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Policies

China unveils three-step strategy for innovation-driven development

[Xinhua, 19-05-2016] China on Thursday, 19 May, unveiled a guideline for a national strategy that maps out three major steps to promote the country's innovation-driven development.

The document, jointly published by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council, pledges to build China into an innovative nation by 2020, and an international leader in innovation by 2030.

The blueprint vows to make China a world powerhouse of scientific and technological innovation by 2050, the third step of the strategy.

Innovation-driven development requires making innovation the primary driving force for development, according to the document.

It also calls for integration of innovation in scientific and technological fields as well as in systems, management, and business models.

The guideline demands efforts to construct a new driving force for development and to build a national innovative system.

The document puts forward missions for developing technology in information networks, modern agriculture, energy, environmental protection, oceanic and space industries, and health and service industries.

Research in fields related to the country's strategic demands and which helps solve bottlenecks in the country's long-term development and national security should be strengthened, it said.

Click [here](#) for details

China releases new action plan to tackle soil pollution

[Reuters, 31-05-2016] China aims to curb worsening soil pollution by 2020 and stabilise and improve soil quality by 2030, the cabinet said in an action plan published on Tuesday, 31st May.

The government will continue to eliminate outdated capacity in heavy metal sectors, the cabinet said in a statement on its website (www.gov.cn).

Last year, the environment minister said 16.1 percent of China's soil exceeded state pollution limits, but treatment costs for heavy metal or chemical contamination are high, and China has struggled to attract private capital.

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China accelerates supply-side reform following 'authority' urges

[China daily, 12-05-2016] China's local governments were busy making and releasing detailed measures to implement supply-side structural reform when an "authority figure" called the reform "a battle we cannot afford to lose."

Shanghai unveiled 27 major tasks with a focus on advanced industrial equipment, information technology, new materials and supply of daily consumer goods.

Shanghai is the latest of more than a third of China's 31 provincial-level regions to release supply-side reform plans with measures to cut overcapacity, reduce stockpiles, de-leverage, lower business costs and fix shortcomings.

The central leadership is counting on the reform to address economic woes in anticipation that the economy will tend towards L-shaped growth as deep-rooted problems persist and new challenges emerge. Overcapacity reduction will continue and "zombie" enterprises will be closed, according to the article.

Supply-side reform is aimed at improved agricultural, industrial and service sectors, less red tape, stronger R&D and a freer flow of resources, according to Yu Bin, a senior macroeconomic researcher with the Development Research Center of the State Council, an official think tank.

Click [here](#) for details

China on "right track" to make economic growth more sustainable: German economist

[Xinhua, 12-05-2-16] China's economic and social development blueprint for 2016-2020 unveiled earlier this year shows China is on "the right track" to make its economic growth "more sustainable," a German economics professor has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Professor Horst Loechel at Frankfurt School of Finance and Management hailed the 13th five-year plan, which was approved by Chinese lawmakers in March, as a good decision, saying it is "the right track to go" for the Chinese economy after decades of rapid growth.

The plan is about modernizing and rebalancing the economy and the level of innovation would be raised, Loechel said.

It will bring a clear impact to the Chinese economy, which will become more sustainable, he said, adding that a strong Chinese economy is good for the world economy and vice versa.

The blueprint outlines the policy framework, priorities and economic and social development goals for 2016-2020, including an innovation-driven development strategy and an average annual growth rate of above 6.5 percent.

China has come to a point where innovation and entrepreneurship are very important to raise productivity, Loechel said. He said market economy should be further strengthened in China in order to foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

Loechel believed more capital flows between China and the rest of the world is needed.

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Premier encourages foreign investment in central, western China

[Xinhua, 24-05-2016] Premier Li Keqiang said Tuesday (24 May) that he welcomed foreign investment in China, particularly in central and western regions.

Li was talking with business leaders on the sidelines of the China Big Data Industry Summit & China E-commerce Innovation and Development Summit in Guiyang, capital of southwest China's Guizhou Province.

Li told them that there is a development disparity between eastern and inland regions, where there is great growth potential and plenty of investment opportunities.

"China attaches great importance to the protection of intellectual property rights and trade secrets. The country will step up cybersecurity and work to create an equal business environment for domestic and foreign-funded firms, " said the premier.

Rapid development of big data, cloud computing and the sharing economy is conducive to new economic drivers, Li said.

China will integrate big data and the Internet with manufacturing to upgrade traditional industries, said Li.

He also said the country will continue to push ahead with mass innovation and entrepreneurship and create a level playing field for growth companies.

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China establishes agricultural credit guarantee firm

[Global Times, 19-05-2016] China has established an agricultural credit guarantee company to help solve longstanding financing problems in agriculture and rural areas, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) said on Thursday, 19 May.

The company, which was set up by the MOF, the Ministry of Agriculture and the China Banking Regulatory Commission, is a policy guarantee institution and not for profit, the statement said.

The initial funding of the company was more than 4 billion yuan (610 million US dollars), including 3 billion yuan from the central treasury. The rest came from 11 provincial-level guarantee institutions.

The company's capital will increase to 15 billion yuan over the next three years as more organizations join.

The tasks of the company include setting national re-guarantee business standards, offering re-guarantees to all provincial-level guarantee organizations and developing agricultural credit guarantee products.

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China to start nationwide inspection of water law enforcement

[CCTV, 04-05-2016] China's top legislature announced Wednesday 4th May the beginning of a nationwide inspection on water conservation law enforcement to aid agricultural water conservation and strengthen protection of water resources.

The inspection team should focus on investment in farmland water conservation facilities and promote the use of water-saving irrigation technology, said Ji Bingxuan, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) at a plenary meeting in Beijing.

The inspection should boost water resources and protection of facilities and speed up reform of the property rights system for small farmland water facilities, Ji said.

Farmers should be encouraged and receive guidance in water conservation construction, and reform of the irrigation water pricing mechanism should be accelerated to encourage more economical water use by farmers.

The inspection will start in early May in Inner Mongolia, Jilin, Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan. The standing committee of the NPC will also authorize another eight provincial-level regions, including Shanxi and Ningxia, to inspect water law enforcement.

China has established a legal system for all aspects of water conservation, including water law, flood control law, soil and water conservation law, water pollution prevention law and regulations on combating drought. Nearly all water-related affairs now are addressed by the laws, according to the NPC meeting proceedings.

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Top legislator stresses implementation of food safety law

[Xinhua, 10-05-2016] Top Chinese legislator Zhang Dejiang has urged companies to obey the food safety law and told government organs to fulfill their supervisory duties, vowing to deal harshly with crimes in the field.

Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, made the remarks during a visit to north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region between May 7 and 9, to investigate how the law has been implemented.

During the inspection, Zhang inquired after quality control at livestock raising facilities as well as farming and herding co-ops, urging leading agricultural companies and co-ops to strengthen supervision and management of food products, with special focus on feedstuffs, additives and pesticides.

Zhang urged food-makers and sellers to follow all required procedures on raw materials and finished products, while keeping clear sales records as part of a food safety liability backtracking system.

Calling on agricultural academies and food inspection centers to improve examination and quarantine procedures, Zhang stressed that the dairy companies should give priority to quality and safety in their development.

Zhang called for efforts to promote the food safety to strengthen the sense of safety and law among the public, as well as an improved and authoritative food safety supervision mechanism.

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China's food safety work to target baby formula

[Xinhua, 12-5-2016] Baby formula, including imported products, will be a priority for government action to improve food safety, said a document issued by the State Council on Wednesday, 11 May.

According to a plan on this year's food safety operations, baby formula and supplementary food will stay on the list of commodities under close watch.

The regulator will also tighten inspection of the recipes of baby milk powders registered by manufacturers and expose malpractice.

Baby formula is a touchy food safety issue in China, haunted by a series of scandals since 2008 when infant formula produced by Sanlu Group, a leading domestic dairy firm, was found to contain melamine.

Last month, police arrested nine people allegedly involved the production and sales of fake baby formula under the brands of "Similac" and "Beingmate." About 1,000 cans of milk powder, over 20,000 empty cans and 65,000 fake trademarks were seized.

Farm produce will also be a priority, especially the use of pesticides and antibiotics, according to the document.

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Illegal fishing targeted in South China Sea

[China Daily, 06-05-2016] China will step up law enforcement in the South China Sea to prevent illegal fishing activities and rehabilitate marine resources during the upcoming seasonal ban, an official with the fisheries authority said on Thursday, 5 May.

Zhao Xingwu, head of the Bureau of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture, said on the sidelines of a news conference that enforcement will be jointly conducted by the Chinese Coast Guard and local fishery bureaus.

"We will definitely step up law enforcement in the South China Sea to enhance regulation of our fishing vessels. Meanwhile, we will also step up the regulation of foreign ships," he said.

Since 1999, China has imposed an annual fishing ban in parts of the South China Sea between May 16 and Aug 1 as part of an effort to protect marine resources in an area under its jurisdiction.

China's territorial waters have long been troubled by overfishing. Around 8-9 million tons of fish can be harvested legally in China's territorial waters each year, but the actual amount reaches 13 million tons, according to a report by Economic Daily.

Overfishing has resulted in the destruction of spawning sites for some species, reducing stocks in China's coastal areas, as well as leading to a prolonged recession in the sector, especially in the East China Sea, the report said.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China makes plan to accelerate commercialization of research findings

[Xinhua, 09-05-2016] China's State Council General Office has issued an action plan to accelerate commercialization of research findings.

The action plan says commercialization of scientific and technological findings is a key task in achieving innovation-driven development, which can also strengthen connections between sci-tech and the economy, with significance of promoting supply-side structural reform.

The plan aims to improve policy environment favorable to commercialization, play market's decisive role in distributing resources, and better exert governmental functions, in a bid to build a system conforming to the laws of innovation and market economy.

The plan focuses on a new generation of information networks and industries such as intelligent manufacturing to seek a market-oriented way of commercializing research findings.

It calls on supporting colleges and institutes to build institutions to facilitate the commercialization by strengthening the connections with businesses.

A national technological transaction platform blending online and offline operations will be built, regional and sectoral technological markets will be developed, and the integration between research commercialization with innovation and entrepreneurship will be promoted, according to the plan.

It also says a number of demonstration zones for commercialization of research findings will be built to seek replicable working mechanisms and models.

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China launches new satellite for civilian hi-res mapping

[China Daily, 30-05-2016] China launched a new civilian high-resolution mapping satellite on Monday 30 May from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi province.

The Ziyuan III 02 satellite took off on the back of a Long March 4B rocket at 11:17 am Beijing time, according to the center. It was the 228th flight mission by a Long March carrier rocket.

Also on board the rocket were two NewSat satellites developed by URUGUS S.A., the Uruguayan subsidiary of Argentine company Satellogic.

All three satellites have entered preset orbits, the Taiyuan center said in a statement.

Ziyuan III 02 will be used in land resources surveys, natural disaster prevention, agricultural development, water resources management and urban planning, among other tasks. It is the second satellite in a remote-sensing mapping system China plans to build by 2030.

It will join its predecessor Ziyuan III 01, launched in January 2012, to form a network and capture high-definition, 3-D images and multispectral data.

Earlier reports said another stereo mapping satellite, Gaofen-7, is expected to be launched in 2018.

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Ministry tweaks eating guidelines

[China daily, 14-05-2016] China's top health authority released a new dietary guideline on Friday, 13 May, stressing the need for a balanced diet amid rising health threats such as obesity in recent years.

The guideline, a revision of a version drafted in 2007, takes into account the main nutritional problems and eating habits of the Chinese in recent years, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

The new guidelines emphasize the benefit of consuming a variety of foods, increases vegetable and dairy consumption and reduces salt and oil.

Compared with the 2007 guideline, it trims the recommended amounts of certain types of foods - such as meat, soybeans and salt - and encourages people to drink more water.

Chinese adults should eat 40 to 75 grams of meat a day, it says, compared with 50 to 75 grams in the 2007 guideline. Recommendations for other foods, such as vegetables, dairy products and oil, remain the same.

The new guideline's reductions in recommended amounts of some foods, such as meat and soybeans, are in keeping with the latest protein and energy intake standards for Chinese, which advise consuming less protein and energy.

Although Chinese nutrition has improved in the past years, people's diet is not totally balanced. For example, people consume too much fat and not enough dairy.

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China is encouraging its citizens to eat less meat — and that could be a big win for the climate

[WP, 27-05-2016] An updated set of dietary guidelines just released by the Chinese government could be a boon not only for public health, say some environmentalists, but also for the environment. They're arguing that the new recommendations have the potential to reduce China's meat consumption, or at least slow its growth, which can help save land and water resources and put a substantial dent in global greenhouse gas emissions.

The actual differences between the new guidelines and the previous ones, which were released in 2007, are slim. Both recommend an upper limit on meat and poultry consumption of 75 grams per day — but the new guidelines reduce the lower daily value from 50 grams to 40 grams. Altogether, the guidelines suggest limiting meat, poultry, fish and dairy consumption to 200 grams daily.

If such reductions were to actually occur, it could be a major win for the environment.

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China "deserves big credit" for efforts to tackle climate change: Britain's ex-Labour leader

[Xinhua, 03-04-2016] China "deserves big credit" for its efforts to develop clean energy and work with other countries to tackle climate change, said Ed Miliband, former leader of the Labour Party in Britain.

"I am very impressed by China's leadership on this issue, and when I look at what China is doing, and I think it is quite an amazing initiative that it is taking," Miliband said in a recent interview with Xinhua.

After resigning from party leadership last year, the politician has continued his role as a member of the Parliament and strived to build a cross-party coalition of lawmakers, businesses, trade unions and NGOs to campaign for tougher environmental policies and legislations in Britain.

Speaking of China's newly released 13th Five-Year Plan, a national blueprint emphasizing "green development," Miliband said it is "incredibly ambitious" and "a very important contribution" to tackling climate change.

The former Labour leader noted that there is "big potential" for UK-China cooperation on climate change and other environmental issues.

The two countries, he said, could learn from each other on renewable energy "where China is obviously driving ahead electric cars."

On broader international cooperation, Miliband pointed out that the most important thing is to begin with mutual understanding, as "every country faces compelling constraints and particular national circumstances."

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UN official lauds China's efforts in curbing air pollution

[Xinhua, 22-05-2016] A UN Environment Programme (UNEP) official on Saturday, 21 May lauded measures put in place by Chinese authorities in controlling air pollution

UNEP Coordinator for Environment and Health Fanny Demassieux said the whole world is looking at the way Beijing is tackling the problem in order to borrow ideas on how to solve their air pollution in their countries.

"China has developed measures aimed at reducing the problem," Demassieux told Xinhua ahead of the second session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in Nairobi.

China, which has been battling air pollution for years, has issued new policy measures that could have big implications for its coal power sector.

The measures are expected to cut coal burning, limit car emissions and set yearly quotas for local governments and individual polluters. The country has also introduced bigger fines for those found to be in violation of air pollution standards.

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China environment ministry given powers to inspect provinces

[Reuters, 12-05-2016] China's environment ministry has been given powers to send inspection teams to provinces and regions across the country as part of its efforts to root out local polluters, the official China Daily newspaper reported.

The paper said the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) would become only the second national authority, after the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, China's

corruption watchdog, to have the power to send inspection teams and hold discussions with provincial leaders.

China has been trying to strengthen its environmental powers as part of a "war on pollution" launched in 2014 to try to reverse the damage done by decades of untrammelled growth.

A new environmental protection law in force from the beginning of last year gave authorities more powers to punish firms and individuals that persistently break the rules, including the ability to impose unlimited fines and imprison violators.

China has also set up dozens of special environmental tribunals at local courts as well as dedicated regional inspection forces to help implement its laws.

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Ecological protection compensation to be further improved

[Gov.CN, 13-05-2016] To speed up the building of an ecological civilization and better protect the ecological environment, the State Council decided to improve the compensation mechanism for ecological protection in China.

The new mechanism would charge those who benefit from ecological environment protection and give compensation to people who protect the environment, according to the document released on May 13.

The government will play a leading role in protecting the ecological environment, perfect related laws, innovate the systems and mechanisms, expand the compensation channels and increase the purchase of services through economic and legal means, said the document.

By 2020, key ecological areas such as forestry, grasslands, wetlands, deserts, oceans, water flows, arable lands and forbidden development zones should be covered by the compensation mechanism. And the compensation should consider local social and economic development conditions.

The document also said that for different kinds of key ecological areas, the compensation should be different.

The document called for multiple channels to raise the compensation funds. It also urged the central budget to increase the transfer payment for key ecological areas and raise investment in the infrastructure and public facilities in those areas.

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Trade and Business

China's soybean industry on the rise

[China Daily, 05-05-2016] China's soybean acreage will increase by 400,000 hectares this year as a result of a government-led initiative to increase the supply of domestic soybeans.

Yu Xinrong, vice-minister of agriculture, told a news conference Thursday 5th May that a survey of farmers' planting intentions indicated that the corn acreage in China will decrease by close to 1.33 million hectares. This is noted as the first decreasing year of corn acreage in 13 years. He said the increase in soybeans acreage will mainly take place in the northeastern provinces where farmers are encouraged to switch from the cultivation of corn to soybeans.

According to a guideline issued by the ministry on the adjustment of the crop structure in the next five years, the country will seek to stabilize the production of staple foods and grains. It will also try to stabilize the level of self-sufficiency in cotton, edible oil, and sugar during the period.

In March, Reuters reported that China has accumulated an estimated 250 million metric tons of corn in its reserves, which is more than it consumes in a year.

China introduced floor prices for farm products in 2006 to protect farmers from price volatility. The government buys products including wheat, corn and cotton for State reserves when market prices fall below floor prices.

The central government announced an end to the floor price for corn in late March, due to large inventory. The government will instead provide subsidies for farmer in the main cultivation areas to protect their interests.

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China corn reserves eyed as crop area to fall for first time in 13 years

[Reuters, 05-05-2016] China has estimated the country's corn planting area will fall by more than a million hectares this year, the first drop in 13 years, as global grain markets brace for the fallout from Beijing's biggest agricultural reforms in nearly a decade.

China said in March that it would end its corn stockpiling program, which had driven up domestic prices and spurred imports of cheaper substitutes like sorghum and distillers' grains.

The scheme, under which large volumes were bought at fixed prices, was designed to support rural incomes, but it has left the state with a bulging stockpile to sell.

China is sitting on close to 250 million tonnes of corn, and how it plans to dispose of this is being carefully watched by markets.

After the government decided it would no longer buy corn at artificially high prices, farmers in China were expected to switch to other crops, including soybeans.

However, the ministry predicted last month that soybean imports would reach 82.28 million tonnes in 2016, around the same as last year, even though it expects the growing areas to rise by 400,000 hectares this year.

The policy changes have raised fears on overseas markets that China would export surplus corn.

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China eats so much pork these feed producers became billionaires

[Bloomberg, 11-05-2016] China's appetite for meat has made billionaires out of two of the country's largest animal-feed providers.

Bao Hongxing, chief executive officer of closely held Twins Group Co., China's fifth-largest animal-feed producer, has a \$1.8 billion net worth, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Chen Yuxin, founder of closely held Sichuan Tequ Investment Co., Sichuan province's biggest animal feedmaker, has a fortune valued at more than \$1 billion.

The two tycoons are benefiting from growing demand for healthier livestock as the world's most populous nation, which is no stranger to food scandals, prods farmers to provide higher-quality pork, chicken and beef. The country's also seeking to reduce its dependence on cheaper, low-protein staples such as rice, corn and soybeans.

"It is impossible to lose money in the animal-feed industry in China right now, unless you have an internal management problem," said Wang Qian, a Shanghai-based agriculture analyst at Guotai Junan Securities Co. "Fewer than 20 percent of China's livestock farming companies make their own feed and are self-sufficient, while 80 to 90 percent of them have to

buy feed from feed companies.” “The animal-feed industry is headed for some good times,” Wang said.

On the flip side, smaller companies have suffered. The number of China’s feed mills has fallen to 6,000 from 10,000 in 2010 as family-owned businesses were shuttered, Wang Junxun, a vice director at the agriculture ministry, said in December.

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Chinese companies’ going global captures world attention

[Gov.cn, 18-05-2015] Recent activities by Chinese companies to merge and acquire overseas once again became the focus of attention from foreign media as China’s “go global” efforts witnessed many mergers and acquisitions around the world amid a time that could have been bleak for such activities.

Some foreign media expressed shock at Chinese companies’ “appetite” for mergers and acquisitions. But as a matter of fact, such dynamic is normal and in line with China’s economic development and globalization.

In addition, all countries should reduce limits on foreign mergers and acquisitions to promote international investment cooperation.

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Why China is investing heavily in Europe

[SCMP, 15-05-2016] For long a laggard, Europe has become a preferred arena for China’s outbound investment in the West.

Five key reasons can explain why Europe has become more attractive to Chinese investors.

First, the debt crisis in 2008 was a crucial moment, when the Chinese government started buying eurobonds as well as investing in infrastructure companies at extremely competitive valuations

Second, countries like Germany, Italy, France and the UK offer a unique selection of small and medium-sized enterprises with some of the best technologies worldwide.

Third, one could certainly argue that relations between China and Europe are much less competitive and confrontational than the US-China relationship.

Fourth, though these FDIs are the result, in most cases, of individual business decisions, they have been clearly ramped up by Beijing’s political decision to deploy capital outside its borders from the late 1990s (the “going out” policy).

Fifth, the rise of Chinese transactions also had a lot to do with bilateral relations between China and individual European countries.

Nonetheless, this European wave of Chinese investments faces numerous challenges.

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ABF weighs sale of Chinese sugar business

[FT, 10-05-2016] Associated British Foods is looking to sell its lossmaking sugar business in China to focus on its sugar operations in Europe and Africa.

The British conglomerate, which owns retail chain Primark, has invited bids for its five cane sugar mills in southern China and two sugar beet factories in the north-east of the country, according to people familiar with the situation.

The business could fetch up to \$1bn, according to analysts' top estimate. "Anything like \$1bn would be a tremendous result for ABF", said analysts at Société Générale. They estimated that the Chinese sugar business made an operating loss of £10m last year on sales of £240m.

ABF declined to comment.

China is the smallest of ABF's three geographic sugar regions, accounting for 23 per cent of the unit's sales.

ABF has turned its attention to the African sugar market and last month paid £262m to buy out minority partners in South Africa-based Illovo Sugar. It said Illovo was attractive because of rising demand for sugar in Africa, driven by increasing populations and higher incomes.

ABF is one of the world's largest sugar manufacturers, with capacity to produce more than 5m tons of sugar and 600m litres of ethanol a year.

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Pork price controllable: MOC

[Xinhua, 05-05-2016] Pork prices will stay high this year, but price rises are controllable since the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) has taken measures to ensure a stable pork supply, a MOC official said on Thursday 5th May.

The average wholesale pork price hit 25.8 yuan (3.96 U.S. dollars) per kg last week, up 0.4 percent from the previous week, or 14.1 percent higher than the price registered at the beginning of the year, the official told a briefing, citing a nationwide survey conducted by the MOC.

After almost three years of falls, pork prices have been rising for about a year, although at a slower pace since March, according to the MOC.

To replenish the supply, the ministry and 12 local governments including Beijing, Zhejiang and Shaanxi have increased the supply of frozen pork from reserves since December 2015. Altogether, about 150,000 tonnes of pork reserves had been released onto the market.

Pork is China's staple meat and its price is subject to a boom-and-bust cycle.

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China overtakes US as most attractive food and beverage market for first time

[IESE, 20-05-2016] China is the most attractive export market for food and beverage companies, according to the **2016 IESE Food and Beverage Attractiveness (FBA) Index**. The FBA Index analyzes markets for the best business and export opportunities.

The United States has dropped to second place, while Germany holds steady as the most attractive European destination in third place.

The study, conducted by IESE Professor Jaume Llopis, researcher Júlia Gifra and Deloitte analyzed 82 food and beverage export destinations.

The index puts **China's success** down to several factors, in particular to the 11 percent growth of its middle class with the highest provisions of future spending growth, with the economic and urbanization expansion increasing at a steady pace.

China also boasts many cities with populations larger than many countries – the top five have over 10 million inhabitants – and Shanghai has 23 million.

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Russia eyes enhanced agricultural cooperation with China

[Xinhua, 04-05-2016] Russia hopes to strengthen agricultural cooperation with China, Russian Agriculture Minister Alexander Tkachev said in a recent interview with Xinhua.

"The trade volume in the agricultural sphere between Russia and China has been increasing during the past years, and in 2015 the figure hit 3 billion U.S. dollars," Tkachev told Xinhua on Monday.

The agricultural development in Russia has demonstrated a strong dynamic with the firm state support and various development projects. And Russia's export of corn, soybean, sunflower oil and flour to China has all increased in recent years, according to the official.

Implementing the Far East development program, for instance, is the Russian government's priority task to increase the country's investment attractiveness, said Tkachev.

Russia would like to boost mutual agricultural trade with China, as well as agricultural products' accessibility to each other's markets, said Tkachev.

Tkachev told Xinhua the implementation of joint investment projects under multilevel Russian-Chinese commissions on agriculture would be discussed during his working visit to China, which started Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Tkachev said he will discuss the safety of agricultural products during his meetings with Chinese officials.

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Belarus to export beef to China

[Xinhua, 06-05-2016] Belarus will export beef to China in the near future, an official at the Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus said on Friday, 6th May.

Alexey Bogdanov, head of the main division for foreign economic affairs at the Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus told local media that China would like Belarus to supply beef as soon as possible.

The beef export agreement was reached during a visit of the Belarusian delegation headed by Agriculture and Food Minister Leonid Zayats to Shanghai for the international food expo SIAL 2016," he added.

Bogdanov said Chinese companies from Hong Kong had already concluded several contracts for the delivery of by-products with the Belarusian meat-packing plants. He stressed that Belarusian side was working to get Belarus certified to supply beef and poultry to China.

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Australian exports of nectarines, peaches to China set to surge in 2017

[Xinhua, 23-05-2016] China could import up to one-quarter of the nectarines produced in Australia next year, as local growers plan to expand into the Chinese market with the lowering of trade tariffs.

Australian-grown nectarines and peaches, both types of summerfruit, will be on their way to China as of Jan. 1 next year, and industry bosses have hailed the introduction of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) for opening the market.

It's the first new export market for the Australian stone-fruit producers in more than two decades, and will lead to lower domestic fruit prices.

John Moore, Chief Executive Officer of Summerfruits Australia, said the agreement would help the entire industry -- not just the main producers.

China is expected to purchase up to 15,000 tons of Australia's nectarines -- or about 25 percent of the market -- according to Moore.

The stone-fruit exports will join other Australian fruits, including citrus, table grapes, mangoes and Tasmanian cherries, to be exported internationally.

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South African wine exports to China jump by 30%

[BDlive, 25-05-2016] South African wine exports to China rose almost 30% in 2015 alone, according to statistics from South African Wine Industry Information and Systems.

China's retail wine market was worth around \$15bn in 2015 compared to \$10.3bn in 2010, with imports accounting for just over half, according to wine data analytics firm IWSR.

It forecast consumption of about 13.5-million hectolitres in 2020, up from 11.3-million in 2010.

SA's wine industry is worth around R26.5bn a year and employs 300,000 people. China has grown to become its sixth largest export market.

Demand is being driven by a booming number of young Chinese professionals who prefer buying over the internet rather than in stores. The rand's 30% fall against the dollar in the last year has also helped.

But the industry faces stiff competition if it is to take full advantage of new consumers in places like China.

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China plans to invest \$1.9bn in Kazakh agriculture

[FT, 09-05-2016] Chinese companies are in talks to invest \$1.9bn in 19 agricultural projects across Kazakhstan in an expansion of Beijing's Silk Road initiative beyond roads and railways to beef and tomato purée.

Gulmira Isayeva, Kazakhstan's deputy agriculture minister, said Beijing's \$40bn Silk Road Fund was planning investments in three projects, including one to move three tomato processing plants from China to the Central Asian country.

"We have great interest from Chinese companies to invest in our Kazakh agricultural production system," she told the Financial Times in an interview. Kazakhstan is the world's eighth-largest wheat exporter but its agriculture industry, established largely in Soviet times under Nikita Khrushchev's virgin lands programme, is inefficient and under-developed. The Kazakh government hopes agriculture can help the oil-dependent economy diversify as it experiences its weakest growth in two decades.

The former Soviet countries of Central Asia are looking increasingly to investments from China to spur growth as the fall in commodity prices and recession in Russia weigh on their economies.

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