

# **China Agri-food News Digest**

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## **Season's Greetings from SAIN Secretariat**

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#### **Policies**

#### China's high-level opening-up to drive global economy

[China daily, 05-11-2022] The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has sent a strong signal that China is committed to widening higher-level opening-up in the coming years. The congress also, for the first time, proposed to steadily widen institutional opening-up with regard to rules, regulations, management and standards, and called for preserving the diversity and maintaining the stability of the international economic landscape and trade relations.

After 10 years of efforts, China has made all the required preparations and created the right atmosphere for institutional opening-up. As such, China now has a broader agenda of opening up more areas and to a larger extent.

To promote institutional opening-up, China will create a more business-friendly environment by introducing more advanced rules, regulations and standards, further shortening the negative list to allow foreign businesses to enjoy the same treatment that domestic and State-owned enterprises get, and promoting fair, green and mutually beneficial development of international trade.

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#### China issues guideline on expanding domestic demand

[Xinhua, 15-12-2022] China has released a guideline on expanding domestic demand and fostering a sound domestic demand system to promote its long-term development.

The long-term goals extending to 2035 include seeing the scale of consumption and investment hit new levels and fully establishing a sound domestic demand system, said the guideline, jointly issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council.

Looking to 2035, new industrialization, informatization, urbanization and agricultural modernization will be basically achieved, people's livelihoods will be improved, the underpinning role of reform in propelling the development of domestic demand will be boosted and China's advantages in terms of engaging in global economic cooperation and competition will be enhanced, according to the guideline.

To accomplish the long-term goals, the country aims to boost investment in consumption, optimize the distribution pattern, bolster the quality of supply, improve the market system and smoothen economic circulation during the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025).

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#### China outlines central, local government roles in rural revitalization drive

[Xinhua, 14-12-2022] China has specified the roles of related central authorities, as well as the roles of local governments, in promoting and steering the country's campaign of revitalizing the countryside.

Related ministries and departments are mainly responsible for the formulation and implementation of strategic plans, major policies and projects for rural revitalization, among others.

Local governments have to take responsibility for 14 tasks, including ensuring the supply of grain and important farming produce, planning for the development of rural industries, and introducing more talents to join the campaign.

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#### China to gradually enhance its ability to control methane emissions

[Xinhua, 09-11-2022] China will gradually enhance its ability to control methane emissions, Xie Zhenhua, special representative for Chinese President Xi Jinping and China's special envoy for climate change, said on Tuesday 8 November.

Xie made the remarks here when attending a side event of the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

He said that China attaches great importance to methane emissions control, carrying out a series of measures in the coal, petroleum and natural gas, agriculture and waste disposal sectors.

Meanwhile, he added that China has promoted the use of market mechanisms to encourage enterprises to control methane emissions.

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## China set to strengthen carbon emissions standard-setting and measurements

[SCMP, 02-11-2022] The Chinese government has set out its aim to improve the standard-setting and measurement of environmental efforts to help ensure it can meet its carbon neutrality goals on time.

The State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR) jointly released an implementation plan with eight other official agencies, including the Ministry of Ecology and Environment and Ministry of Transport, aims to establish a standards and measurement system for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The state agencies will focus on carbon emissions, carbon reduction, carbon removal and the carbon credits market, with the aim of improving their standard-setting and measurement capabilities, according to the plan.

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#### China to enhance prevention, control of invasive alien species

[MARA, 30-11-2022] China will enhance its capabilities in preventing and controlling invasive alien species to safeguard agriculture development and biodiversity.

The country faces multiple risks of invasive alien species due to its long land border, foreign exchanges, illegal introduction and breeding of exotic pets, and illegal release of animals, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said in a statement.

The statement said that China would strengthen quarantine inspection of inbound goods, means of transport, consignments and deliveries, and cross-border e-commerce to stem the introduction of invasive alien species.

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#### Well-balanced consolidation of food security

[China daily, 16-11-2022] Over the past decade, China, with nearly one-fifth of the world's population, has effectively prevented and resisted all kinds of risks and challenges by keeping a firm grip on its food security.

With the continuous improvement of the mechanism for maintaining grain stability, the main contradiction of grain supply has changed from food shortage to imbalanced structure. So at present, optimizing the grain structure and improving the quality of grain have become the focuses for the nation's efforts related to food security.

Over the past five years, the transformation of China's agricultural development mode has accelerated, and the development of resource-saving and environmentally friendly agriculture has been expedited.

The country has carried out a series of policies and measures, such as the pilot program of crop rotation and fallowing, the zero-growth program of fertilizers and pesticides, and the black soil protection program, which have effectively promoted the optimization of the grain supply structure in a sustainable direction.

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#### China eyes 10% cut in pesticide use on fruit, vegetables by 2025

[Reuters, 01-12-2022] China, the world's top user of pesticides, aims to reduce their use in cultivation of fruit, vegetables and tea by a tenth within three years' time, the farm ministry said 1 December, in an effort to curb chemicals in the food chain.

The ministry also wants to reduce pesticide use on rice, wheat and corn by 5% in the same period, and step up use of organic fertilisers by the same amount by 2025.

"There is an urgent need to improve the efficiency and scientific use of pesticides and fertilizers when promoting the reduction of chemical pesticides," the ministry of agriculture and rural affairs said on its website.

At the same time, national food security and supplies of key products must be maintained, it said in its plan.

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#### China issues list of invasive species under key management

[ECNS, 21-12-2022] China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and several other departments released a list of 59 invasive alien species under key management.

The list was established according to the Biosecurity Law of China. Alligator gars and American bullfrogs are included on the list.

The new list will come into force on January 1, 2023.

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## Science, Technology and Environment

## China beefs up wetlands conservation to enhance people's well-being

[Xinhua, 09-11-2022] Known as the "kidneys of the Earth," wetlands can help safeguard biodiversity and cope with climate change. China's wetlands conservation efforts have illustrated its genuine commitment to ensuring harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

During the ongoing 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP14), held in Wuhan and Switzerland's Geneva, China called for enhancing people's well-being globally by leveraging the role of wetlands in promoting sustainable development, tackling climate change, protecting biodiversity, and delivering more benefits to people around the world.

It has set up over 600 wetland nature reserves, and more than 1,600 wetland parks, and it is home to 64 wetlands of international importance and 29 wetlands of national importance. China's first specialized law governing wetland protection took effect in June 2022.

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#### Integrated network to ensure ecological red lines not crossed

[China daily, 19-12-2022] China will establish a space-ground integrated network to monitor its ecological conservation red lines, which encircle over 30 percent of the country's land area, said officials from the Ministry of Ecology and Environment.

The mechanism will cover regions playing important roles in the functioning of ecosystems — including water and soil conservation, and biodiversity maintenance — as well as ecologically fragile areas prone to soil erosion and desertification, according to the document.

Through continuous efforts to optimize the mechanism, China plans to guarantee national ecological safety by 2030.

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#### Nation seeks breeding breakthroughs

[China daily, 23-11-2022] China is working toward more breakthroughs in breeding research as the world's biggest grain importer races to develop more homegrown varieties of crops and livestock to better feed the country's 1.4 billion people, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Vice-Minister Zhang Xingwang told a panel of agricultural officials, business owners and researchers in Beijing that policy tools will be used to attract more capital to finance the State-led breeding effort that also involves the country's major grain companies, top research bodies and other potential nongovernmental forces.

The top 10 crop and livestock companies will receive support to carry out independent research to boost their competitiveness in hopes that their overspill effect will benefit the whole industry.

The research efforts will be focused on 10 major crops and livestock, and aimed at upgrading important food species, such as rice, wheat, soybean and swine, so that "technological independence and control over the source of seeds and livestock can be strengthened".

The ministry will also support research into 64 local specialties to meet the needs of Chinese consumers.

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#### Research sheds light on rice's natural defences

[China daily, 17-12-2022] Rice plants attacked by the striped stem borer, a major paddy pest, send out airborne substances to warn their neighbors so they can prepare chemical defenses, Chinese scientists have found.

The findings can help enhance the widely planted crop's resistance against one of its most devastating pests, according to a study published in New Phytologist, a plant science journal, in mid-October, a boon to world food security.

HIPVs, or herbivore-induced plant volatiles, are complex mixtures of volatile organic compounds emitted by plants attacked by herbivores. They play a crucial role in plants' interactions with insect communities, experts say.

China has been leading the world in rice-related research. In 2004, Yuan Longping won the World Food Prize for developing hybrid rice, whose output was around 7.5 metric tons per hectare, compared with 4.61 tons globally.

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#### Chinese researchers identify gene that increases protein in modern maize

[Xinhua, 17-11-2022] The researchers from the Center for Excellence in Molecular Plant Sciences under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Shanghai Normal University recovered a gene called teosinte high protein 9 (THP9), which was lost in maize when the staple grain was domesticated from its wild ancestor during the past 9,000 years.

The researchers in the study carried out large-scale gene sequencing and then zeroed in on significant high-protein chromosomal regions, according to the survey.

THP9 could encode an enzyme playing a significant role in the metabolism of nitrogen, according to the study.

In field trials conducted in the tropical island province of Hainan in south China, the maize strain hybridized with THP9 saw its protein content increase by 12.7 percent.

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#### Study finds genetic solution to pre-harvest sprouting in rice, wheat

[China daily, 08-12-202] A new Chinese scientific study has identified a combination of two crop genes that are in charge of controlling seed dormancy and could be used to reduce the costly phenomenon of pre-harvest sprouting (PHS) in crops such as rice and wheat.

Seed dormancy is an important survival tool for plants, allowing them to survive in negative weather conditions. However, excessive dormancy may shorten cultivation time, so many farmers like to plant low-dormancy species of rice and wheat to get a high rate of seed emergence after sowing.

This practice can lead to PHS, a worldwide production problem in which grains germinate on the mother plant before harvest time and often during wet weather, severely reducing grain yield and quality.

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#### Syngenta and others unite to fight climate change

[China daily, 21-12-2022] Syngenta Group China, the Shanghai-headquartered crop protection and nutrition product manufacturer, together with nine Chinese and multinational companies, jointly launched an industrial alliance to tackle climate change in Beijing on 20 November.

Formed by companies from agricultural, beverage and foodstuff sectors, the alliance will promote carbon sequestration and emission reduction measures in agricultural and food sectors, reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the industrial chain, as well as enhance the strength of agriculture and food industries to cope with climate change.

In addition to advancing regenerative agricultural practices to support sustainable development of agriculture and food industries, the alliance will offer assistance to member companies' green and sustainable transformation and help them reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the life cycle of agricultural products.

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#### Biomass technology shows huge growth

[China daily, 15-12-2022] Organic waste, including wood, crop by-products and animal droppings, may soon play an important role in facilitating global carbon neutrality as energy sources to heat homes and fuel cars.

In Heilongjiang province, State Power Investment Corp has been working on a technology to compress corn straw, residues and agricultural and associated processing wastes into fuel to provide clean heating to local residents.

The technology will be put into use by 2024 and replace coal to provide clean heating for more than 10 million square meters in Jiamusi, Heilongjiang, the company said.

As the country's first domestic biomass green energy particle technology, it will make better use of the availability of large quantities of corn straw and other residues, breaking the bottleneck of inconvenient transportation and storage for biomass energy utilization.

China produces over 900 million metric tons of agricultural and forestry biomass every year, which can generate power equal to nearly 400 million tons of coal. The number is even larger including other organic waste from urban and rural areas, according to the association.

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#### **Experts highlight urgency of efficient irrigation**

[China daily, 05-11-2022] Agricultural officials and scientists highlighted the urgency of developing more efficient irrigation methods at a forum on 5 November as China races to vitalize rural areas and modernize its agriculture.

The demand for more efficient watering techniques is on the rise as the country works to build high-standard farmland for large-scale mechanical farming and to construct demonstration zones for modernized agriculture, said Zhou Guomin, director of the Institute of Farmland Irrigation of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

The State Council, China's cabinet, unveiled a plan last year to increase the area of high-standard farmland to 71.67 million hectares by 2025 and 80 million hectares by 2030.

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#### Growth in irrigated farmland secures food

[China daily, 14-11-2022] China's push for more irrigated farmland over the past seven decades has resulted in a quadrupling of such areas, which now account for about half of the country's arable land, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The expansion has contributed to consolidating national food security in the populous country where two-thirds of cropland are scattered across arid or semiarid regions, experts said.

However, the need for more efficient watering techniques — such as drip irrigation that provides targeted daily rations of water and fertilizer directly to a plant's roots — is "evermore urgent" as the country races to vitalize rural areas and modernize its agriculture.

There were around 16 million hectares of irrigated grain field when the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, a figure that rose to 68.6 million hectares last year.

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#### Chinese technology helps Qatar grow vegetables in desert

(CGTN, 11-12-2022) Over ten kilometers north of Qatar's capital Doha, a farm produces enough vegetables to supply supermarkets during World Cup. Qatar heavily relies on imports for vegetables due to its mild winters and hot, humid summers.

Sichuan, a major agricultural base in China, is helping Qatar by sharing its plant factory knowledge.

With the help of the plant factory system, the farms in Qatar can now produce over 30 types of vegetables.

More than ten types of crops including soybeans, and wheat can thrive in the plant factory with the help of a well-controlled environment.

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#### China harvests in development of BDS applications industry

[China daily, 04-11-2022] China has made continuous efforts to refine the products supporting the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) industry, expand its application fields, improve its industry ecosystem, and promote its large-scale applications, according to a white paper published Friday 4 November.

China has established a set of platforms featuring BDS services including international search and rescue, short message communication, satellite-based augmentation, and ground-based augmentation. It has also developed a series of basic products such as chips, modules and antennas, and realized 100-million-scale manufacturing of BDS products.

BDS has been widely used in agriculture and has become an important sci-tech force for supporting agricultural development.

BDS-based agricultural equipment, such as farming machinery, drones, autonomous tractors, planters and harvesters, are providing services to farmers around the country, helping them boost production efficiency. Farmers are able to plan their driving routes in advance through mobile phone terminals.

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### Trade and Business

## China's grain harvest stays above target for eighth year running

[Yicai, 12-12-2022] China's grain harvest edged up 0.5 percent this year from last year to 687 million tons, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics. The high yield is mainly due to a bigger planting area. The grain planting area nudged up 0.6 percent year on year to 118 million hectares while output per hectare dipped 0.1 percent to 5.8 tons.

The summer grain harvest, which is mainly made up of wheat, edged up 1 percent from a year earlier to 147 million tons, according to previous data from the NBS.

Corn, soybeans, potatoes and rice are the main autumn grains, and the autumn harvest accounts for 70 percent of the country's total grain production each year.

For the autumn harvest, soybean output surged 23.7 percent from a year ago to 20.2 million tons and corn production gained 1.7 percent to 277 million tons. But potato output sank 2.2 percent to 29.7 million tons.

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#### China's largest soybean-producing province sets new records

[China daily, 18-12-2022] Heilongjiang, China's largest soybean-producing province, set new records in 2022 in terms of soybean output and planting area, statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics show.

Heilongjiang yielded 9.54 billion kilograms of soybeans this year, up 32.6 percent year-on-year and accounting for 47 percent of the country's total soybean output. The sown soybean area in the province hit 73.98 million mu (\$4.93 million hectares), up 26.9 percent year-on-year.

To ensure national food security, Heilongjiang has been increasing its soybean yield through a string of measures such as improving varieties and field management techniques.

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#### **Innovation of Chinese brands sets new consumption trends**

[Xinhua, 27-11-22] Thanks to the continued upgrading of the manufacturing sector and an outburst of innovative ideas, many Chinese products have, in recent years, become trendsetters in the consumer market.

At the 2022 Boao Forum for Entrepreneurs held in south China's Hainan Province, Chinese entrepreneurs and experts discussed how the innovation of domestic brands can create new waves of domestic consumption.

During this year's Singles' Day shopping spree, sales of domestic products have increased significantly. More than half of the 102 brands with a turnover of over 100 million yuan (about 14 million U.S. dollars) within the first hour of sales were domestic ones.

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#### Panda Guide releases 9th edition, boosting China's agriculture industry

[China daily, 30-11-22] Panda Guide, a professional evaluation platform of quality agricultural products supported by State-owned Sinochem Holdings Corp Ltd, released the list of quality Chinese agricultural products (2022) in Beijing, providing consumers with recommendations based on a strict selection criteria.

This is the ninth edition of the list published by Panda Guide after five years of development, covering product categories such as fruit, vegetables, grains, mushrooms and pork. It put 336 high quality agricultural products on the list this year, marking a record in the history of Panda Guide.

Based on the results of independent, scientific and fair market research and laboratory tests, Panda Guide created a proprietary review matrix and standard system for agricultural products, which is able to rate premium agricultural products in a one to three-star score.

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#### China's Yunnan boosts coffee-related tourism

[China daily, 30-11-22] The cultural and tourism authorities of Southwest China's Yunnan province have recently rolled out six tourist routes in a bid to further boost the high-quality development of tourism related to coffee resources.

The routes cover seven major coffee production bases in Yunnan, including Baoshan, Pu'er, and Dali.

With a large multi-ethnic population, Yunnan is home to rich tourism resources such as picturesque scenery and a major tea and coffee production area in China.

The province has accelerated the integrated development of coffee-themed agriculture, culture, and tourism.

In 2021, the plantation area of coffee in the province reached 93,333 hectares, yielding over 100,000 tons of coffee beans. The output value of the whole industrial chain reached 31.63 billion yuan (\$4.4 billion).

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#### Returned migrant workers thrive at home with e-commerce live-streaming

[Xinhua, 22-11-2022] Since the 1980s, Chinese rural workers have been leaving their villages behind for new lives in the cities. In 2021, the number of migrant workers in the country reached 292.51 million. This migration helped develop the big cities, which in turn supported China's miracle of economic growth.

However, amid China's efforts to boost rural revitalization alongside better infrastructure and higher living standards in villages, many migrant workers have now returned to their rural hometowns and started their own businesses.

New businesses like e-commerce live-streaming are contributing to the reversal of the move to the big cities. In the first half of 2022, over 60 million live-streaming promotions were held on e-commerce platforms closely tracked by the Ministry of Commerce. These live-streaming promotions, covering more than 47.5 million products, attracted over 517 billion online visits.

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#### Sales of Chinese poverty-relief platform top 30b yuan

[CGTN, 13-11-2022] Sales of a Chinese e-commerce platform that sells products from the country's once-impoverished regions have exceeded 30 billion yuan (\$4.17 billion), boosting the sustainable poverty-relief drive.

As of October 31, over 224,000 farm produce and sideline products from these once-improvised counties were available on the platform, according to the China CO-OP Group. It is estimated that nearly 3 million rural families have benefited from the platform.

Further efforts will be made to promote the high-quality development of the platform, consolidate poverty-elimination achievements and push for rural revitalization, according to the group.

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#### Online shopping spree sees imported products gain Chinese market steam

[GOV.CN, 09-11-2022] Imports consumption growth is a benefit stemming from China's effective measures to expand imports, introduce high-quality brands, improve consumption structures and widen cross-border e-commerce channels, according to a research report released by the Consumption and Industry Development Research Institute of JD.com.

To facilitate consumption and delivery of imported goods, China has set up 132 comprehensive pilot zones for cross-border e-commerce across the country, which offer preferential policies in terms of tax, customs clearance and regulation.

Earlier this year, 29 categories enjoying high consumer demand, such as skiing equipment and household dishwashers, were added to the catalogue of retail imports via cross-border ecommerce. Items on this list enjoy tax benefits.

The huge market potential of imported products has attracted foreign countries and global brands keen to secure a slice of the expanding cake.

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#### Rural e-commerce development helps farmers expand into new markets

[Xinhua, 13-12-2022] Qingjian, a county on the Loess Plateau, has grown jujube trees for more than 3,000 years, with the planting area now totaling 60,000 hectares.

A pillar of the local economy, the jujube industry hit headwinds in recent years. For a long time, jujubes were sold at low prices as primary commodities on the wholesale market, with the profit declining due to intensified competition.

Today, the country's booming e-commerce industry is helping Qingjian turn headwinds into tailwinds. Since October 2022, Alibaba platforms have seen 200,000 orders placed each month for amethyst jujubes.

Qingjian has been supporting the development of rural e-commerce in a variety of ways, including setting up a logistics center, providing training, and subsidizing express delivery services.

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#### **Diageo unveils new products for Chinese consumers**

[China daily, 09-11-2022] Encouraged by its fruit outings to the previous editions of the China International Import Expo, multinational alcoholic beverage company Diageo made its fourth appearance at the fair this year with a 150-square-meter booth - its largest to date.

For this year's expo, the London-headquarter company unveiled for the first time a host of new products, including a Johnnie Walker Chinese New Year collection and a Chinese New Year edition of the single-malt whisky The Singleton. Also on show are fine and rare whiskies that have been made from limited edition casks.

With 78 physical retail spaces in 30 Chinese cities, Diageo views China as one of its top three global strategic markets, and its scotch sales have seen double-digit growth in recent years.

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