnes.

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China's fruit farmers hurt by lockdown losses as harvests rot

[Reuters, 02-04-2020] China's fruit farmers, hurt by lost crops from coronavirus lockdowns and a slow recovery in demand, are looking to reduce plantings, switch crops or even take other jobs to cover their losses.

Quarantine measures to curb the spread of the virus have disrupted supply chains and labour, preventing many farmers from harvesting produce or selling any they could salvage.

China is the largest producer of many fruits, accounting for over half the world's apples and roughly 70% of all grapefruit, peaches, tangerines and pears, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data, although most is consumed locally.

Hardest hit have been small farmers without access to cold storage or those producing quick-spoiling produce such as cherry tomatoes and strawberries.

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Pigs fly in as China replenishes world's biggest hog herd

[Reuters, 02-04-2020] Six planes carrying more than 4,000 high-quality French breeding pigs have arrived in China so far this year, the first of an expected dozens of plane-loads as the world's top pork producer rebuilds its decimated hog herd.

China is ramping up imports as it rushes to restock after an outbreak of African swine fever swept through the country from late 2018, killing tens of millions of pigs and reducing its sow herd by as much as 60%.

China imports breeding pigs to take advantage of traits like increased productivity and better meat quality that global genetics firms select for during breeding. A top breeding sow can have a litter of as many as 16 piglets.

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Epidemic unlikely to hurt soybean import, ministry says

[China daily, 04-04-2020] China's soybean imports haven't been affected by the spread of COVID-19 globally and the soybean production is expected to increase in major soybean exporting countries, officials with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

The COVID-19 is still spreading and Brazil, Argentina and the US are the countries with severe epidemic. The ministry will pay close attention to the impact of the epidemic on China's soybean imports together with relevant departments,.

The ministry will continue to promote the soybean production in China to increase domestic supply.

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China snake village scales down as coronavirus prompts wildlife trade ban

[Reuters, 08-04-2020] Since China began frantic efforts to curb a coronavirus epidemic in late January, residents in the tiny snake breeding village of Zisiqiao have had to come to terms with a ban on wildlife trading, its lifeline for decades. Zisiqiao employed hundreds of people to breed three million snakes a year.

China issued a temporary ban on the trade and consumption of wildlife on Jan. 23 and vowed to amend animal protection and epidemic prevention legislation to make that ban permanent. Thirteen provinces have implemented their own local regulations to ban wildlife consumption.

While some residents said they expected restrictions to be relaxed once the crisis ends, government officials insisted they were permanent, and even if new licenses are issued later this year, the criteria will be far stricter.

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China aims to boost domestic demand to ease coronavirus impact

[Reuters, 08-04-2020] China's government will work on expanding domestic demand and actively boosting consumption as the coronavirus pandemic makes economic development more difficult, state television reported.

China has ample grain reserves and is fully capable of securing the supply of grain and agricultural products, it said.

Facing a complex and severe pandemic that is putting increasing downward pressure on the world's economy, China needs to be prepared to respond to the changing external environment in the long term, it said.

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China releases 500,000 T of reserve soybeans to COFCO amid supply crunch

[Reuters, 08-04-2020] China's state stockpiler Sinograin has granted another 500,000 tonnes of soybeans from state reserves to the country's top state-owned crusher COFCO for commercial crushing, according to two sources briefed on the matter.

The move comes after rains delayed cargoes from Brazil, China's top supplier of soybeans, and caused soybean inventories to fall to record lows, forcing some plants to curb operations.

It will be the second batch of state reserve soybeans granted to COFCO this year. Sinograin released 500,000 tonnes to the state-owned agriculture conglomerate earlier in the year.

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China's leading pet food maker net profit up nearly 40 pct in 2019

[Xinhua, 08-04-2020] China's leading pet food maker Yantai China Pet Foods Co., Ltd. (China Pet Foods) saw annual growth of 39.97 percent in net profit attributable to shareholders of the listed company in 2019, the company announced.

China Pet Foods said its net profit reach 79 million yuan (about 11.18 million U.S. dollars) last year.

In 2019, the company recorded sales revenue of 1.72 billion yuan, up 21.52 percent year on year.

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Retreating food costs ease China's consumer inflation, factory prices slip

[Xinhua, 10-04-2020] Retreating food costs in China eased consumer inflation in March, while factory prices fell deeper over depressed demand due to the novel coronavirus outbreak, official data showed 10 April.

China's consumer price index (CPI), the main gauge of inflation, grew 4.3 percent year on year last month, moderating from 5.2 percent in February as economic activities including transport and logistics gradually recovered after effective epidemic containment in the country, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

On a monthly basis, consumer prices went down 1.2 percent. Food prices, which account for nearly one-third of China's CPI, headed down 3.8 percent last month.

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