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Policies

No. 1 central document prioritizes agricultural, rural development

[Xinhua, 19-02-2019] Agriculture, rural areas and farmer's issues remain China's top priorities for the 16th consecutive year as its "No. 1 central document" prioritizes development of agriculture and rural areas.

Work must be done to deepen agricultural supply-side structural reform, win the tough battle against poverty, give full play to the key role of rural primary-level Party organizations, and push forward rural vitalization in all respects, according to the document.

The document noted that the country will strive to ensure effective supply of major agricultural products. Efforts will be made to ensure that grain planting area remains steady at 1.65 billion mu (110 million hectares) and arable land area is kept above 1.8 billion mu, as well as develop 800 million mu of high-standard farmland by 2020.

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China to boost high-quality development of agriculture

[Xinhua, 18-02-2019] China on 18 February issued a plan to boost high-quality development of its agricultural sector through 2022.

The country will work to improve the quality of agricultural products, as well as the agricultural sector's efficiency and international competitiveness, according to the plan jointly issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and six other ministries and government agencies.

Under the plan, the country aims to raise the per-capita agricultural productivity from 34,000 yuan (about 5,000 U.S. dollars) in 2017 to 55,000 yuan in 2022.

To raise the sector's international competitiveness, the country vowed to foster the development of grain dealer giants and international agricultural conglomerates.

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China vows technology, policy boost for small farming households in new guidelines

[GT, 21-02-2019] China's central government on 21 February issued guidelines to empower the country's small-scale farming households so that their development is aligned with that of modern agriculture.

In the policy announced by the State Council, the government vowed to empower small farming households, improve their organization, increase their incomes, set up a comprehensive social services system for such households, and design policies to support such drives.

The policy acknowledged that the small farming household economic model will prevail in China for the current and foreseeable future, despite the nation's drive toward modern agriculture.

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Plan to control use of veterinary drugs in aquaculture industry

[China daily, 16-02-2019] The use of veterinary drugs in aquaculture will be strictly supervised to ensure the safety and quality of aquatic products, according to a guideline aimed at promoting green development of the industry in China.

The authorities will step up efforts to develop ecologically friendly aquaculture to improve the quality of farmed fish and shellfish and minimize the environmental impact of raising them, according to the guideline jointly released by 10 central government agencies, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The use of veterinary drugs will be reduced through the promotion of vaccination and ecological means to prevent diseases, the guideline said. The authorities will also provide more support for the development and research of safer and more environmentally friendly drugs for use in aquaculture.

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Vice premier urges solid efforts for biodiversity conservation

[Xinhua, 13-02-2019] Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng stressed solid efforts to further protect biological diversity.

Han made the remarks when presiding over a meeting of China National Committee for Biodiversity Conservation.

Despite the substantial progress that has been made, more needs to be done to stop the current decline in biodiversity, he said.

In order to offer the highest level of protection for biodiversity, Han stressed establishing a management system for protected nature areas by establishing a network of national parks, nature reserves and parks.

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China to develop over 5 mln hectares of high-standard farmland

[Xinhua, 18-02-2019] China will build at least 80 million mu (5.33 million hectares) of high-standard farmland this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

China has started building drought and flood resistant farmland since 2011, in a bid to ensure food security. By the end of 2018, China has already developed 640 million mu of such farmland, with grain output increasing 100 kg per mu on average.

Water, fertilizer, and pesticide consumption on the farmland fell 24.3 percent, 13.8 percent and 19.1 percent, respectively, per mu.

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China will increase soybean planting area this year

[GT, 14-02-2019] The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said China will expand the soybean planting area this year, although the world's largest soybean purchaser has promised to increase soybean imports from the US to help cut trade surplus with the US.

Han Changfu, the minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, said that China will further improve its agricultural plantation structure and narrow the deficit in the supply of certain farm products in 2019.

China is the world's top soybean buyer, but the purchasing volume was decreased last year as the buyers shunned US soybeans amid the ongoing trade war between China and the US.

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China's investment to grow faster in 2019

[Xinhua, 13-02-2019] A report from the Economic and Strategic Planning Department of the Bank of China (Hong Kong) forecast a rise of 7.3 percent in China's aggregated investment in 2019, up 1.4 percentage points from 2018.

Last October, the State Council issued a guideline on beefing up the investment in nine kinds of infrastructure facilities including railways, highways and waterways, airports, water conservancy, energy and environmental protection as well as infrastructure conducive to agriculture and rural development.

Rural infrastructure construction will be used to enhance agricultural productivity and boost village development.

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China says guarantee funds should focus on rural development, small firms

[Reuters, 16-02-2019] China's finance ministry said that government financing guarantee funds should "return to the main business of guarantees" and reduce fees as it seeks to step up support for smaller firms and rural development.

Funds should not "deviate" from guarantees or "blindly expand their business scope, should not provide guarantees to government bond issuance, should not extend credit to government financing platforms, and should not make equity investments in non-financial guarantee institutions", the ministry said in a statement on its website.

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China unveils guidelines on financial services for rural rejuvenation

[Reuters, 11-02-2019] China issued guidelines to improve financial services for rural rejuvenation, vowing to encourage local governments' special bonds issuance to support projects in the countryside, according to the central bank.

China will support qualified agriculture companies to go public, the central bank said in a statement posted on its website, which was jointly issued by multiple authorities including the finance and agriculture ministries.

The guidelines also said China will strengthen monetary policy support and use differentiated reserve requirement tools to support rural areas.

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China releases plan to reduce sugar intake for oral health improvement

[Xinhua, 17-02-2019] China will make efforts to reduce sugar intake among both children and adults, in a bid to improve the nation's oral health, according to an action plan recently released by the National Health Commission.

Primary and middle schools, as well as nurseries, should restrict sales of beverages and snacks high in sugar, said the oral health action plan covering the period from 2019 to 2025, which also required school canteens to offer less sweetened beverages and sugar-rich foods.

The country will encourage food manufacturers to use "reduced sugar" or "sugar-free" claims, and help consumers learn how to identify added sugar on nutrition facts labels, according to the plan.

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China unveils guideline to toughen supervision over food safety

[Xinhua, 25-02-2019] China has unveiled a guideline to enhance the accountability system of local governments to strengthen supervision over food safety.

Food safety will be included in the performance assessment of the Party and government leading officials, according to the guideline released by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council.

Food safety, including the safety of agricultural products, will be included in the national economic and social development plan of local governments.

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Science, Technology and Environment

Chinese farmers use new methods as agriculture goes automated

[Xinhua, 11-02-2019] The production and living standards of China's farmers have undergone a huge change, especially over the past 40 years.

The hardship of farmers has been largely eased and outdated agricultural tools such as plows and sickles have started to become memories.

In the 1980s, agricultural mechanization gained its momentum in China and farming came to be more productive than ever with machines that plowed the ground, planted seeds and performed other tasks becoming everyday tools for more and more farmers.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, China currently has more than 2,500 agricultural machinery enterprises, and its mechanization rate for crop cultivation and harvesting exceeded 67 percent in 2018. The country's agricultural production is now mainly done by farming machines, replacing the previous manual labor.

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China's rural areas surpass cities in growth of digital consumption

[Xinhua, 29-01-2019] Alibaba's report shows that China's rural areas are growing faster than some first-tier cities in digital consumption.

Statistics indicate that the growth rate of digital spending on Alibaba's e-commerce platforms in rural areas reached 23.8 percent last year, 4.5 percent higher than that in first-tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

The huge consumption potential in rural areas would be turned into a major engine of growth as a result of the digital economy, more internet access and faster logistics, said the report.

Moreover, the internet will narrow the gap between the country's developed eastern regions and the less-developed remote areas.

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Farmers cultivate social media sales

[China daily, 13-02-2019] Kuaishou, a photo and video-sharing app, has become particularly popular among small retailers and farmers in rural areas. Statistics from the company showed there are more than 3.75 million monthly active users in China's 832 poverty-stricken counties. In all, they make up around 20 percent of platform's total user base.

Explaining the popularity, Chen Sinuo, vice-president of Kuaishou, said the short videos enable users in rural areas to gain attention from the public, show their lives and have a sense of recognition and pride in their own identities.

According to Kuaishou, more than 16 million people in rural areas received incomes through the platform in 2018, among which about 3.4 million people come from national-level poverty-stricken counties.

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Robots are taking over China's food service industry, and making it better

[TechNode, 27-02-2019] Robots in restaurants sound like a futuristic novelty. But in China, kitchen-side automation has long been routine for some restaurants, fast food chains, and cafeterias. What's more, robotics are being used to standardize a centuries-old cuisine, potentially shaping the taste buds of future generations.

In the case of food preparation, automation could be a boon for more than just cutting costs. Food safety has long been a concern for consumers, from 2008's melamine-tainted infant formula scandal to various reports of contaminated cooking oil. Chinese tech companies have attempted to address these issues with the help of blockchain and AI, including the unforgettable development of facial recognition for pigs. Introducing standardized recipes and preparation methods, as well as automated cooking, could help restore consumer trust.

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Waterbirds wintering in Dongting Lake up 6.3 percent

[Xinhua, 03-02-2019] The number of waterbirds arriving at central China's Dongting Lake for winter exceeded 240,000 this winter, up 6.3 percent year on year, according to a survey by lake protection authorities.

The migratory birds in Dongting Lake, the country's second largest freshwater lake, increased by 14,257 year on year. Bean geese, numbered 60,000, became the largest population of waterbirds wintering there.

To restore the wetland ecosystem and supply more food for the birds, lake administration staff planted lots of aquatic plants in the reserve, said an official with East Dongting Lake National Nature Reserve.

Click [here](#) for details

Water quality of Baiyangdian Lake in Xiongan improved in 2018

[Xinhua, 10-02-2019] The water quality of Baiyangdian Lake in Xiongan New Area in north China's Hebei Province has been significantly improved in 2018, according to the ecology and environment bureau of the new area.

The concentration of the major pollutants total phosphorus and ammonia nitrogen in Baiyangdian Lake saw a year-on-year decrease of 35.16 percent and 45.45 percent respectively last year.

To protect the environment of Baiyangdian Lake, Xiongan New Area started to deal with a sewage reservoir that is only 2.5 km away from the lake and posed a threat to the water quality in 2018.

Click [here](#) for details

Yellow River water diverted to major lake in Xiongan

[Xinhua, 02-02-2019] A water conservancy project was put into effect on Friday to divert water from the Yellow River to Baiyangdian Lake in northern China's Hebei Province.

The 482-km-long diversion route started in Puyang City, Henan Province in central China, where the Yellow River water flows naturally through a sluice gate and runs northward before reaching Baiyangdian in the Xiongan New Area.

According to a protection plan on Baiyangdian Lake, its water level will remain at 6.5 to 7 meters with an area of 360 square km. To realize this, the diversion project will supplement 110 million cubic meters of water to the lake each year.

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Working with China to find a solution to pollution

[NERC, 07-02-2019] Changes in the way China manages its land and water use, due to population and economic development pressures, have resulted in a lack of fresh water and widespread decline in soil health quality. To help alleviate this problem, scientists funded by NERC and the National Science Foundation of China embarked on in-depth studies to understand how best to sustain China's struggling ecosystem services, which are integral to the provisioning of clean water, the decomposition of waste and the natural pollination of crops.

Together with a team of 12 UK partners and 15 Chinese institutions, a new project will build upon these findings in a bid to develop sophisticated, but simple to use, tools that can guide policy and farming. This will range from smartphone apps that farmers can use in the field to specialist software that can test the environmental impacts of farm practices over large areas of land.

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China and India Lead the Way in Greening

[NASA, 12-02-2019] A new study shows that China and India—the world's most populous countries—are leading the increase in greening on land. The effect comes mostly from ambitious tree-planting programs in China and intensive agriculture in both countries.

Ranga Myneni of Boston University and colleagues first detected the greening phenomenon in satellite data from the mid-1990s, but they did not know whether human activity was a chief cause. They then set out to track the total amount of Earth's land area covered by vegetation and how it changed over time.

The research team found that global green leaf area has increased by 5 percent since the early 2000s, an area equivalent to all of the Amazon rainforests. At least 25 percent of that gain came in China.

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China to promote ecological conservation in Greater Bay Area

[Xinhua, 18-02-2019] China plans to take forward ecological conservation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, says a development plan.

The plan promises to act on the principles of prioritizing resource conservation, environmental protection and letting nature restore itself, be led by the development of a beautiful bay area, devote efforts to improving ecological and environmental quality, develop spatial layouts, industrial structures as well as ways of work and life that help conserve resources and protect the environment, put into practice green, low-carbon and circular development, and make the Greater Bay Area a place with bluer skies, greener mountains, clearer water and a better environment.

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Trade and Business

Imported food gains ground

[04-02-2019] Nianhuo purchases by Chinese consumers, especially imported food products, have been increasing steadily as Spring Festival approaches.

Nianhuo refers to special products often bought around Spring Festival, including not only gifts but also essentials needed for the holidays such as fresh produce, local delicacies, spirits, clothing and other wares.

Though tastes of nianhuo have changed over the years with the rapid development of the retail sector, it is the advent of mobile internet technologies that has triggered demand for imported food products.

To cash in on growing demand for such products, an array of retailers and firms are offering special incentives and discounts to lure customers.

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Smaller farm produce gains popularity in China

[Xinhua, 06-02-2019] For generations, Chinese farmers have spared no efforts to increase the weight of their produce to boost profits, now they are turning in the opposite direction -- making them slimmer.

Organic fathead fish, 20 to 30 percent lighter than those raised with fodder, were a big hit in the Shanghai market during the Spring Festival holiday.

The organic fish, with a darker color and smaller stomach, is tastier than traditional fish and sells for double the price, 30 yuan (4.4 U.S. dollars) per kilo.

Chinese people are willing to pay more for higher quality products, as they are getting rich and have higher expectation of food quality, said Yang Peilin, head of the Jiujiang Zhelinhu Ecological Fishing Co. Ltd, who has raised fish for more than 20 years.

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China's internet era: changing the way we eat

[CGTN, 09-02-2019] Technology has revolutionized China's catering industry in ways beyond our imagination.

From app-based food delivery services to robot-aided restaurants, people's eating habits have been totally transformed thanks to recent innovations.

According to an industry report published by EO Intelligence, the annual revenue of China's catering industry has reached 3.9 trillion yuan (578.2 billion U.S. dollars) in 2017, with food delivery service contributing 204.6 billion yuan (30.3 billion U.S. dollars).

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Pig and chicken farmers are big winners in China's silicon valley

[Bloomberg, 12-02-2019] The big stock-market winners in China's technology hub of Shenzhen aren't artificial intelligence and semiconductor companies. They're farmers.

The Shenzhen Stock Exchange's agriculture index has rallied more than any other subgauge in 2019, and is the only one to eke out a gain in the past three years as the city's benchmark slid 21 percent.

Analysts attribute the more recent gains to the likelihood of higher pork prices as African swine fever dents supply.

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Crop technology firm Syngenta helping China enhance food security

[SCMP, 18-02-2019] Crop technology firm Syngenta aims to quadruple its market share in China in the next five years, according to its chief financial officer.

Syngenta aims to achieve its growth goal partly via partnerships with both Chinese and overseas peers to bring advanced overseas crops-growing technology to China to enhance food supply security, said Mark Patrick, its CFO.

Since its acquisition by ChemChina was completed in June 2017, Syngenta has been working with large state-owned farms with combined plantations of more than 1,000 hectares on adoption of its technology.

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Executives of TCM company in trouble over honey

[ECNS, 3-02-2019] The Beijing Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party of China has condemned and punished executives of Tong Ren Tang, a famous maker of traditional Chinese medicine, after it was found to be selling expired honey, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) said.

The investigation found that the Party committee of the company failed to supervise its subsidiaries, resulting in chaotic internal management and severe loss of State-owned assets, the CCDI said.

The food business license of Beijing Tong Ren Tang Bee Industry has been revoked and it will not be able to apply for a new one for five years.

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Beijing to enhance food safety in school canteens

[Xinhua, 23-02-2019] Beijing will further strengthen food safety management in schools, requesting school officials to dine with students, according to the municipal education authority.

Students in primary and middle schools and kindergartens should be accompanied by staff during each meal served at school, the Beijing Municipal Education Commission announced.

Staff who eat with the kids are required to keep a record, find and solve the problems they find in a timely manner.

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Outbreak of African Swine Fever in China

China reports fewer African swine fever cases

[China daily, 02-02-2019] China's agriculture authority on 1 February reported a falling number of African swine fever cases and vowed to continue to take preventive measures.

By February 1, 92 infected areas in 23 provinces have been unlocked. Seventeen provinces including Henan, Liaoning, Zhejiang and Anhui have been freed from the epidemic with all of the infected zones unblocked, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The epidemic has shown signs of abating since December 2018. Five cases were reported in January 2019. However, the ministry cautioned that the prevention work remains grim since the existing situation will linger for a period of time.

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Pig disease found in dumplings triggers slump in Chinese food maker

[Bloomberg, 18-02-2019] Sanquan Food Co., based in Henan province, slumped the most since October after a media report said African swine fever was found in some of the company's pork dumplings. Volume in the first hour of trading Monday 18 February was quadruple the three-month full-day average, according to Bloomberg data.

China is trying to contain the spread of African swine fever, which is threatening its massive pig population.

Click [here](#) for details

African swine fever outbreaks in February 2019

Date	Location	Details
8 Feb	Yongzhou City, Hunan Province	Click here for details
19 Feb	Yinhai District, Beihai City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous	Click here for details
20 Feb	Laiwu District, Jinan City, Shandong province	Click here for details
21 Feb	Lushui City, Yunnan Province	Click here for details
24 Feb	Greater Khingan Mountains, Inner Mongolia	Click here for details
24 Feb	Xushui District, Baoding City, Hebei Province	Click here for details
27 Feb	Jingbian County, Yulin City, Shaanxi Province	Click here for details

African swine fever restrictions lifted in February 2019

Date	Location	Details
1 Feb	Bishan District, Chongqing City	Click here for details
2 Feb	Huangpu District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province	Click here for details
2 Feb	Longli County, Guizhou Province	Click here for details
5 Feb	Boluo County, Huizhou City, Guangdong Province	Click here for details
6 Feb	Yanping District, Nanping City, Fujian Province	Click here for details
13 Feb	Zezhou County, Jincheng City, Shanxi province	Click here for details
25 Feb	Mingshui County, Suihua City, Heilongjiang Province	Click here for details
27 Feb	Siyang County, Suqian City, Jiangsu Province	Click here for details
28 Feb	Qingcheng County, Qingyang City, Gansu province	Click here for details

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