

Contents

Policies	1
CPC issues regulations for rural work	1
Chinese city sells discounted pork as meat prices soar	1
UN Climate Action Summit: China's Position and Action	1
China seeks people's feedback on blanket cuts in pollution war	1
China pledges efforts to develop family farms	2
Farmers' festival celebrated as China stresses food security	2
Science, Technology and Environment	2
China develops new high-yield soybean variety	2
Shanghai launches green agri-product promotion platform.....	2
Vertical farming labs set sights on China	3
High-precision! Satellite data to be used to address agriculture problems in Zimbabwe	3
Some internet firms see hog heaven in pork market	3
China says no more armyworm threat to major corn area this year	4
Northwest area sees increasing precipitation	4
Program tests resilience of rice in frigid, salty soil.....	4
China pledges support for poverty reduction projects using internet	4
Algae-plagued lake in east China gets cleaner.....	5
U.K. Ambassador: Great Britain and China are global partners.....	5
Trade and Business	5
China's grain output to remain over 650 bln kg in 2019	5
China's grain output rises nearly 6 times in 70 years	6
China Mengniu offers \$1bn for infant formula maker Bellamy's	6
Crawfish craze keeps industry on a roll	6
China has 56 mln tonnes of corn left in temporary state reserve	6
China corn industry also hit by African swine fever as demand for pig feed drops	7
Sheep meat exports to China a step closer	7
China green lights eight Argentine meat plants for beef exports.....	7
Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China	8
China sees pig production capacity recovering.....	8
Swine fever may affect pork for several years.....	8
China toughens crackdown on illegal African swine fever vaccines	8
China to subsidize pig farms to ensure supply.....	8
African swine fever outbreaks in September 2019	9
African swine fever restrictions lifted in September 2019	9

Policies

CPC issues regulations for rural work

[Xinhua, 01-09-2019] The Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee has issued a set of regulations for the country's rural work, as well as a circular calling on local governments and government agencies to follow the regulations.

The regulations were designed to uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership over rural work, facilitate the implementation of the rural vitalization strategy and to improve the Party's capacity to lead the country's rural work in the new era.

Major tasks of the CPC's rural work are to strengthen the Party's leadership in economic development, socialist democracy, socialist cultural and ethical issues, social and ecological development, as well as to improve Party building in rural areas, according to the regulations.

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Chinese city sells discounted pork as meat prices soar

[Reuters, 02-09-2019] A city in southern China is selling a limited quantity of pork at discounted prices to help consumers cope with soaring prices, as the world's top pork-eating nation deals with a meat shortage caused by the death of pigs due to African swine fever.

From Sept. 1, people in Nanning, the capital of the southwestern Guangxi region, can buy up to 1 kg of pork a day at a discount of more than 10% to the average market price over the previous 10 days, said the state-backed Nanning Evening News on Sunday, 1 September.

Pork prices in Nanning rose to 40 yuan (\$5.64) per kg last week, according to industry website ZhuE.

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UN Climate Action Summit: China's Position and Action

[MEE, 17-09-2019] China appreciates and supports UN Secretary-General Guterres's initiative to hold the UN Climate Action Summit.

China has always attached great importance to addressing climate change. Upholding a national strategy of attaching equal importance to mitigation and adaptation, China has regarded addressing climate change as a great opportunity to achieve high-quality economic development and promote ecological progress. China will continue, as always, to firmly implement the Paris Agreement, fully honor its commitments, promote the establishment of an equitable, rational, and win-win global climate governance mechanism, and work with others to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

China has actively promoted efforts to address climate change in the areas of biodiversity, forestry and grassland, agriculture, oceans and water resources. ... In agriculture, the use of chemical fertilizers has achieved negative growth ahead of schedule, the comprehensive utilization rate of livestock and poultry waste and straws has increased significantly, and biomass energy has developed rapidly.

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China seeks people's feedback on blanket cuts in pollution war

[Reuters, 03-09-2019] China's environment watchdog has asked people to call out local officials carrying out blanket curbs in a "one size fits all" way to support the nation's fight against pollution, as these have led to hindering large parts of the industrial economy.

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) said in a statement on Monday 2 September that it welcomes reports from public on local authorities conducting blanket cuts, as there have been instances of officials indiscriminately forcing all companies to shut down or cut production, to deal with environmental issues.

The public at large has grown increasingly discontent on blanket cuts as it disrupted large parts of the industrial economy, especially amid the slowing economic growth and escalating trade tension with the United States.

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China pledges efforts to develop family farms

[Xinhua, 18-09-2019] China will intensify efforts to tackle problems restricting the development of family farms, an official said.

Governments at all levels should support the construction of warehouses, ice storehouses and other infrastructures to boost the development of family farms, Zhao Yang, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, told a press conference. Preferential fiscal and tax policies will be formulated to family farms and more training will also be introduced, he added.

The country aims to set up more quality family farms as it tries to improve agricultural efficiency and raise farmers' incomes.

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Farmers' festival celebrated as China stresses food security

[Xinhua, 23-09-2019] As hundreds of millions of farmers celebrated their harvest festival on Monday, 23 Sept, China expects a bumper harvest of crops from rice to corn and soybeans during the major harvest season.

The Chinese farmers' harvest festival falls on the Autumn Equinox each year.

The festival, along with many other measures, showed the government's increasing focus on agriculture, particularly food security.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China develops new high-yield soybean variety

[China daily, 30-09-2019] China has developed a new variety of high-yield soybean and has tested it in a trial planting area, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The new variety of soybean named Henong 71 was planted in the test fields in Shihezi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It achieved an average yield of 447.47 kg of soybean per mu (0.07 hectares), reaching a new high of China's soybean output.

Researchers used molecular design breeding technology, hybridization as well as radiation breeding methods.

Experts from the Ministry of Science and Technology said the new soybean variety indicates that soybean breeding technology has been greatly improved in China, according to the CAS.

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Shanghai launches green agri-product promotion platform

[Xinhua, 04-09-2019] An online green agri-product promotion platform was launched Wednesday 4 September in eastern China's Shanghai.

Residents will be able to search for locally produced green agri-products via a mobile app, together with the products' sales links and green food certificates issued by China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Shanghai is working on the production technologies and equipment of green agri-products, with an aim to reach a 30 percent certification rate of green agri-products.

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Vertical farming labs set sights on China

[China Daily, 14-09-2019] While indoor farming companies race to transform the future of food production, they have set their sights on China to capitalize on the country's growing demand for food production and food safety.

In vertical farming facilities, plants, such as vegetables, flowers and herbs, are grown in stacked layers with a software-managed system regulating temperature, water, nutrients and LED lighting that replaces sunlight.

One of the advantages of vertical farming is that the controlled environment won't be affected by adverse natural conditions that conventional farmland often faces.

But to Chinese consumers, safety would be a selling point since the confined indoor space creates a pesticide-free environment, he said.

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High-precision! Satellite data to be used to address agriculture problems in Zimbabwe

[Xinhua, 06-09-2019] The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) handed over an arable land distribution data product here on Thursday to Zimbabwe, as the two countries are strengthening scientific cooperation to boost food security in the southern African country.

The product, co-developed by the CAS, China's top scientific and technological institution, and the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), contains high-precision data which will help Zimbabwe address challenges of agriculture productivity and climate change.

Visiting President of the CAS Bai Chunli handed over the software disc to Zimbabwean Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement Perence Shiri, saying the data product was developed following a general agreement the two sides signed in 2015.

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Some internet firms see hog heaven in pork market

[China daily, 16-09-2016] China is the world's biggest pork producer and consumer, producing about half of the world's total. Statistics showed that the value of the market related to pigs is expected to be as high as 3 trillion yuan, which includes 1.4 trillion yuan direct from the pork industry, Futures Daily reported.

Faced with a mega market and high returns, some internet companies have also followed suit.

NetEase quietly began to raise organic, non-GMO black pigs about 10 years ago. Last March, Aliyun, Alibaba's cloud computing subsidiary, announced that the company plans to put AI technology into the pig farming industry. Presently, Aliyun has invested hundreds of millions of yuan in this project, and predicted the number of pigs being raised to reach 10 million by 2020.

Chinese e-commerce giant JD also set up its agriculture and animal husbandry unit last November, putting pig facial recognition technology into pig farming. This high technology

can identify different pigs by their faces, monitor them and record their weight and health condition.

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China says no more armyworm threat to major corn area this year

[Reuters, 17-09-2019] China's agriculture ministry said on 17 Sept the period of danger from the fall armyworm pest was over for this year's crop and there was no longer a threat to the country's major corn production area in the northeast for now.

The fall armyworm can ravage large swathes of crops and has been moving northwards in the world's second-largest corn producer since January. China is set to begin its corn harvest early next month, with the market closely watching output amid tightening stocks.

The pest spread to 25 provinces this year and impacted more than 15 million mu (1 million hectares), officials at China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs told.

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Northwest area sees increasing precipitation

[China daily, 20-09-2019] Northwest China, which used to be cold and dry, is now getting warmer and wetter.

Statistics from the meteorological departments of northwestern provinces Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia Hui autonomous region showed these areas have seen climate warming and increasing precipitation since 1961, while the trend of warming and humidification has risen since 2000.

Research results released by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other institutions also showed that the northwestern regions, particularly the central and western areas within the range, have more precipitation, including parts of the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, the Qilian Mountains, the Hexi Corridor and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

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Program tests resilience of rice in frigid, salty soil

[China daily, 20-09-2019] A rice breeding program aimed at testing the resilience of rice strains that can grow in salty, frigid soil at high elevations was launched this week in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang.

The program, unveiled in a national agricultural park in Tieli city, is the country's first to test experimental rice species that are tolerant of saline-alkaline land-also known as saltwater rice-in frosty environments in Northeast China, according to the Qingdao Saline-Alkali Tolerant Rice Research and Development Center.

Currently, the average annual output of saltwater rice varieties planted in salty land in Northeast China stands at about 3.75 metric tons per hectare. It is generally acknowledged that a new strain of rice attains market potential if it can yield more than 4.5 tons per hectare, agricultural experts have said.

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China pledges support for poverty reduction projects using internet

[China daily, 20-09-2019] China will support projects on poverty reduction using the internet as a further step to win the battle against poverty, the National Development and Reform Commission said.

According to a guideline released on the website, the move will expand Internet coverage in China's impoverished regions.

The guideline called for expansion of the application of the internet, big data, internet of things and artificial intelligence in agriculture and rural areas.

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Algae-plagued lake in east China gets cleaner

[Xinhua, 18-09-2019] Blue-algae is still "a snake in the grass" in Taihu Lake, as the pollution treatment program in China's third-largest freshwater lake has entered its 13th year, according to the government in east China's Jiangsu Province.

The provincial departments of finance and environmental protection said the annual budget of 2 billion yuan (282 million U.S. dollars) has been appropriated for the lake pollution treatment since 2007. By the end of this year, the total funding would reach 26 billion yuan.

Water sample tests at 137 monitoring sites on the lake in 2018 showed the water quality of 94.2 percent of them is on par with the national Level IV standard.

China classifies water quality into six levels, from level I, which is suitable for drinking after minimal treatment, to level VI, which is severely polluted.

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U.K. Ambassador: Great Britain and China are global partners

[Caixin, 23-09-2019] The preparations for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China next month along with breakthroughs in science which have eradicated the scourge of smallpox and improved the lives of millions are reminders of global progress that we can celebrate.

U.K.-China cooperation on global challenges will be unaffected by Brexit. The U.K. will be an outward-looking and innovative country as it has always been. Here in China the U.K. already has over 1,500 people working in the embassy, consulates and our network across China.

We will continue to work closely with China to address the global challenges facing our citizens and the world. Next year, at the UN's 75th anniversary, we hope to be able to celebrate progress in tackling the world's challenges bringing us a step closer to a peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

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Trade and Business

China's grain output to remain over 650 bln kg in 2019

[Xinhua, 27-09-2019] China's grain output is expected to remain above 650 billion kg for a fifth straight year in 2019.

China has achieved a bumper grain harvest for 15 consecutive years, with per capita grain possession exceeding 470 kg, Han Changfu, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said at a press conference.

Han stressed policy support to ensure grain safety, and called for efforts to consolidate basic rural operation system, foster new business entities and implement more favorable subsidy and reward measures.

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China's grain output rises nearly 6 times in 70 years

[China daily, 23-09-2019] China will have another harvest of grains provided there are no major natural disasters this autumn, said an agriculture official, as the country's grain output last year reached 657.89 million tons, almost 6 times that of 1949.

The general situation for grain production remains positive across the country, showing a trend of increasing production, except for draughts and floods in some areas, said an official with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The country's grain output stood at 657.89 million tons in 2018. In 1949, the grain output was only 113.18 million tons. The grain output reached 300 million tons in 1978, 500 million tons in 1996, and 600 million tons in 2012.

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China Mengniu offers \$1bn for infant formula maker Bellamy's

[FT, 16-09-2019] China Mengniu Dairy has offered A\$1.5bn (\$1bn) to buy Bellamy's, an Australian infant formula maker, as it pushes ahead with ambitious plans to expand beyond its domestic market.

The proposed takeover by Hong Kong-listed Mengniu comes amid signs a wave of foreign investment by Chinese companies is slowing due to tighter credit conditions and deteriorating business conditions at home.

Chinese groups have become net sellers of assets this year for the first time in a decade, data from Dealogic shows. Last year, Chinese investment in Australia fell 36 per cent to A\$8.2bn, according to a joint report by University of Sydney and KPMG. But analysts said Mengniu's A\$1.5bn bid for Bellamy's showed deals were still being done in sectors enjoying strong consumer demand within China.

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Crawfish craze keeps industry on a roll

[China daily, 17-09-2019] Seafood-savvy Chinese are eating more crawfish at restaurants and through e-commerce purchases. Resembling small lobsters, the delicacy has become quite popular on Chinese dining tables and for late-night snacks over the years.

Last year, the total industrial output of crawfish in China was worth 369 billion yuan (\$52 billion), up 37.5 percent year-on-year, according to a new crawfish sector growth report released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in late August.

In May last year, the government released crawfish sector-related guidelines about the standardization of the circulation grade, safety and hygiene index, packing requirements, transportation and storage requirements, providing more specific guidance and monitoring for the crawfish market.

Speaking of industrial chains, sales in the crawfish cultivation sector hit 68 billion yuan last year. The processing industry yielded sales of 28.4 billion yuan, and sales in the tertiary industry, mainly catering, came in at 272.6 billion yuan, the report said.

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China has 56 mln tonnes of corn left in temporary state reserve

[Reuters, 17-09-2017] China has about 56 million tonnes of corn left in its temporary state reserve, a researcher with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on 17 Sept, after selling millions of tonnes of the grain from its stocks in recent years.

China will import about 4-4.5 million tonnes of corn this year, added Wu Tianlong, deputy researcher with the ministry's Rural Economy Research Center.

Corn is the main raw material for ethanol production, he told an industry event in Shanghai.

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China corn industry also hit by African swine fever as demand for pig feed drops

[SCMP, 17-09-2019] Corn accounted for almost 8 per cent of China's gross domestic product last year and 40 per cent of the country's overall grain production, but one of the country's three principle crops is feeling the effects of the African swine fever epidemic as demand for pig feed shrinks, according to industry insiders.

Along with wheat and rice, corn is one of the three principle crops in China, meaning the government will take steps to ensure the country's self-sufficiency as part of its overarching food security policy.

The annual output of corn was the largest of all crops at 257 million tonnes last year, with the corn industry also an important part of the nation's economy, contributing 7.8 per cent of China's gross domestic product last year.

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Sheep meat exports to China a step closer

[AHDB, 25-09-2019] A delegation from the General Administrations of Customs of the People's Republic of China arrived in the UK for a ten-day visit, which ended on 25th Sept.

During the mission, they were given a tour of a sheep farm, abattoir, feed mill and attended a feed testing workshop in a bid to better understand the disease control measures for sheep meat in the UK.

The visit forms part of ongoing work by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) alongside the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and meat levy bodies Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) as well as others including UKECP, to open the market for UK lamb.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said the visit was incredibly successful and marked a major step forward in the UK's ambitions to gain market access.

Click here for details

China green lights eight Argentine meat plants for beef exports

[Reuters, 19-09-2019] China's customs office said on 19 Sept it had granted export licenses to some Argentine meat-processing plants, as the Asian country looks to plug a supply gap after an African swine fever outbreak decimated China's pig herds.

China, the world's top pork producer, has seen its hog herd shrink by a third since the incurable disease arrived in the country more than a year ago. That has led to a spike in beef imports from markets like Argentina and Brazil.

Beijing approved seven Argentina poultry plants for exports to the world's top meat market last week, according to the Embassy of Argentina in Beijing.

China has also granted export licenses to 25 Brazil meatpacking plants.

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Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China

China sees pig production capacity recovering

[Reuters, 25-09-2015] China's pig production capacity is gradually recovering thanks to government support, an agriculture ministry official said.

Yang Zhenhai, chief of the ministry's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine Bureau, said the recovery was down to an African swine fever epidemic stabilising in late September, and as various policies came into effect.

Earlier this month, China issued a series of policies aimed at supporting national hog production, as pork prices surged to record highs following the worst disease outbreak to ever hit the world's leading producer of the meat.

Measures include subsidies to support the construction of large pig farms, simplify procedures and reduce the cost of land for pig farms.

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Swine fever may affect pork for several years

[China daily, 11-09-2019] The supply of pork in China may remain tight for the next few years, a leading pig industry expert said recently, citing "unprecedented losses" due to African swine fever, which has spread around the country since August last year.

Wang Lixian - president of the Chinese Association of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine's pig branch and a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Institute of Animal Sciences - said domestic pig stocks had plummeted since the first outbreak in the country was reported in Liaoning province, with industry insiders generally estimating a loss of between 30 and 60 percent.

However, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said last month that China's overall meat supply can meet demand this year despite tight pork supplies.

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China toughens crackdown on illegal African swine fever vaccines

[Xinhua, 02-09-2019] China has stepped up its crackdown on the illegal production, selling and use of "test, home-made and smuggled" vaccines for African swine fever, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA).

As of now, no country, including China, has approved a vaccine for African swine fever to go to market, so any African swine fever vaccines that appear on the market are illegal and will be disposed of, an official with the MARA said.

The MARA has been supporting and encouraging legitimate scientific research institutions and enterprises to work on the prevention and control measures for African swine fever, but no institutes have been approved to conduct clinical trials yet.

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China to subsidize pig farms to ensure supply

[Xinhua, 09-09-2019] China has decided to offer subsidies from the central budget to large pig farms to support their facilities construction in the latest effort to stabilize pork supply.

One-off subsidies will be handed out to newly built or rebuilt pig farms, scale farmers as well as some relocation projects before the end of 2020, according to work plans jointly released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The funds will be used to support the construction of facilities including epidemic prevention and automatic feed plants.

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African swine fever outbreaks in September 2019

Date	Location	Details
10 Sept	Xingqing District, Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous	Click here for details
23 Sept	Cenxi city, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous	Click here for details

African swine fever restrictions lifted in September 2019

Date	Location	Details
4 Sept	Jiajiang County, Sichuan Province	Click here for details
12 Sept	Honghu City, Hubei Province	Click here for details

This issue is compiled by SAIN Secretariat (UK). If you have any further enquiries, please contact Yuelai Lu at: y.lu@uea.ac.uk; for more information about SAIN, please visit: www.sainonline.org/English.html

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