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## Policies

### **China to stabilize grain production, ensure food security**

[Xinhua, 06-05-2021] China will further promote stable grain production and step up its ability to ensure food security, a State Council executive meeting decided on 6 May.

Determined efforts will be made to ensure stable and high yields. The policies including minimum purchase prices for rice and wheat and subsidies for corn and soybean producers will remain and be improved. The pilot programs of full-cost insurance and income insurance for the three major cereal crops will be extended to make grain growing profitable for farmers.

Central budgetary investment and proceeds from the transfer of land-use rights at provincial level will be tilted towards major grain-producing counties.

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### **China issues guideline on social investment in rural sectors**

[Xinhua, 07-05-2021] China issued a guideline to encourage social investment in 13 major rural and agricultural sectors to boost rural vitalization.

The sectors include modern planting and breeding, farm-produce processing and circulation, new type of rural services, agricultural technological innovation and rural infrastructure, said the guideline jointly released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the national administration for rural vitalization at a press conference.

Efforts should also be made to create new approaches to investment, build platforms for cooperation and improve the environment of investment, according to the guideline.

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### **China to step up financial services for new agricultural businesses**

[Xinhua, 25-05-2021] Chinese financial and agricultural authorities have demanded efforts to improve financial services for new types of agricultural business entities amid the country's push for rural vitalization and agricultural and rural modernization, according to a document jointly released by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), the central bank and five other government departments.

The document has specified requirements on strengthening information sharing, promoting the development of credit loans, the innovation of exclusive financial products and services and expanding and diversifying financial channels, as well as improving agricultural insurance service, among others.

Financial services for new types of rural businesses will be taken into account in assessing the financial institutions' service performance on rural vitalization, according to the document.

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### **China to provide wider farm insurance coverage**

[Xinhua, 19-06-2021] A State Council executive meeting decided to provide wider farm insurance to help farmers fend off risks and stabilize income from grain production.

It will cover costs for seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, land, labor, and losses from natural disasters, plant diseases, and insect pests, among others. The insurance for those planting corn will cover losses due to price and output fluctuations.

The meeting decided to provide a one-time subsidy to farmers growing major grains to cushion them from sharp price increases of farming supplies and stabilize their income. The total subsidy amount will be around 20 billion yuan (about 3.11 billion U.S. dollars).

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### **New red lines protecting biodiversity**

[China daily, 22-05-2021] In one of the country's latest efforts to conserve biodiversity, China has drawn red lines for ecosystem protection that encircle one-fourth of its land area, a leading environmental official said.

Huang Runqiu, minister of ecology and environment, also said the boundaries that cannot be crossed have covered all habitats for key species and areas critical for biodiversity conservation across the country.

China has also been forging ahead with biodiversity surveys and assessments. Investment from the central government into the issues has totaled almost 400 million yuan (\$62 million), he continued.

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### **China increases financial support for rural water conservancies**

[Xinhua, 03-05-2021] China's Ministry of Finance has allocated 57.4 billion yuan (8.88 billion U.S. dollars) to subsidize local water conservancy projects in 2021, up 3.1 percent from the previous year.

The funds aim to help resolve weak links in water conservancies in rural areas.

To reduce damages caused by floods and droughts, 45 percent of the funds, or 25.9 billion yuan, will be used to reinforce small dilapidated reservoirs, harness small and medium-sized rivers, and enhance the prevention of mountain torrents.

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### **CAAS launches Institute of Rural Vitalization in Beijing**

[China daily, 18-06-2021] The Institute of Rural Vitalization under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences was unveiled in Beijing on 18 June.

The new institute aims to combine research with education, nurture agricultural talents and promote the development of scientific achievements in the process of rural vitalization.

By 2050, the Institute of Rural Vitalization is expected to become a world-renowned think tank in rural development, according to the CAAS.

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## **Science, Technology and Environment**

### **China to strengthen basic agricultural research in seed industry**

[Xinhua, 05-06-2021] China will strengthen basic agricultural research in the seed industry to ensure food security and the supply of agricultural products, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) said.

It will focus on basic research in the new system of plant-microbe interactions featuring highly efficient nitrogen fixation, photosynthesis and nitrogen use and epigenetic regulation in response to the environment, aiming to increase grain yield and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers.

The integration of systems biology, big data, synthetic biology and artificial intelligence will innovate precise gene-editing tools and technologies.

Click [here](#) for details

### **1st national institute in Hainan seed breeding base opens**

[China daily, 19-05-2021] The Nanfan Breeding Research Center under the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences was unveiled in Sanya, South China's Hainan province.

The center will engage in research on the protection and utilization of seed germ plasm resources, molecular design and variety cultivation.

The center will be jointly operated with CAAS's Nanfan Institute to boost innovation in the seed industry and ensure national food security.

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### **China's grain production to hit 692m tons in 2025**

[China daily, 25-05-2021] China's grain production will hit 692 million tons and the self-sufficiency rate of staple grains such as rice and wheat will be 99.3 percent in 2025, according to the China Agricultural Sector Development Report 2021.

The report was jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and International Food Policy Research Institute on 25<sup>th</sup> May.

Last year, the agricultural development in China improved steadily despite the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic as grain production reached 669 million tons, the report said.

The soybean production increased to 19.6 million tons, up 8.3 percent year-on-year, and imports exceeded 100 million tons.

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### **China could boost yields and cut emissions by switching from maize to soy**

[Phys.org, 15-06-2021] A large team of researchers has found that if many of the farmers in China switched from growing maize to growing soy, the country as a whole could boost yields while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In their paper published in the journal Nature Food, the researchers describe their county-level analysis of farming practices in China.

The researchers focused their efforts on soy and maize production for over 1,800 counties and as part of their effort; they calculated the yield gap for each. In so doing, they found yield gaps as high as 50% - far higher than for other major soy producers. The team then conducted a reallocation analysis of the farms in each of the counties, where they simulated converting maize growing to soy growing. They found that if their recommendations were implemented, China would be able to boost its production of soy to 45% of demand - a significant increase. They also found that switching so much maize production to soy production would reduce emissions of reactive nitrogen significantly and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in China attributable to soy and maize growing, by 19%.

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### **China accelerates construction of integrated big data center**

[Xinhua, 26-05-2021] China has officially kicked off the construction of computing power hubs for an integrated national big data center as the country seeks to tap the value of massive data resources more efficiently, an official with the country's top economic planner said.

China had earlier released a guideline on the relevant construction in eight key regions including the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the Yangtze River Delta, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and Guizhou Province.

China aims to promote the distribution of big data centers to regions where renewable energy is abundant and climate and geological conditions are favorable, and strengthen network transmission capacity between national hubs, said Shen Zhulin, with the National Development and Reform Commission, at the opening ceremony of the China International Big Data Industry Expo 2021 held in Guizhou.

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### **Alibaba ramps up digital support to revitalize China's rural economy**

[Alizila, 25-05-2021] Alibaba Group last week rolled out 14 measures to boost rural economies in China, expanding its investment and philanthropic efforts in rural education, female empowerment, healthcare, digital infrastructure and e-commerce development for present and future generations. Dubbed the Alibaba Rural Vitalization Fund, this effort extends Alibaba's Poverty Relief Fund, a philanthropic initiative the company set up in 2017.

In 2020, Alibaba's various e-commerce platforms sold more than RMB303.7 billion (\$47.2 billion) worth of agricultural products, spotlighting an increasing number of rural merchants and products from China's most poverty-stricken counties and regions.

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### **From picking tomatoes to vaccinating fish, agricultural robots show future of farming**

[Pinduoduo, 25-05-2021] The future of farming was on display at the recent "First China Agricultural Robot Innovation Competition" as teams from universities, scientific research institutes and technology companies showcased their innovations.

Taking center stage were weeding robots, vertical farming robots, strawberry-picking robots, underwater inspection robots, fish-vaccination robots, and disinfection robots.

China, which faces the challenge of producing more food with limited land and a dwindling and aging farming labor pool, has issued guidelines to encourage investment in 13 agricultural and rural sectors, including smart agriculture, as part of its efforts to spur agricultural modernization.

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### **Planting new seeds to boost agricultural brand building**

[China daily, 10-05-2021] A symposium on China's Agricultural Brand Policy was held on in Beijing before China Brand Day on May 10, aiming to strengthen the policymaking of agricultural brands and promote better varieties and products.

Last year, digital platforms became an important channel for selling agricultural products and a major way to promote related brands.

The online retail sales of agricultural products in the country exceeded 550 billion yuan (\$85.5 billion) in 2020, according to the China Agricultural Brand Development Report released at the symposium.

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## **Rural greenhouses turn high-tech as handsets become farm tools**

[China daily, 13-05-2021] Vegetable growers in Shouguang, Shandong province, are now finding it easier to grow vegetables in greenhouses, thanks to the rapid development of technology and infrastructure.

At the demonstration base of modern agricultural technologies, a smart glass greenhouse with tomatoes features over 120 patented technologies developed by a team from the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

A series of data on humidity, temperature and carbon dioxide concentration are updated on a large electronic screen in the glass greenhouse.

Click [here](#) for details

## **Modern farming: Coronavirus outbreak spurs high-tech greenhouse boom in China**

[Reuters, 04-06-2021] At Chongming Island just outside Shanghai, China's most populous city, workers collect and pack tomatoes and cucumbers at a glass greenhouse operated by Dutch company FoodVentures, which harvested their first batch of produce at the site in May.

The facility is one of dozens sprouting up on the outskirts of China's megacities that utilise high-end technology to manage irrigation, temperature and lighting systems to grow vegetables within easy reach of a large and affluent consumer base.

By far the world's largest vegetable producer, China has used greenhouses for decades, but food supply disruptions sparked by coronavirus lockdowns in 2020 have accelerated the development of high-tech glass greenhouse facilities.

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## **Nutrition study shows too much fat, need for more protein in Chinese diets**

[China daily, 25-05-2021] Chinese people have been eating more than they need of certain types of food and are facing an obvious dietary imbalance, according to the China Agricultural Sector Development Report 2021, which was released on 25 May.

The report, jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and International Food Policy Research Institute, shows Chinese people's per capita intake of protein and fat was respectively 85 g per day and 79 g per day in 2020.

Meanwhile, the proportion of energy supplied by carbohydrates was 50.6 percent, and that of protein and fat was 14.7 percent and 34.7 percent, respectively, it said.

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## **Jilin province strengthens black soil protection**

[China daily, 18-06-2021] Measures have been taken to protect "black soil" in Northeast China's Jilin province, including technological innovations, talent recruitment, funding support and related policies.

Jilin province is rich in black soil – a type of highly fertile earth that takes hundreds of years to form a layer one-centimeter thick – and this has made it China's major grain-producing province.

To prevent the fertility of the black soil from being degraded and to maintain productivity, the province has been undertaking conservation tillage, a form of tillage designed to minimize the use of plows and prevent the loss of topsoil.

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## **Joint efforts needed to tackle destructive pests**

[China daily, 16-06-2021] The advance of invasive red fire ants in China can be slowed and made less hazardous through joint prevention efforts by government departments, according to experts.

The species, which is native to South America and arrived in China in 2004, will continue to spread to more areas of the country, however, and may not be eradicated anytime soon, they said.

As of April, the insects had been reported in 12 provinces and 448 counties, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The number of counties in which the ants have been detected has doubled in five years, and they have been sighted in parks and farmland in urban areas.

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## **Trade and Business**

### **China's summer grain harvest hits a new record, says agriculture minister**

[GT, 23-06-2021] China's summer grain output hit another record high this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on 23 June.

The record-breaking bumper summer grain harvest was revealed by Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Tang Renjian during an inspection tour in Hebei Province, according to a statement on the ministry's website.

Previously, a record was set last year despite the COVID-19 pandemic, with summer grain output totaling 142.81 million tons, up 0.9 percent from the year before.

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### **China to be nearly self-sufficient in wheat, rice by 2025**

[World Grain, 26-05-2021] China will be almost entirely self-sufficient in staple grains such as rice and wheat by 2025, according to the China Agricultural Sector Development Report released on May 25.

The report, jointly released by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and International Food Policy Research Institute, forecasts the country's total grain production at 692 million tonnes by that year.

China's overall grain output in 2020 was 669 million tonnes, the report said.

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### **Grain price rise unlikely to impact on Chinese market supply**

[GT, 08-06-2021] As global food prices surge, Russia is reportedly considering tighter export controls on major food products. However, an expert said that this is unlikely to affect China too much, as the country has reached basic self-sufficiency in staple food.

Soaring international prices will mainly affect imports of feed crops such as corn and sorghum, as the country's need for international supplies jumped over the past one or two years with the recovery of live hog production, Jiao Shanwei, editor-in-chief of cngrain.com, a website specializing in grain news, told the Global Times.

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## **China's feed lots set to snap up wheat harvest for pigs, poultry**

[Reuters, 28-05-2021] China's massive livestock sector is set to snap up millions of tonnes of wheat from the country's harvest that began this month, extending a run of crop-switching in animal feed and further cooling demand for corn imports.

Corn imports surged last year after a decline in stockpiles and production, pushing up prices and reshaping global grain markets as feed producers and pig farmers scoured the world for supplies.

At the same time, China's feed sector purchased record volumes of cheaper wheat from the 2020/21 season for use as a substitute for corn, traditionally the main grain in animal rations.

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## **China's Hog Herd Has Almost Recovered From African Swine Fever**

[Bloomberg, 22-06-2021] China's hog population rose 24% in the year through May and has now almost fully recovered from the recent resurgence in African swine fever, according to the country's agriculture ministry.

Herd sizes are close to normal for this time of year, Xin Guochang, an official at the ministry's animal husbandry bureau, said in an interview on state television. Meanwhile, around 3.5 million of low-productivity breeding sows were culled in the first five months of the year, he said, which should lead to an improvement in herd fertility.

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## **Pandemic gives boost to dairy consumption**

[ECNS, 27-05-2021] The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed Chinese consumers' lifestyle and dietary intake habits, with their dairy intake rates steadily increasing, said a new report released on 27 May.

In 2019, the average daily dairy intake volume of Chinese was 237 milliliter. This year, the number reached 260ml, although still lower than the suggested volume of 300ml daily, according to Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents.

The report shows that 30.7 percent of the surveyed consumers said they have increased dairy intakes since the pandemic. The study collected information from more than 4,200 valid samples and it covered 20 cities nationwide.

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## **Over 1 billion Chinese people still have no dairy consuming habits**

[Chemlinked, 01-06-2021] According to 2021 China Milk Quotient Report jointly issued by China Dairy Industry Association, China International Exchange and Promotion Association for Medical and Healthcare, and Friesland Campina on May 27, China's 2021 Milk Quotient is 62.7 points, the same as last year.

The survey shows that although the COVID-19 epidemic helps improve the public's awareness of consuming dairy, the number of Chinese people who keep a daily intake of dairy products is only about 360 million. More than one billion people have not yet formed a dairy consuming habit.

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## **China embraces rural tourism boom amid COVID-19**

[Xinhua, 12-05-2021] China is in the middle of a rural tourism boom amid the COVID-19 pandemic, CNN reported.

The rapid growth in rural tourism isn't just the result of the pandemic or rapid urbanization in China. It's also a major government policy of revitalizing rural areas, which involves supporting poor citizens in the countryside through a program of poverty alleviation, the report explained.

Such a boom in rural tourism has been backed by concrete government plans, as were laid down in a draft of China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), in which the government called for further strengthening "leisure agriculture, rural tourism and the homestay economy," it said.

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### **China's pork prices fall as consumers tuck into poultry, other meats**

[Yicai, 27-05-2021] Pork prices in China have been falling since the Spring Festival in February, partly because production capacity has risen, but also because consumers are increasingly eating more poultry, beef and mutton instead, a trend that is expected to continue, according to industry experts.

Yicai Global compared two sets of annual data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2017 and 2020 and found that pork's share in the total of pork, beef, mutton and poultry produced shrank to 53.8 percent from 63.3 percent, while poultry rose to 30.9 percent from 22.5 percent.

Annual pork demand is likely to stagnate at 50 million to 52 million tons in the future, and is unlikely to return to the peak 56 million tons seen before the outbreak of ASF said Lin Guofa, research director at Bric Agriculture Group. Meanwhile, annual demand for poultry will increase from the current 25 million tons to 28 million tons.

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### **Yili expands its global health ecosystems in Europe with StartLife and Cambridge's Institute for Manufacturing**

[PRNewswire, 21-06-2021] On June 2021, Yili, Asia's largest and fast-growing dairy company, is officially partnering with the agri-foodtech accelerator StartLife in the Netherlands. Yili is also joining the Open Innovation Forum, an industry network for food and FMCG companies at the Institute for Manufacturing (IfM), which is part of the University of Cambridge.

The collaboration with StartLife enables Yili to tap into the innovation ecosystem of agri-foodtech start-up and scale-up companies.

Through becoming a member of the IfM's Open Innovation Forum, Yili has a unique opportunity to collaborate with industry experts and world-leading academics, gaining access to the latest industry insights, tools and techniques.

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### **China's ambassador to UK Zheng Zeguang calls for closer trade ties despite 'headwinds'**

[CGTN, 29-06-2021] China's new ambassador to the UK says he hopes trade ties between the two countries can be strengthened, despite "headwinds" in their relationship.

Zheng Zeguang was making his first public appearance as ambassador at a webinar celebrating 20 years of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in the UK.

China is the UK's fifth-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade in goods and services worth \$112 billion a year.

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### **China overtakes Germany as UK's top import market**

[BBC, 27-05-2021] China has overtaken Germany to become the UK's biggest single import market for the first time since records began.

Goods imported from China rose 66% from the start of 2018 to £16.9bn (\$24bn) in the first quarter of this year, the Office for National Statistics said.

Imports from Germany fell by a quarter to £12.5bn in the same period.

The change came as trade with the European Union was disrupted by Brexit and the pandemic boosted demand for Chinese goods.

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### **Engagement with China essential: British Chamber of Commerce**

[Xinhua, 27-05-2021] The challenges in the China-UK relationship can only be resolved through engagement, said the British Chamber of Commerce in China (BCCC), calling for cooperation around preventing climate change, improving the business environment and other areas of common interest.

The voice came as the BCCC released its Position Paper 2021 on British Businesses in China in Beijing on Wednesday, and the analysis within the paper is drawn from the data provided in the Sentiment Survey and industry roundtables and interviews.

It is vital that China-UK travel resumes as quickly as possible in line with pandemic response measures, said St. John Moore, chair of the BCCC, adding that it is important for China to remain a vibrant international hub.

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### **Harrogate distillery raises a glass to trade with China**

[Harrogate Advertiser, 28-05-2021] Harrogate Tipple, the distillery based at Ripley, is breaking into the Chinese market with its Downton Abbey branded gin and whisky.

The spirits have been shipped to China and re-labelled in Chinese by logistics group Elanders UK of North Tyneside, which has 11 operations in China. The drinks are shipped to Elanders' bonded warehouse in Shanghai, enabling Chinese customers to receive orders within 24 hours.

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