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Policies

China to boost scientific and technological innovation

[Gov.cn, 08-08-2016] The State Council issued a national scientific and technological innovation plan in a bid to build China into an innovative country and a scientific and technological power.

The plan aims to substantially improve China's technology and innovation capabilities, and lift the country's comprehensive innovation capabilities into the world's top 15.

The plan urged to play the key leading role of scientific and technological innovation in uplifting the industries to the medium- and high-end, developing new growth drivers, expanding new development space, improving development quality and efficiency.

The plan called efforts to accelerate the implementation of major national scientific and technological projects and launch the scientific and technological innovation 2030 project.

Click [here](#) for details

China's technology innovation plan to support GM crops research

[Xinhua, 11-08-2016] China will allocate more resources to GM crop R&D, according to a five-year plan for science and technology progress published Monday 8 August by the State Council.

China has identified GM as an important area on many occasions, ordering research and supervision to be improved, the development of a GM food evaluation system and the industrialization of certain GM food crops.

The new plan, with its emphasis on innovation, advantages of hybrids and breeding by molecular design, will help elevate GM research to the next level.

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Agriculture ministry rejects non-GMO reserve proposal

[Global Times, 10-08-2016] China's agricultural authority announced Tuesday, 9 August that it has rejected the national legislature's proposal to set aside special zones for the cultivation of non-GMO (genetically modified organism) soybeans, saying such a step would mislead the public about GMO products.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) said on its official website that it disagrees with lawmakers' proposal to set up separate non-GMO reserves, though it noted that relevant departments must further investigate and evaluate the proposed policy. The MOA's statement also noted that China has not authorized large-scale commercial planting of GMOs.

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China to grade provincial governments' food safety performance

[Xinhua, 29-08-2016] The central authority will send inspectors to review provincial-level government food safety, according to a document published on Monday, 29 August.

According to the document, the State Council food safety committee will oversee the assessment and an office under the committee will work with other authorities to conduct the inspections.

A final assessment report will be issued by the central authorities and local governments' performance will be rated into three grades.

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Plan targets antimicrobial resistance

[China Daily, 26-08-2016] China announced a State-level plan to curb antimicrobial resistance, high-lighting the first multisector effort involving 14 ministries and agencies, including health, agriculture, food and drug, and environmental protection.

Under the plan, the Chinese government will intensify international cooperation and exchanges to prevent and control drug-resistant bacteria in the next five years.

On the agriculture side, veterinarians and employees of poultry and livestock industries will be required to finish training on the proper use of antibiotics by 2020.

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Pollution fees could become law of the land

[China Daily, 30-08-2016] A draft of China's first environmental protection tax law, submitted to the top legislative body for initial discussion on Monday, 29 August may impose heavier penalties on polluters than ever before.

The draft designates four taxable types of pollution - airborne and water pollutants, solid waste and noise. Companies and individuals who directly discharge these would be subject to the tax, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei told the top legislators.

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China introduces humane livestock slaughter rules

[Xinhua, 29-08-2016] Local rule on the humane slaughter of chicken took effect in east China's Shandong Province on Monday 29th August, the first for poultry in China.

Under Shandong's standard for slaughter of chicken, stress relief measures should be taken in the processes of seizing, transporting, loading and unloading.

The Chinese Veterinary Medical Association began to draft welfare criteria in November covering pigs, chicken, sheep and cattle.

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Govt offers financial support for rural migrants' urbanization

[Gov.cn, 05-08-2016]The State Council issued a circular on Aug 5, giving series of financial supports for rural migrants' urbanization to acquire townspeople status equal to that of their urban fellows.

The circular urged local governments to take actions to help rural migrants' urbanization, including building good financial system and providing enough social security benefits and public services for them.

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Science, Technology and Environment

Global Innovation Index 2016: China joins top 25

[WIPO, 15-08-2016] China joins the ranks of the world's 25 most-innovative economies, while Switzerland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Finland and Singapore lead the 2016 rankings in the **Global Innovation Index**, released by Cornell University, INSEAD and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

China's top-25 entry marks the first time a middle-income country has joined the highly developed economies that have historically dominated the top of the Global Innovation Index (GII) throughout its nine years of surveying the innovative capacity of 100-plus countries

across the globe. China's progression reflects the country's improved innovation performance as well as methodological considerations such as improved innovation metrics in the GII.

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China backs GMO soybeans in push for high-tech agriculture

[Reuters, 10-08-2016] China will push for the commercialization of genetically modified soybeans over the next five years as it seeks to raise the efficiency of its agriculture sector, potentially boosting output of the crop by the world's top soy importer and consumer.

In its latest five-year plan for science and technology to 2020, China for the first time outlined specific GMO crops to be developed, including soybeans - used in food products such as tofu and soy sauce and for animal feed - and corn.

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China to establish national eco-experimental zones

[Xinhua, 22-08-2016] China will establish several national ecological experimental zones to explore reforms ranging from natural resource balance sheets to ecological performance evaluation of officials, according to an official guideline published on Monday, 22 August.

Main experiments will include establishing a natural resource property right system, compiling natural resource balance sheet, optimizing land and space planning, and incorporating ecological performance into officials' evaluation.

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China's honey bee losses are low compared with West

[phys.org, 24-08-2016] Since concern about widespread honey bee colony losses began 10 years ago, there have been surveys carried out to assess winter losses in North America and many European countries. So far, the picture in China, the largest beekeeping country in the world, has been unclear.

In a new paper published in the *Journal of Apicultural Research*, Zhiguang Liu and Wei Shi from the Institute of Apicultural Research, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Beijing and colleagues, report on a three-year survey using standard questionnaires developed by the international COLOSS Association.

The results showed that colony losses were generally low (on average 10.1%), compared to the published results from Europe and the USA.

The authors speculate that reasons for the lower losses compared to those of other countries may be due to a high genetic diversity in their honey bees, regular replacement of queen bees by the beekeepers, and because the average size of beekeeping operation is small, meaning that beekeepers can pay close attention to their hives, in particular to the way they control the parasitic varroa mite.

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7th International Crop Science Congress held in Beijing

[MOA, 17-08-2016] The 7th International Crop Science Congress (7th ICSC) opened at Beijing International Convention Center in Beijing on August 15, 2016. Dr. Li Jiayang, MOA Vice Minister and CAAS President, addressed the opening ceremony.

Dr. Li noted that the stimulus of agricultural development in China is shifting from resource input increase to S&T progress. China is at the critical juncture of transition from conventional agriculture to modern agriculture. The agricultural development should focus

on the goal of ensuring national food security and completing the building of a moderately prosperous society, and highlight the supply-side structural reform to advance agricultural modernization.

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China to increase public's scientific literacy

[Xinhua, 13-08-2016] China has firm plans to increase scientific literacy among the public.

According to a science and technology progress plan published by the State Council, China expects its knowledge-intensive services to contribute to 20 percent of GDP by 2020.

The plan lists measures to improve legislation on scientific research and technological development, streamline fund raising systems and raise the efficiency of governance.

The plan said that youngsters, farmers, migrant workers and public servants will be the key groups targeted in the science promotion campaign.

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China launches free technical training project in poverty relief

[Xinhua, 01-08-2016] Around 1,000 technical schools in China will provide free training to impoverished people from 2016 to 2020, according to a circular issued recently.

According to a document issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, anyone who is able to work from a poverty-stricken household can receive free technical training.

Local governments should implement national policies on student subsidies and free tuition, and formulate regional policies on the deduction and exemption of other fees, as well as on offering living allowances, the circular said.

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China's Internet users total 710 mln

[Xinhua, 03-08-2016] China has 710 million Internet users as of June, accounting for 51.7 percent of its total population, exceeding the global average by 3.1 percent, according to an official report released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC).

The report noted that 191 million people, almost 27 percent total Internet users were from rural areas, marking a huge gap of 35.6 percent in the Internet penetration rate between urban and rural areas.

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China's farmland remains above "red line"

[Xinhua, 10-08-2016] China's total area of arable land stood at 135 million hectares at the end of 2015, well above a government "red line".

The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) has said that China must retain at least 124 million hectares of farmland by 2020, given farmers account for about half of the population and food security is still a major issue.

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China tops the world for having 70 million ha of planted forest

[Ecns.cn, 29-08-2016] China is home to 69.3 million hectares of artificial forest, the most in the world, following more than six decades of afforestation work, said Zhang Jianlong, head of the State Forestry Administration.

Total forest acreage has grown to 3.12 billion mu (208 million ha) from 1.24 billion mu in early 1950s, covering 21.66 percent of the land area, compared with 8.6 percent more than 60 years ago, Zhang said.

China has effectively contained desertification, with desert land area shrinking continuously over the past decade.

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China pledges to cut size of its massive fishing fleet

[SCMP, 15-08-2016] Overfishing in Chinese rivers and seas has seriously depleted stocks and the government is to cut the size of the nation's fishing fleet, the agricultural ministry said.

The ministry said there were practically "no fish" in the coastal East China Sea and fishermen also had a hard time finding a catch in many other coastal waters, according to a state radio report.

Agriculture minister Han Changfu told China National Radio that it was time to trim China's fishing fleet, the world's largest, to protect fish stocks.

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China has 91 major water projects under construction

[Xinhua, 29-08-2016] China has 91 major water projects under construction, at a cost over 800 billion yuan (120 billion U.S. dollars), according to a report submitted to the bimonthly session of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee.

The projects are among 172 water conservation projects planned for the coming five years.

With uneven water resources, floods and droughts, China's water resources per capita are far below the global average.

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China, UK start three-year agricultural collaboration project

[China Daily, 06-08-2016] China and the UK started a 1.3 million pound collaboration project on sustainable agricultural technology research in July.

The three-year project focuses on improving the efficiency of agricultural remote sensing so that farmers in China can apply water and nutrients to areas of farmlands that need them the most, based on data gathered by remote sensing tools.

"Working with China in this research project is very important because China has large areas of farmland, so the results can have a wide impact," said Wen-Hua Chen, a professor in autonomous vehicles at the University of Loughborough, who is leading a team at his university to participate in the research.

Another milestone was reached in 2008 when a memorandum of understanding for agricultural collaboration was signed between the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and the UK's Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

In the same year, the China-UK Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Network (SAIN) was established to support agricultural collaboration.

Lu Yuelai, Head of Secretariat of the SAIN network, said UK agriculture sustainability development started earlier and the UK already has a lot of experiences to share with China.

Pete Smith, a professor of soils and global change at the University of Aberdeen, added that the UK's agricultural sector has undergone significant changes over the past 20-30 years in reducing its impact on the environment, partly due to compliance with increasingly strict EU legislations, and the UK is able to share its experiences with China.

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Trade and Business

New agricultural businesses doing well

[Gov.cn, 22-08-2016] According to a recently released survey, new agricultural business entities have offered more abundant human and social resources for agricultural production, and their scale and integrated operation have yielded high profits, with an increasing effect on villages, farmers, and agriculture.

Statistics revealed that people engaged in new agricultural business entities are younger, with better education, and male labor forces still make up a large share of the labor-consuming industry.

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China remains largest contributor to global growth, U.S. expert says

[Xinhua, 30-08-2016] Despite concerns about the slowdown of the world's second-largest economy, China remains the single largest contributor to global economic growth, a U.S. expert said on Monday 29th August.

If China's economy grows at 6.7 percent in 2016, in line with the government's official target, it would account for 1.2 percentage points of global GDP (gross domestic product) growth this year, said Stephen Roach, a senior fellow at Yale University and former chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia.

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Growth in online purchases by rural Chinese outpaces that of urbanites

[Xinhua, 18-08-2016] Growth in online retail purchases by China's rural residents outpaced that of urban dwellers in the second quarter, official data showed.

MOC data showed that, in the second quarter, rural online sales grew by 13.48 percent from the first quarter. The growth rate was at least 4 percentage points higher than the growth in sales to urban residents.

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China plans to raise scale, quality of dairy sector – minister

[Reuters, 29-08-2016] China will work to raise the scale and quality of its dairy sector in a bid to boost local consumption and rural employment, the country's agriculture minister said.

Despite rapid growth in recent years, the industry was "big but not strong", Han Changfu, the minister said. He said the sector lacked product standardisation and had few recognisable and competitive brands. Production costs were also too high and there was no stable profit mechanism for breeders and processors.

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ChemChina clears hurdle in \$44bn takeover of Syngenta

[FT, 22-08-2016] Shares in Syngenta jumped 12 per cent on Monday 22 August after a US committee scrutinising national security concerns approved ChemChina's \$44bn takeover of the Swiss agribusiness.

The two companies said they had received approval from the US Committee on Foreign Investment for the deal, which was first announced in February, clearing a significant hurdle for the takeover.

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China's Cofco buys remainder of grain trader Nidera

[FT, 23-08-2016] China's state-owned food group Cofco has bought the remaining 49 per cent stake in Nidera, completing a full takeover of the Dutch grain trader and further expanding its global footprint.

The deal is the latest acquisition from Cofco as China attempts to build a full-scale international agricultural trading house. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

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Sainsbury's to double products available online in China

[Reuters, 01-08-2016] Sainsbury's, Britain's second-biggest supermarket group, said it would double the number of products it sells in China via the Alibaba Tmall online marketplace following a trial that started last year.

Sainsbury's said its expansion on Alibaba will mean it sells over 100 branded products in the breakfast, drinks, organic and baby categories, with plans to add more ranges later this year.

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First parametric insurance programme against risks of natural disaster for farmers in China

[Swiss Re, 03-08-2016] Swiss Re has entered into a reinsurance protection scheme with the government of Heilongjiang Province and the Sunlight Agriculture Mutual Insurance Company of China. This is the first time that the Chinese government employs commercial insurance programmes to protect farmers against financial risks from natural catastrophes. It's also the first anti-poverty insurance deal in China and the first tailored solution combining a weather index product with a satellite-based flood parametric product. As the technical adviser and the sole reinsurer, Swiss Re design the scheme with advanced modeling technology.

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China, Kazakhstan to jointly build fertilizer production hub

[Xinhua, 29-08-2016] A Chinese firm and a Kazakhstan firm have agreed to form a joint venture to develop a major fertilizer production and distribution hub in southwest China's Chongqing municipality.

Under the deal between Kazakhstan Potash Corporation (KPC) and Chongqing Agricultural Production Material Group, the two sides will jointly build a major potash fertilizer distribution center and the largest compound fertilizer producer in western China, with an annual turnover of around 3 million tonnes.

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China delays new canola rules in late reprieve for Canada

[Reuters, 31-08-2016] China agreed on Wednesday to delay introducing stricter rules on shipments of canola from Canada while both countries work to end a months-long **trade** spat over sales of the oilseed, offering an eleventh hour temporary reprieve for Canada's farmers.

Just a day before the new standards were due to go into force, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said Canada would be able to continue with the current canola export regime, while a longer-term solution was worked out.

China is Canada's top export market for the oilseed, and Ottawa has taken an increasingly strong line in talks on a new standard, which industry participants say would significantly raise costs for exporters.

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New Zealand meat firm approves deal with Chinese food giant

[Xinhua, 12-08-2016] Shareholders in New Zealand's biggest meat cooperative reaffirmed their support to sell a controlling stake to China's biggest meat processor.

Shareholders of Silver Fern Farms held a second vote on the 50-percent sell-down, including a casting vote, to Shanghai Maling Aquarius Co. Ltd. (Shanghai Maling) with 80.4 percent voting in favor of the deal.

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Trade fair to stress cooperation in food safety among Belt and Road nations

[China Daily, 08-08-2016] The seventh Eco-Agriculture and Food Safety Forum for the Belt and Road will be held in Xiamen, Fujian province, on September 8 and 9, simultaneously with the 2016 China International Fair for Investment & Trade.

The forum aims to strengthen agricultural cooperation among Belt and Road nations. The debates will revolve around the construction of an industrial chain to secure food safety and the promotion of farm produce.

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Chile targets China as main destination for food exports

[Xinhua, 07-08-2016] Chile hopes China will soon become the No. 1 destination for its food exports, Chilean Agriculture Minister Carlos Furche said.

When the free trade agreement (FTA) was signed in 2005, Chilean exports of forest and agricultural products to China were worth 400 million U.S. dollars and, in 2015, this figure rose to 2.4 billion dollars.

Cherries, grapes, pork and wine are among the main Chilean food exports to China while China exports textiles, shoes, and furniture to Chile.

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Compiled by Yuelai Lu, 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