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Policies

China considers new law on promoting rural vitalization

[Xinhua, 18-06-2020] China's top legislature on 18 June began reviewing a draft law on promoting rural vitalization, a move to speed up the development of agriculture and rural areas, and ensure the country's farmers live a better life.

The draft was submitted to the ongoing legislative session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for deliberation.

The main contents of the draft law include general provisions, industry development, talent support, cultural inheritance, ecological protection, and others.

The draft also has a chapter on supporting policies for rural vitalization, making stipulations on areas including government funding, agricultural subsidies, and financial services.

Click [here](#) for details

China releases once-a-decade national census on pollution sources

[CGTN, 10-06-2020] China has released its Bulletin on the Second National Census on Pollution Sources. The survey was conducted by 15 ministerial departments over three years and aimed at identifying pollution threats throughout the country.

The once-a-decade census reveals the scale, structure and distribution of the country's current pollution sources.

China published the results of the first such national census in 2010. Since then, more tough measures began to take effect to control and prevent various types of pollution. And the census now will give further impetus to those efforts.

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Nation reveals 15-year ecological protection plan

[China daily, 12-06-2020] China released a comprehensive 15-year plan for ecological protection and recovery work, setting a target to improve the country's environment and achieve the goal of building a Beautiful China by 2035.

In the next 15 years, China will expand its forest coverage to 26 percent and have 75 percent of recoverable sandy land under control, according to the plan released by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Moreover, China will maintain the area of natural forest at 200 million hectares and guarantee that 60 percent of its wetlands will be under protection, according to the plan.

The plan also aims to safeguard at least 35 percent of the country's natural coastlines and prevent the marine ecological condition from worsening.

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China says sticking to climate pledges despite coronavirus outbreak

[Reuters, 02-06-2020] China will fully implement its commitment to nationally determined contributions (NDCs) on climate change under the Paris climate agreement despite the coronavirus outbreak, the country's environment ministry said.

China, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, pledged to cut "carbon intensity" - the amount of carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP - by 40-45% from 2005-2020 as part of the Paris pact it signed in 2015. It said last year it would set a more ambitious target, without giving figures.

However, government researchers and analysts have warned that China may struggle to meet its climate pledges this year as it turns to heavy industry and carbon-intensive projects to shore up its coronavirus-stricken economy.

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Rural e-commerce drive presses ahead

[China daily, 09-06-2020] The central government is pressing ahead with an initiative to bolster the growth of e-commerce in rural areas this year, with measures to help develop logistics and public services and offer more training courses to farmers.

A government notice published on June 1 said it will continue to energize market players in rural areas, help with the sales of agricultural products to cities and facilitate the smooth flow of industrial products to rural areas this year.

Online sales of agricultural products reached 397.5 billion yuan (\$56.1 billion) last year, up 27 percent year-on-year, according to the Ministry of Commerce. The number of online sellers in rural areas reached 13.84 million, with the number of internet users exceeding 250 million, according to official figures.

Click [here](#) for details

Guideline details measures to boost distribution of agricultural produce

[China daily, 16-02-2020] China will adopt a series of measures to support enterprises, including private ones, as part of efforts to promote the development of the fresh agricultural produce distribution industry, according to a guideline published on June 8.

The guideline, jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission and 11 other ministries, included 12 policies and measures covering five aspects of the industry.

To reduce enterprises' operating costs, electricity prices will be lowered for power used to operate food preservation and storage equipment built in rural areas by family farms, agricultural cooperatives and related companies, the guideline said.

Click [here](#) for details

China strengthens tracking of hog transport to control animal disease

[MARA, 15-06-2020] China will step up the regulation of hog transport to further contain the spread of African swine fever, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

Starting on July 1, companies and individuals that transport hogs will be required to register their basic personal information with a mini-program on WeChat, which will be managed by the national animal disease control authorities, the ministry said in a statement released on June 12.

The transport information of each hog will be linked with data on its respective quarantine certificate, allowing authorities to better track the animal and reduce the risk of spreading African swine fever, the ministry said.

Click [here](#) for details

Pangolin officially removed from TCM list

[GT, 09-06-2020] The latest version of the Chinese Pharmacopoeia for 2020 does not include pangolins, which means the mammals will no longer be used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

The move came after China upgraded all species of pangolin from second-class to first-class protected animals on Friday considering their rapidly decreasing numbers due to over-hunting and habitat destruction.

Pangolins are believed to be one of the world's most endangered animals and the world's most illegally trafficked mammal, according to TRAFFIC, an international wildlife trade research organization.

Click [here](#) for details

China to further boost facility-based agricultural planting

[Xinhua, 29-06-2020] The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs issued a guideline to promote the country's facility-based agricultural planting, outlining goals for infrastructure upgrades and mechanization to boost output and farmers' income.

By 2025, China will maintain over 2 million hectares of facilities, including plastic greenhouses, and achieve above 50 percent mechanization for facility-based planting, a sector of the so-called controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), or protected agriculture.

Efforts will be made to achieve new breakthroughs in terms of structure, material and energy efficiency of the facilities, according to the guideline.

Promotion of new varieties, new technologies and new models suitable for mechanized production will also be accelerated.

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Chinese agriculture minister stresses green development

[Xinhua, 05-06-2020] China's minister of agriculture on Friday 5th June stressed the role of green agricultural development in stepping up high-quality growth in the sector and the country's rural vitalization.

The country should enhance agricultural modernization that ensures output efficiency and product safety, conserves resources and is environmentally friendly, Han Changfu, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said at a conference on green agricultural development.

Han stressed the crucial role of green development in relieving the pressure on resources, controlling pollution in agriculture and rural areas and promoting sustainable agricultural development.

Click [here](#) for details

Guangdong focused on ocean ecology

[China Daily, 09-06-2020] Guangdong province, one of China's ocean economy powerhouses, promised to spare no effort to protect the environment and ecology as it accelerates development.

The province will

- promote the construction of demonstration zones and continue to restore and improve the marine ecology in coming years.
- increase and improve Guangdong's mangrove forest areas and introduce more concrete and effective measures to curb ocean pollution
- give full support to Shenzhen in becoming a global marine center, and build a service base for the development of the South China Sea
- further increase the proportion of marine tertiary industry in the years ahead

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China forestry authority strengthens wildlife consumption ban

[Xinhua, 22-06-2020] China will continue to promote the banning of consuming wild animals, and strengthen measures to prevent wildlife consumption by the end of September, according to the National Forestry and Grassland Administration.

Follow-up work will focus on the implementation of compensation, and assistance measures in proper disposal.

The administration stressed all localities should develop a deeper understanding of the importance and urgency of eliminating the eating of wild animals, and proactively report the situation to local authorities.

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Science, Technology and Environment

Chinese agricultural sector's role significant amid COVID-19

[Xinhua, 03-06-2020] The role of China's agricultural sector in the economy is proving to be significant amid the COVID-19 epidemic, according to a report released by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

China's agricultural sector was less directly affected by the COVID-19 epidemic compared with the industrial and service sectors, said the report, predicting that the country's grain output will reach 670 million tonnes in 2020.

China's agriculture and food system is less dependent on the international market compared with other sectors, with both its export share of the entire output and its import share of the entire demand below 5 percent. As a result, employment in the agriculture-food system is about to return to normal even without a complete recovery of the import and export trade, said the report.

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Relevance of circular economy has grown

[China Daily, 17-06-2020] As the pandemic forces us to adapt our daily lives in ways we would not have imagined, it also challenges us to rethink the systems that underpin the economy. While there is no question that addressing public health consequences is a priority, the nature of the economic recovery effort raises important questions.

Should stimulus packages focus on finding the way back to growth by kicking business as usual into overdrive, or could they accelerate the shift that has started toward a more resilient, low-carbon circular economy?

Looking at the pre-COVID-19 landscape, it is clear that momentum had been increasing around the need for a system reset, with a visible consensus around the potential of a circular model.

Click [here](#) for details

China study warns of possible new 'pandemic virus' from pigs

[Reuters, 30-06-2020] new flu virus found in Chinese pigs has become more infectious to humans and needs to be watched closely in case it becomes a potential "pandemic virus", a study said, although experts said there is no imminent threat.

A team of Chinese researchers looked at influenza viruses found in pigs from 2011 to 2018 and found a "G4" strain of H1N1 that has "all the essential hallmarks of a candidate

pandemic virus”, according to the paper, published by the U.S. journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Pig farm workers also showed elevated levels of the virus in their blood, the authors said, adding that “close monitoring in human populations, especially the workers in the swine industry, should be urgently implemented”.

The study highlights the risks of viruses crossing the species barrier into humans, especially in densely populated regions in China, where millions live close to farms, breeding facilities, slaughterhouses and wet markets.

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China's BeiDou navigation enables smarter agricultural production

[Xinhua, 09-06-2020] Nanjing Agricultural University has developed the BeiDou-tech-supported unmanned wheat seeding and harvesting technology, empowering agricultural production with advanced navigation technology, according to the university.

The new wheat production technology is a significant part of smart wheat production technology, according to Tian Yongchao, deputy director with the smart agriculture institute of Nanjing Agricultural University.

The smart wheat production technology integrates BeiDou navigation technology, information technology and agricultural engineering into the whole process of wheat production.

Click [here](#) for details

China successfully launches new ocean observation satellite

[Xinhua, 11-06-2020] China successfully sent an ocean observation satellite into orbit.

The new satellite will form China's first satellite constellation for marine civil service together with HY-1C, which was launched in September 2018, and double the current ocean observation data, according to CNSA and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The satellite constellation is expected to improve China's capabilities in observing ocean color, coastal resources and ecological environment, and ramp up support for meteorology, agriculture, water conservation and transportation.

It will also be of great significance to coping with global climate change and building an ecological civilization.

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Big data is revolutionizing the agricultural sector in Guizhou, China

[PR Newswire, 29-06-2020] During the past few years, Guizhou has advocated the intersection of big data and the farming industry.

Basically, big data can assist the value chain optimization, plug the lacunae in the supply and demand gap. As for the traditional farming industry, peasants send their harvest to a grocer or department chain. Such a model may cause the supply-demand imbalance as it is not always possible to know precisely how much a particular crop should be ready.

However, a large volume of agricultural corporations in Guizhou now apply big data to tackle that challenge. Meitan Qinyuanchun Tea Co. LTD. could be a case in point. Equipped with big data, peasants better track the consumer trend and cushion themselves against the vagaries of markets.

Click [here](#) for details

New tech turns toxic blue algae into protein powder

[Xinhua, 11-06-2020] Chinese researchers have developed a technology to turn blue algae into protein powder with high detoxification efficiency.

A research team from the Research Institute for Environmental Innovation (Suzhou), Tsinghua, in east China's Jiangsu Province, used microsecond ultrasound to explode blue algae, which achieved detoxification with an efficiency of up to 99.8 percent.

Without any addition of chemical or biological reactants, only water vapor was used as the medium in the whole experimental detoxification process, resulting in zero emissions.

The technology may contribute to the ecological management of rivers and lakes, when it is popularized in the province or even nationwide, according to the institute.

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High-protein corn varieties cultivation program

[Xinhua, 11-06-2020]The Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences has launched a program to facilitate the breeding of high-protein corn varieties and promote the healthy development of animal husbandry.

To develop high-quality corn varieties as livestock feed, the program will focus on high-protein corns by creating germplasm resources, utilizing molecular-design breeding and evaluating nutritional value. It will also introduce cultivation demonstration projects and design new animal-feed formula.

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China grows sea rice on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau

[CGTN, 10-06-2020] Chinese scientists have grown saline-alkali tolerant rice on a farm at an altitude of 2,800 meters in northwest China's Qinghai Province. This is the first trial of "sea rice-planting" on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

For thousands of years, rice has been planted in locations with high temperatures, humidity, and short days, but this farm on the plateau's Qaidam Basin, specifically, has a large area of saline-alkali land that makes it difficult for crops to grow. It is also frequently affected by drought, hail, frost, and natural disasters.

A team led by the "father of hybrid rice" Yuan Longping has worked on the research to yield more rice in saline-alkali environments.

Click [here](#) for details

Optic Technology Aiding Hybrid Rice Breeding

[CAS, 03-06-2020] About 600kg of third-generation hybrid rice seeds was sorted at a speed of 20kg/h, with the help of a prototype developed by Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics and Physics (CIOMP) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The prototype, a fluorescence identification and sorting device, can boost the speed and accuracy of seed sorting, a help for agricultural scientists at China National Hybrid Rice R&D Centre (CNHRRDC), where third-generation hybrid rice is being developed.

Unlike the previous two generations of hybrid rice which requires large amount of water and fertilisers as well as demanding growing conditions and technological support, the third-generation hybrid rice can be easily cultivated by ordinary farmers.

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Going greener, China on course to meet environment goals

[Xinhua, 05-06-2020] As World Environment Day reminds global citizens of the “Time for Nature,” China keeps its eyes fixed on its green targets this year amid solid steps along the path of environment-friendly development.

This year also marks China's final push in finishing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and general improvement in the environment is listed among the "three tough battles" that must be won.

The pressure to push ahead with anti-pollution work, however, still remains, as firms and factories have quickened pace to resume business activities and expedited investment projects after the novel coronavirus disrupted the economy.

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More animals added to list of conservation

[China daily, 23-06-2020] China's top conservation authority recently proposed a new list of wild animals under State priority conservation — the first time the list has been overhauled since 1988 — and has started to collect public opinion.

Released by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs, the list is part of China's efforts to enhance regulations on wildlife protection.

According to the proposed list, 55 wild animals will see upgraded protection from the second level to first, including the Yangtze finless porpoise, jungle cat, spotted seal and Eurasian elk.

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China's African swine fever vaccine shows positive early results

[Xinhua, 10-06-2020] An African swine fever vaccine has shown positive early results in trials, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) said 10 June.

The vaccine, developed by Harbin Veterinary Research Institute under the CAAS, uses a gene-deleted African swine fever virus as a live attenuated vaccine in pigs, and was approved for clinical trials in March.

Since April, clinical trials have been carried out in three breeding bases in Heilongjiang Province, Henan Province and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Around 3,000 pigs received the vaccine.

So far, vaccinated piglets have normally grown and developed with no obvious adverse effects.

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China pork crisis spurs pig farms' return to cities

[Reuters, 11-06-2020] China is building industrial pig farms near its urban areas, reversing years of policies to relocate the livestock over waste concerns, as the government prioritises food security over the environment after African swine fever decimated its herds.

The world's biggest pork consumer will add about 200 million pigs by constructing new farms around the country to restore output after the swine fever outbreak that started in 2018. But new farms going up in the suburbs of major cities face high costs to prevent the problems like farm run-off leaking into water and soil that prompted the government to relocate them between 2015 and 2017.

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China starts COVID-19 tests on seafood markets

[GT, 16-06-2020] Major seafood markets in China have launched massive nucleic acid tests for their working staff and environmental samples as a quick response to the new COVID-19 outbreak in Beijing which was uncovered at the city's largest wholesale food market.

Although there's no proof that salmon was the source of the sudden spike in Beijing, the latest research shows that the virus "came from Europe," and virologists believe the epidemic was most likely caused by contaminated food.

Industrial insiders noted that the incident in Xinfadi market in southern Beijing's Fengtai district will have a huge impact on the imported seafood market across China and the world supply chain. However, given the authorities' competence in handling the matter, such an impact would be temporary.

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Overfishing threatens cetaceans in South China Sea

[CAS, 16-06-2020] Cetaceans, such as whales and dolphins, in the South China Sea are at risk of disappearing amid overfishing, scientists warn in an article recently published in the journal Science.

Cetaceans are large mammals, but overfishing has limited their nutrition as they now have little prey to eat. Fishing operations have also caused hundreds of cetaceans to be caught by mistake or hit by fishing vessels, resulting in casualties.

Furthermore, many fishing vessels produced underwater noise that damaged cetaceans' hearing and disturbed their behavior.

In the article, the scientists suggest that regional countries carry out research to investigate and identify key cetacean areas in the South China Sea, where fishing and other human activities will be strictly controlled.

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China realizes land degradation neutrality

[CAS, 19-06-2020] The CAS "Big Earth Data Science Engineering" Program (CASEarth) released their research results of using big Earth data in support of land degradation neutrality assessment along Belt and Road Region on June 17, 26th World's Desertification and Drought Day.

The report shows that China has achieved land degradation neutrality in advance, and the net land restoration area accounts for 18.24% of the world's total, ranking first in the world, and contributing greatly to global land degradation neutrality.

However, global land degradation is still prominent. There are still 32 countries in the world where the area of land degradation is larger than the area of land restoration. These countries mainly distributed in Central Asia and Africa.

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Trade and Business

Launch of Syngenta Group – Creating a Global AgTech Market Leader

[Business Wire, 18-06-2020)--Syngenta Group Co. Ltd., announced the official launch of Syngenta Group, a new global leader in agricultural science and innovation. Under a single entity, it unites the strengths of Syngenta AG, headquartered in Switzerland, ADAMA, based in Israel, and the agricultural businesses of Sinochem, based in China. The new entity,

headquartered in Switzerland, has 48,000 employees in more than 100 countries, and had sales of US\$23 billion in 2019.

From its inception, Syngenta Group is the global market leader in crop protection, the global number three in seeds, the market leader in fertilizer in China and, with its Modern Agriculture Platform (MAP) Farmer Solution Centers, the leading agriculture services provider in China. It offers comprehensive agronomic solutions and digital agricultural services. With 15 key production sites the Group has strong capacity to supply farmers with the solutions they need.

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China to see bumper summer harvest, wheat yields and quality up

[Xinhua, 15-06-2020] China will see a bumper harvest of grains this summer thanks to stable grain acreage and improved crop yields, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said.

Summer grain acreage is 400 million mu (about 26.67 million hectares) this year. As of Monday, 90 percent of summer grains have been harvested.

The quality of wheat, which is the mainstay of summer grains, has improved and its yield is expected to rise by 4 kg per mu on average, said Han Changfu, minister of agriculture and rural affairs.

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China approves import of first domestic GM soybean for feed use

[Reuters, 23-06-2020] China has approved the import of two new genetically modified (GM) soybean varieties, including one developed by local firm Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group Co Ltd, its agriculture ministry said, making it the first Chinese engineered soybean allowed for import.

The MON87751 soybean, an insect-resistant variety developed by Bayer-owned Monsanto Far East Ltd has also been approved, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said in a statement.

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China's farm produce trade deficit expands

[Xinhua, 06-06-2020] China's agricultural products trade reported a deficit of 28.62 billion U.S. dollars in the first four months of 2020, up 18.2 percent year-on-year, official statistics showed.

Imports increased by 8 percent year-on-year to 51.53 billion U.S. dollars while exports went down by 2.6 percent to 22.91 billion U.S. dollars, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Total farm produce trade volume rose by 4.5 percent year-on-year to 74.44 billion U.S. dollars in the first four months.

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China's food industry remains stable in first four months

[Xinhua, 09-06-2020] China's food industry remained generally stable in the first four months of this year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

Industrial added-value of firms in the sector saw stable growth, with those of food manufacturers and agricultural by-product processors rising by 7.5 percent and 3 percent year on year respectively.

Retail sales of grain, oil and food reached 499.63 billion yuan (about 70.41 billion U.S. dollars), up 13.8 percent from last year. Sales of beverages stood at 63.46 billion yuan during the period, a 6.3-percent year-on-year growth, MIIT data showed.

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British Chamber of Commerce calls for China-UK free trade deal

[CGTN, 09-06-2020] The British Chamber of Commerce in China (BCCC) has called on the UK government to prioritize trade negotiations with China and work towards a bilateral free-trade deal as the world continues its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and Britain seeks to devise a post-Brexit economic strategy.

The push for a China-UK free trade agreement (FTA) came as the BCCC released its Position Paper 2020 on British Businesses in China, in Beijing.

The findings of this year's paper reflected the views of British businesses throughout the year, but also acknowledged the immense economic impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last four months.

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Livestreaming boosts sales, publicity of goji berries

[Xinhua, 12-06-2020] Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, goji berry growers in northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region are expecting a bumper harvest this year, thanks to livestreaming marketing.

Goji berries, also known as wolfberries, have embraced the first harvest in early June. On one plantation in Dahe County, under Hongsipu District of the city of Wuzhong, busy pickers were joined by livestreaming anchors, who took on the role of "leading actors" in the fields.

Besides placing orders, online viewers also raised questions about the berries' nutritional value and growing conditions, as well as tips on picking. Livestreaming anchors answered their questions both passionately and patiently.

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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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