

### Season's Greetings from SAIN Secretariat

#### Contents

<b>Policies .....</b>	<b>1</b>
China holds key economic meeting to plan for 2020 .....	1
China holds key conference to map out plans for 2020 rural work .....	1
China drafts new rules to control rural plastic pollution.....	1
China unveils plan to boost pork production .....	1
Grain output reaches record high in 2019 .....	2
China to establish 100 quality schools for training rural talent .....	2
New measures released for integration of Yangtze River Delta.....	2
China makes miracle in achieving food security .....	3
<b>Science, Technology and Environment.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Agriculture innovations to help boost crops, reduce waste .....	3
Better biosafety oversight planned after outbreak .....	3
Scientists develop 'cocktail therapy' for plant disease .....	3
China launches new optical remote sensing satellite .....	4
New commercial satellite launched in north China .....	4
The 2020 biodiversity COP: An opportunity for China to lead the world in conservation ...	4
Conservation brings birds and plants back to the lake.....	5
China launches water quality dataset for country's largest freshwater lake.....	5
<b>Trade and Business .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Swine fever causes increase in demand for UK pork exports .....	5
Chinese taste for British food catalyzes exports, report shows .....	5
Monthly pig stocks rise for 1st time in a year amid favorable policies .....	6
Agriculture insurance companies take a hit from African Swine Fever.....	6
Caviar 'queen': Chinese roe reigns around the world.....	6
China, Africa see robust growth in agricultural trade.....	7
Global animal health company eyes Chinese opportunity.....	7
<b>Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Pig farming gets a welcome boost .....	7
Land use changes to lift hog production .....	7
Rising pork prices boost fortunes of pig breeders .....	8
China's pork supply, demand to balance for the Chinese New Year .....	8
African swine fever outbreaks in December 2019.....	8
African swine fever restrictions lifted in December 2019 .....	8

## Policies

### **China holds key economic meeting to plan for 2020**

[Xinhua, 12-12-2019] The annual Central Economic Work Conference was held in Beijing.

Facing the complicated situation of mounting risks and challenges at home and abroad in 2019, China has maintained sustained and sound economic and social development and made key breakthroughs in the "three tough battles," seeing notable progress in targeted poverty reduction, effective prevention and control of financial risks, and general improvement in the environment, according to a statement released after the conference.

The country faces rising downward economic pressure amid intertwined structural, institutional and cyclical problems, according to the statement.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China holds key conference to map out plans for 2020 rural work**

[Xinhua, 21-012-2019] The central rural work conference was held in Beijing from Dec. 20 to 21, outlining the roadmap for the country's work related to agriculture, rural areas and rural people in the coming year.

The conference discussed a document on increasing efforts on major work concerning agriculture, rural areas and rural people to ensure the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects is achieved on time.

The conference stressed the importance of winning the battle against poverty, and called for consistent efforts to lift the rest of the poor population out of poverty and effective steps to prevent people from slipping back into poverty.

Efforts should be made to boost the development of rural infrastructure and water supply, and improve the rural living environment, education, medical services, social security, cultural activities and ecological environment, the conference said.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China drafts new rules to control rural plastic pollution**

[Reuters, 06-12-2019] China will tighten regulations on the use of plastic film by farmers to boost crop yields, which has become a major source of soil contamination throughout northern and western regions, according to a draft policy document published on 6 December.

The new rules, which have been opened to the public for consultation, will involve the establishment of a comprehensive "management system" covering the production, sale, utilization and recycling of thin plastic film in the countryside.

Chinese farmers, mostly in the arid north and west, cover fields with vast amounts of "plastic mulch" to help maintain soil moisture and protect against pests. The technique has played an important role in boosting yields and raising the quality of crops, the agriculture ministry said in a notice.

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### **China unveils plan to boost pork production**

[CAN, 06-12-2019] China will free up as much land as possible to restore pork production to pre-swine fever levels - including areas designated pig-free zones for environmental reasons, the agriculture ministry said Friday (Dec 6).

Authorities outlined a three-year plan to boost its pig-breeding facilities in a bid to restore the country's hog herds, devastated by African swine fever.

This will involve making the process for acquiring land for pig-breeding easier and working to reduce "forbidden" zones for pig farming by the end of 2020, the ministry said.

Formerly "pig-free" cities and counties - protected for environmental reasons - must be "reformed" to restore hog production to normal by 2021, according to the plan.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Grain output reaches record high in 2019**

[ECNS, 06-12-2019] China's total grain output reached a record high 663.84 million tons in 2019, increasing 5.94 million tons or 0.9 percent from 2018, according to a report published by the National Bureau of Statistics on 6 December.

China has achieved grain output growth while cutting grain planting areas by 14.62 million *mu* (0.975 million hectares) or 0.8 percent, from 2018 to 1.741 billion *mu* in 2019, according to the report.

While cutting the planting areas for grains such as rice, wheat and tubers, China has arranged more farmland to plant soybeans, increasing 13.82 million *mu* or 10.9 percent from 2018 to 140 million *mu* in 2019. Most of the increased planting areas are in Northeast China.

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### **China to establish 100 quality schools for training rural talent**

[Xinhua, 07-12-2019] China launched a program to establish 100 quality schools for training talent for its rural vitalization within two years.

These schools will cover various resources such as higher vocational colleges, agricultural radio and television schools and county-level vocational education centers, according to China Education Daily.

The expansion of higher vocational colleges this year has opened the door of higher education to farmers, an official from the Ministry of Education was quoted as saying, hailing the move as a major measure to vitalize vocational education related to agriculture and improve the quality of farmers' lives.

Click [here](#) for details

### **New measures released for integration of Yangtze River Delta**

[CGTN, 06-12-2019] In a massive country like China, there's always room for new development. The Chinese government on Dec 6 announced plans to bolster the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, one of its most dynamic regions.

New measures include the advancement of innovation-driven development and the upgrading of industry chains.

Officials say the measures focus on the key elements of greater integration and high-quality progress to lead the growth of the whole Yangtze River Economic Belt and eastern China.

The Delta region, which includes Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui, is among the areas with the most robust economic growth, the highest level of opening-up and the strongest capacities for innovation in China.

Click [here](#) for details

## **China makes miracle in achieving food security**

[Xinhua, 15-12-2019] Qu Dongyu, director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, said on Dec 15 that China has made a miracle in achieving food security.

Sound agricultural policy, innovation, and good management are keys to the Chinese success in achieving food security, he said.

The FAO chief said, China has been sharing its experience in the agricultural sector with African partners for decades and is willing to strengthen cooperation in areas of agricultural development plan, new techniques and new varieties of grain.

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## **Science, Technology and Environment**

### **Agriculture innovations to help boost crops, reduce waste**

[China daily, 18-12-2019] China will boost agricultural innovations and expand the use of advanced pest and weed control technologies to make its use of fertilizer and pesticide more productive, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on 18 Dec.

The latest data shows that the utilization rate of fertilizer used on land growing rice, corn and wheat — the amount of nutrients these crops can absorb — now stands at 39.2 percent, up by 1.4 percentage points from 2017. The application of pesticide also has reached 39.8 percent this year, up by 1 percentage points from 201.

The smarter use of fertilizers and pesticides has helped cut 1.4 billion yuan worth of urea output — a major component of traditional fertilizer, as well as 1.7 billion yuan worth of pesticide output.

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### **Better biosafety oversight planned after outbreak**

[China daily, 12-12-2019] Health authorities in Gansu province plan to strengthen oversight over biosafety at laboratories to guard against brucellosis following a fresh wave of infections that have affected nearly 100 personnel at a research institute in the province.

The Health Commission of Gansu has urged laboratory workers to increase awareness of safety regulations and demonstrate proficiency in protecting themselves from laboratory-acquired infections, including brucellosis, according to a notice posted on its website on Dec 11.

Brucellosis circulates rapidly between livestock but is not transmittable among humans. The latest outbreak, first reported on Dec 2, occurred among personnel at the Lanzhou Veterinary Research Institute in Lanzhou, the provincial capital.

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### **Scientists develop 'cocktail therapy' for plant disease**

[Xinhua, 08-12-2019] Researchers from China's Nanjing Agricultural University, Utrecht University in the Netherlands and the University of York in Britain developed a "cocktail therapy" to control bacterial wilt disease by blending viruses together to selectively destroy the pathogen.

They selected four bacteriophages that can infect *Ralstonia solanacearum* and isolated more than 1,000 strains of *Ralstonia solanacearum* in four Chinese provincial regions. They then tested different combinations of bacteriophages against the bacteria.

According to the research published in the journal Nature Biotechnology, increasing the number of bacteriophages in combinations decreased the incidence of bacterial wilt disease in greenhouse and field experiments, and the remaining bacteria grew much slower.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China launches new optical remote sensing satellite**

[Xinhua, 07-12-2019] China sent a new optical remote sensing satellite into space from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern China's Shanxi Province on 7 Dec.

The Jilin-1 Gaofen 02B satellite, which belongs to the Jilin-1 satellite family, was launched by Kuaizhou-1A (KZ-1A) and entered the planned orbit successfully.

The satellite will form a network with the 14 previously launched Jilin-1 satellites, providing remote sensing data and services for agriculture, forestry, resources and environment.

Click [here](#) for details

### **New commercial satellite launched in north China**

[Xinhua, 20-12-2019] A new commercial satellite was successfully launched from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shanxi Province 20 December.

The "BDSAGR-1" satellite has entered its scheduled orbit and is expected to provide accurate remote sensing data on crops in the river basins in north China and help modernize and digitalize China's agricultural industry.

The satellite belongs to the first phase of the "Guozhiheng Agricultural Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation" project jointly engineered by GasTianta and GZH-HNJ BDS AGR Co., Ltd.

Zeng Weigang, general manager of GasTianta, said the satellite was designed to operate in a sun-synchronous orbit with an orbit period of 96 minutes.

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### **The 2020 biodiversity COP: An opportunity for China to lead the world in conservation**

[China daily, 10-12-2019] As with many of the world's ills, biodiversity conservation, or the maintenance of the huge variety of species on Earth, has its own UN convention. This time next year China will be hosting the 15th Conference of Parties (COP) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province. Many are calling it the "Paris of biodiversity," imagining it will be a breakthrough moment for the conservation community to set goals and gain public awareness of the one million species now under threat of extinction from human behavior.

China by no means has a perfect track record on biodiversity protection. Pollution, deforestation, and poaching have pushed species like the Chinese white dolphin, pangolin, giant panda, South China tiger, and one-horned rhino to the brink of extinction. Reforestation efforts have been criticized for creating monocultures instead of thriving habitats, and Chinese consumer demand for products like ivory is infamous for driving poaching around the world. Nevertheless, COP15 provides an opportunity for China to begin a new era of biodiversity conservation, one defined by coordination with climate adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as ambition and high-level engagement.

Click [here](#) for details

## **Conservation brings birds and plants back to the lake**

[China daily, 10-12-2019] For thousands of years, the Dongting Lake, which is along the Yangtze River, Asia's longest river, had been a thoroughfare for migratory birds with its biologically rich wetlands, but its status was tarnished amid the anti-hunger drive and economic pursuit in the last century.

It was not until recently that birds regained interest in the lake.

In 2017, a campaign was launched to chop down invasive poplars in the lake. The West Dongting Lake Reserve alone has cleared more than 6,600 hectares of poplars and it plans to complete the eradication by next year.

Meanwhile, the reserve has shut down all the paper mills and pig farms that discharge effluent into the lake and is gearing up for a 10-year fishing moratorium-effective on Jan 1-on the Yangtze River.

Click [here](#) for details

## **China launches water quality dataset for country's largest freshwater lake**

[Xinhua, 23-12-2019] China has launched a water environment dataset of Poyang Lake, east China's Jiangxi Province, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The lake has witnessed remarkable changes in water yield and quality since 2000 due to human activities. Researchers from the Poyang Laboratory for Wetland Ecosystem Research of the CAS conducted positioning observation of the lake from 2013 to 2018.

The indicators, including water temperature, electrical conductivity, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, total nitrogen and phosphorus were recorded. The results showed that the water quality of Poyang Lake had a rapid worsening trend.

Click [here](#) for details

## **Trade and Business**

### **Swine fever causes increase in demand for UK pork exports**

[China Daily, 23-12-2019] United Kingdom pork exports to China are rising rapidly, according to new trade data, as Chinese farmers continue to contend with outbreaks of African swine fever virus.

Customs figures released by the UK government show that exports of British pork to China rose 150 percent by volume in October compared to the same month last year. This trend contributed to a 20 percent increase in total UK pork exports over the period.

According to China's Ministry of Commerce, this year outbreaks of African swine fever caused a shortage of 10 million tons, or around 20 percent of China's total pork output.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Chinese taste for British food catalyzes exports, report shows**

[CEN, 11-12-2019] The rapid growth of China's middle class is providing a boost for United Kingdom food and drink exporters, according to a new report.

Exports to the Chinese mainland of UK food and drink products increased by 16.2 percent in the first half of this year compared to the same period in 2018, the UK-based Food and Drink Federation, or FDF, revealed this week.



Exports during the period reached 344.4 million pounds (\$453.7 million), making the Chinese mainland the eighth-largest importer of British food and beverages and the second-largest non-European Union importer behind the United States.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Monthly pig stocks rise for 1st time in a year amid favorable policies**

[China Daily, 11-12-2019] China's stock of hogs rose 2 percent in November, the first monthly increase in about a year, signaling that favorable policies to boost hog production despite the epidemic of African swine fever have taken effect, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Monday.

The inventory of breeding sows also went up by 4 percent in November, building on an uptick of 0.6 percent in October, the ministry added. Previously, the sow stock had been on a decline for about 19 months.

"With both significant indexes having bottomed out recently, the country's hog production capacity is faring better and becoming steady," Yang Zhenhai, chief of the ministry's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine Bureau, said in a statement posted on the ministry's website.

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### **Agriculture insurance companies take a hit from African Swine Fever**

[Caixin, 12-12-2019] China's agriculture insurance companies have taken a hit from the nationwide deadly African swine fever that wiped out a significant portion of the country's pigs, Caixin has learned.

The loss ratio of pig insurance has risen to 130%, meaning the insurance companies are effectively paying out 130 yuan for every 100 yuan collected, multiple industry experts told Caixin at a recent agricultural insurance forum. Before the outbreak, the loss ratios for pig insurance companies ranged from 50% to 60%.

In addition, most smaller farmers have shown less enthusiasm to start raising pigs again after the losses they incurred due to the deadly pig fever, which in turn has made insurance companies' revenue decrease.

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### **Caviar 'queen': Chinese roe reigns around the world**

[AFP, 12-12-2019] The caviar on the menu of Michelin-starred restaurants may come from an unexpected place: China.

The country has endured embarrassing food scandals in recent years, but its sturgeon eggs have gained the respect of caviar connoisseurs around the world.

It has also become pricier for US buyers as Chinese caviar is among the slew of products hit with 25 percent tariffs in the US-China trade war.

The bulk of China's production comes from a picturesque lake ringed by mountains in eastern Zhejiang province where industry leader Kaluga Queen breeds the giant fish.

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## **China, Africa see robust growth in agricultural trade**

[Xinhua, 09-12-2019] The trade volume of agricultural products between China and Africa increased about tenfold from 2000 to 2018, according to China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The trade volume increased from 650 million U.S. dollars in 2000 to 6.92 billion in 2018, registering an average annual growth of 14 percent, agricultural minister Han Changfu said at the 1st Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Agriculture that opened Monday in the southern resort city of Sanya.

The inaugural forum brought together nearly 500 participants, including representatives from institutions of higher education and research, enterprises from home and abroad, as well as international organizations.

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## **Global animal health company eyes Chinese opportunity**

[Xinhua, 16-12-2019] China's robust development and wider opening up have been creating massive opportunities for foreign businesses, a senior executive of a U.S.-based global animal health company has said.

"It would probably be our biggest opportunity because we still have a lot of growth there," Brian McCawley, senior vice president of sales at Alltech, told Xinhua in a recent interview, referring to the company's business ambition on the Chinese market.

The company, headquartered in Nicholasville, the southeastern U.S. state of Kentucky, develops agricultural products for use in both livestock and crop farming, as well as products for the food industry.

The executive believes that mutual benefits from the market will endure.

Click [here](#) for detail

## **Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China**

### **Pig farming gets a welcome boost**

[China Daily, 06-12-2019] Traditional pig industry players and agricultural companies are increasing their investments in pig breeding and expanding production, in the wake of a pork shortage in China following an outbreak of African swine fever.

The swine fever has caused a shortage of more than 10 million metric tons of pork, or at least 20 percent of China's total pork output this year. Pork accounts for more than 60 percent of China's meat consumption.

New Hope Group, a major Chinese private company involved in animal husbandry and food processing, said it would build nine pig-breeding projects with an investment of 8.95 billion yuan (\$1.28 billion). Among which, 20 percent of the funds will come from the company itself, and the rest will be from loans, according to a company statement.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Land use changes to lift hog production**

[China daily, 20-12-2019] The production of hogs should get a boost with the recent release of a document allowing the construction of larger agriculture-related facilities.

Limits for the maximum area of land allowed for the construction of pig farms -1 hectare- have been removed, according to the document released by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.



Instead, the local government can set maximums based on their own conditions, said the document.

It also allowed facilities and buildings that are directly used for the production of agricultural products, including crops, livestock, poultry and aquatic products to be built on ordinary farmland.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Rising pork prices boost fortunes of pig breeders**

[China daily, 20-12-2019] China's listed pig breeders reported better performance after the country's pork price began rising this year, according to the National Business Daily on 19 December.

Muyuan Foodstuff, a Henan-based major pig breeder, registered its net profit at 1.387 billion yuan (\$198 million) in the first three quarters, a year-on-year increase of 296 percent. The company's stock price skyrocketed more than 180 percent since the start of this year, the report said.

Other major pig farming companies, like New Hope Group and Wens Foodstuff Group, all recorded over 100 percent net profit growth in the first three quarters, according to the report.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China's pork supply, demand to balance for the Chinese New Year**

[Xinhua, 17-12-2019] China's pork market may beat expectations with balanced supply and demand during the upcoming Chinese New Year, said the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) on 17 Dec.

Increased pork import, stacked hogs to hit shelves and reserved pork released from government and commercial inventory will expand supply for the staple meat during the holidays, Wang Junxun, a senior official with the MARA, told a press conference.

Expected increase in poultry, beef and mutton output will help ensure meat supply during the peak season of meat consumption, said Wang.

Click [here](#) for details

### **African swine fever outbreaks in December 2019**

Date	Location	Details
11 Dec	ASF detected in dead wild boars in Foping County, Shaanxi province	Click <a href="#">here</a> for details

### **African swine fever restrictions lifted in December 2019**

Date	Location	Details
6 Dec	Chuxiong City, Yunnan Province	Click <a href="#">here</a> 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](mailto:y.lu@uea.ac.uk); for more information about SAIN, please visit: [www.sainonline.org/English.html](http://www.sainonline.org/English.html)**

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