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Policies

Modernizing China's agriculture key to tackling slower economy

[Reuters, 16-02-2015] Modernizing Chinese agriculture will help in countering slower economic growth by driving investment in rural infrastructure and boosting consumption, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said.

Investing in infrastructure in rural areas could help digest some of the excess capacity in China's steel and cement industries, as well as create new jobs, wrote Li in the latest issue of the Chinese Communist Party journal Qiushi.

Overhauling farming models and improving efficiency in distribution systems could also boost rural incomes, Li said in the article.

Although the country is self-sufficient in its most important food crops, it has paid a huge price for its intensive farming practices with excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides and plastic sheeting causing serious environmental damage and threatening food safety, said Li.

Farmers need to focus on consumer demand rather than on production volumes, said the Premier, and urged them to produce safe food and specialty products including organic ones.

The agricultural sector also needs to integrate processing so that farmers get added value from their output, and more efficient distribution would help reduce farmers' costs, he said.

Li reiterated the need to promote new types of farming models such as larger family farms and encourage transfer of land rights to allow people who remain in the countryside to expand their farms.

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Sow today, reap tomorrow - the future of China's agriculture

[Xinhua, 03-02-2015] For twelve years in a row, China's "No. 1 Central Document" has focused on agriculture and rural issues.

Agriculture is a significant issue in the world's most populous nation, with problems including low farmer income, pollution and a lack of competitive agricultural companies.

Efforts have been made to increase farmers' incomes, but the gap between urban and rural incomes remains. Growth of rural incomes has outpaced that of urban dwellers since 2010, but nonetheless, Chinese villagers only earn about one third of city residents.

Without increased government investment in agriculture, tourism and other income sources for farmers combined with higher value agricultural products, hopes of reducing the gap will be in vain.

Environmental protection was never given enough weight in farming and over-exploitation of farmland must come to an end. Use of chemicals and fertilizers per hectare in China was once 70 percent higher than the world average, resulting in more than 40 percent of farmland being degraded. Protecting farmland is an uphill battle that China must win.

Many farmers in their 50s or 60s till plots of less than half an acre, while their children work in cities. Those seniors will soon quit farming and about 200 million rural people are expected to move into cities over the coming decades, so China has to develop large-scale, environmentally friendly farming, and must do it quickly.

A high percentage of China's population are employed in agriculture, but a short list of reputable agricultural businesses compares poorly with the United States and France. Innovation must play a bigger role in farming, and Chinese agricultural companies with global clout must be fostered.

A list of 32 points related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers was in the No.1 document released, but implementation is the key. You have to sow today to reap tomorrow.

Click [here](#) for details

China to enhance public awareness of GM technology

[China Daily, 02-02-2015] China will step up its efforts in improving public awareness of genetically modified (GM) technology in agriculture in 2015, according to a key policy document released by the Communist Party of China and the government.

The country will strengthen the technical study, safety management and better public awareness of GM technology, noted the No. 1 Central Document, which is focused on agricultural modernization.

Compared with the United States and many South American countries that have freely adopted GM technologies, China has shown a marked reluctance to do so. Though there is no evidence that GM crops harm human health or the environment and most Chinese know little about these technologies, they seem overwhelmingly to regard them with great suspicion.

In a speech to the Central Rural Work Conference last year, Chinese President Xi Jinping suggested that genetically modified organisms will finally be accepted in China and the technology should be allowed to develop in the country so long as the right caution is exercised.

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Feed China, starve the world?

[Xinhua, 03-02-2014] China's increasing grain imports in recent years have ignited concerns that the world's most populous country is on a global grab for food. The "No. 1 Central Document", however, may reassure the worriers by promising "a good grasp of the scale and pace of agricultural import".

The document said China should better utilize both domestic and overseas agricultural resources, but that it will also improve its own grain production and encourage competitive farm produce exports.

"It indicates that China's grain market is open and that competition among importers is equal. Meanwhile, the country will control its food security risk and count on modernized farming to feed itself in the future," said Li Guoxiang, a rural development researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

According to official data, China imported 19.51 million metric tonnes of cereals in 2014, marking a record year-on-year increase of 33.8 percent. During the same period, its grain imports, including soybeans, topped 90 million metric tonnes, compared with less than 15 million metric tonnes in 2002.

However, Chinese business insiders, academics and officials believe the surging figures are not as alarming as they appear, arguing that rising imports were not caused by food shortages, but by cheaper global prices, and that China is safely self-sufficient in grain consumption.

Currently, prices of Chinese cereals are about 400 to 800 yuan (about 64 to 128 U.S. dollars) per ton higher than foreign cereals, said Cheng Guoqiang, a researcher with the Development Research Center of the State Council.

The country's imports of the rice, wheat and corn that dominate Chinese dinner plates are equivalent to just 2.4 percent of the domestic output, and will not rise sharply in the future, Ministry of Agriculture spokesman Bi Meijia said at a press conference in December. He stressed that China poses no threat to global food security.

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China seeks better rural-urban integration

[Xinhua, 03-02-2015] Along with urban expansion in the past decades, China has been paying special attention to rural development in hope of building the countryside into another economic engine.

China released the annual "No.1 Central Document" pledging to further coordinate the development of cities and villages and narrow their gap.

"It has become a key issue to consolidate the position of agriculture as the foundation of the economy against the current backdrop of slowdown," noted the document.

The country will strive to transform the development mode of agriculture, boost policies that benefit farmers, push forward the building of "new socialist countryside", deepen rural reforms and strengthen rule of law in dealing with rural issues.

Central authorities will upgrade infrastructure, improve public services and enhance living conditions in the countryside.

The document introduces measures to encourage grain production, nurture secondary and tertiary industries and increase farmers' incomes, promising equal public services and opportunities for urbanites and migrant workers.

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Document to give legal tools to Chinese farmers

[Xinhua, 03-02-2015] Rural land in China is managed through collective ownership, with farmers each assigned a small plot of land. In recent years, however, due to urbanization, farmers have swarmed to cities to seek alternative employment, leaving the land idle. In response, many turned to leasing their farmland to large-scale and specialized agriculture businesses.

Yet, the practice is hampered by unclear legislation and a lack of legal guidance, meaning that many do not honor their contractual obligations. The government's new agriculture policy aims to address this issue.

Known as the "No.1 Central Document", this policy empowers local governments, allowing them to roll out a series of legal reform measures that will give hundreds of millions of farmers access to legal advice.

The document, for the first time, noted the importance of rule of law, according to Zheng Fengtian, an agriculture professor at Renmin University of China.

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China to pilot rural land use reform

[Xinhua, 06-02-2015] The State Council has passed a draft decision that will enable rural construction land to have the same rights and market price as state-owned construction land in some areas.

According to the draft, in places where pilot reforms will be carried out, the use right of existing collectively-owned rural construction land can be transferred, leased and traded for shares. It will be given the same rights and price as state-owned construction land when traded in the market.

The draft decision said that the reform shall be carried out on the condition that public ownership of land won't be changed, China's "red-line" minimum of arable land was not broken and farmers' rights not undermined.

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Entrepreneurial opportunities bring young Chinese back to countryside

[Xinhua, 04-02-2015] As rapid urbanization continues, some youngsters are bucking this trend and pursuing better career prospects in the countryside, thanks to the government's emphasis on agriculture and the Internet.

China released its annual "No. 1 Central Document" of 2015 which pledged further coordinated development of cities and villages.

In February 2014, a Ministry of Agriculture guidance suggestion asked local governments to issue policies that would encourage graduates to establish farms.

Meanwhile, the boom of China's e-commerce sector, combined with the development of transportation and logistics, are also supporting countryside entrepreneurs.

Many countryside entrepreneurs depend on computers and mobile devices to support their daily tasks.

However, starting a business in the countryside is no easy task.

According to a poll of over 4,000 college graduates majoring in agriculture-related subjects, about 67 percent were interested in starting businesses in the countryside, but less than 7 percent actually took action.

A report on the results, published by Shandong Jianzhu University last August, found that underdeveloped infrastructure, financing difficulties and lack of experience were some of the major obstacles.

It suggested that governments should further promote preferential policies for countryside entrepreneurs, and colleges should offer relevant courses to better prepare students.

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China to direct farm machinery subsidies to growers of key crops

[Reuters, 09-02-2015] China will give priority to growers of key staple crops as well as cotton and sugar under changes to its farm machinery subsidy scheme, as it seeks to guarantee food self-sufficiency amid a declining rural workforce, its top newspaper said.

Maintaining food security has been one of China's top policy priorities for several years, as rapid urbanisation swallows up arable farmland and reduces the rural workforce by drawing farmers to better paying city jobs.

Beijing has allocated 120 billion yuan (\$19.21 billion) to farm machinery subsidies since 2004, supporting the purchase of more than 35 million pieces of machinery, a report in the official People's Daily newspaper said.

That has helped raise mechanisation levels across China's farms to 61 percent last year from 33 percent in 2003, it said.

Farm mechanisation is seen as a key tool in countering the decline in rural productivity. Machinery is already widely used in harvesting grain and Xinjiang's cotton growers have also rapidly increased their use of mechanical cotton-pickers in recent years, significantly reducing costs.

But machinery is ill-suited to some regions, including mountainous terrain in the south, China's key sugar cane-production area, analysts say.

Equipment is also often ill-adapted to China's small farms, with average landholdings still around 8 mu, or slightly more than half a hectare.

Subsidies for farm equipment should typically not exceed 50,000 yuan or 30 percent of its sale price, but the amount can be as much as 600,000 yuan in some cases such as for large cotton-pickers, according to the agriculture ministry's proposed revisions.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China to step up GMO research, supervision, education

[Xinhua, 03-02-2015] "GM technology is very promising and we must stand on top of GM research as China has quite limited agricultural resources," said Han Jun, deputy head of the office for the central leading group on agricultural work.

"Our GMO market should not be saturated by foreign brands," he said at a news briefing.

China has set up strict supervision mechanisms to monitor GMO research, tests, production and imports, and it supports innovative GMO research, strict supervision and prudent production, the official said.

This year's campaign will see the promotion of knowledge about GMOs so that the public can have a clear and comprehensive understanding of them, said Han, adding that many Chinese still "turn pale" at the mere mention of GMOs.

China has maintained a cautious approach to large-scale production of GM crops. It currently only approves the production of GM cotton and papaya and prohibits commercial production of any GM staple foods.

However, it is a major importer of GM farm produce, including soybean, rapeseed, cotton and corn. China imported over 71 million tonnes of soybean in 2014, the bulk of being GMOs, Han said.

Click [here](#) for details

China underlines cautious approach to biotech crops

[Reuters, 03-02-2015] China will continue to promote research into genetically modified crops while maintaining strict controls on safety of the technology, a top agriculture official said Han Jun, deputy head of the Communist Party's office on rural affairs, underscoring Beijing's cautious approach towards biotechnology.

China has poured billions of yuan into developing GMO seeds but has not dared to permit cultivation of biotech varieties of feed and food crops, citing consumer concerns over safety.

The government has already made some attempts to clear up worries about GMOs, launching a national media campaign last year.

Han added that China follows international standards on safety and management of its biotech research in areas such as genetically modified rice and corn, and said that Beijing had no choice but to continue supporting the technology.

"China, a big country with 1.3 billion people and its agricultural development facing increasingly serious environmental constraints, cannot afford to fall behind in research of GMOs."

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China completes vanilla genome sequencing

[Xinhua, 11-02-2015] Chinese scientists have completed the genome sequencing of Vanilla Shenzhenica, providing insight that will further fuel research into vanilla and the development of related industries.

The genome sequencing project, which the scientists said has produced the world's first orchid genetic map, was a collaboration between Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University and the National Orchid Conservation Center of China, which is based in Shenzhen, in July 2014.

A genome is the full complement of an organism's DNA; complex molecules that direct the formation and function of all living organisms. The size of an organism's genome is measured by the number of bases it contains -- base pairs being the building blocks of DNA.

"The research has helped us to understand the evolutionary history of the orchid, and it's of great importance to the conservation and breeding of the species," said Lan Siren, head of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University at a press conference on Feb. 7.

Liu Zhongjian, chief scientist with the National Orchid Conservation Center of China said that the genome sequencing would make it possible to alter orchid properties through transgenic technology, indicating a possibility that a synthetic version of vanilla may be produced in the future.

Vanilla is the world's second expensive spice after saffron. It is widely used in food, cosmetics, tobacco and pharmaceutical products.

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Large scale study warns of unsustainable ecological decline in rural China

[Southampton University, 16-02-2015] The agricultural development of a region of eastern China is ecologically unsustainable and actions are needed soon to reverse its decline, according to a new study by geographers at the University of Southampton.

The work, supported by the UK Government through the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) research programme, used complex system science to examine the long-term health of the ecosystem of the Lower Yangtze River Basin, around Nanjing and Shanghai. [Professor John Dearing](#) from the University of Southampton led a team which found the region has been in environmental decline since it passed a tipping point in the late 1970s.

Professor Dearing says: “By combining a range of data we have been able to get an overview of the economic, environmental and social health of the region – understand how these factors have been working together – and what the implications are for the future.

The study found that:

- the relatively stable pre-1970s ‘agriculture-ecology’ system in the region reached a tipping point at the end of the 1970s, as reforms in China allowed farmers to grow surplus crops with more fertilisers and pesticides.
- economic development has created a ‘trade-off’ between gains in agricultural productivity and increasing environmental degradation, with losses of ecosystem services, such as good water quality and stable soils.
- the relationship between current economic and environmental conditions is unsustainable and in continuous decline. It is uncertain how the ecological conditions can recover before they actually affect the agriculture and the livelihoods of those that depend upon them.

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For food safety, China's agriculture needs market-driven innovation

[China Daily, 10-02-2015] Faced with new challenges and emerging situations, China's agricultural industry needs to drive innovation to expedite reform, an expert from the United States has said.

William Niebur, vice-president of DuPont and DuPont Pioneer North Asia, said that national and provincial administrative policies in agriculture require innovation and should be driven by market forces, because food safety and security - along with the modernization of the agricultural industry - are prerequisites for China's sustainable economic growth and development.

Economic growth in China has recently entered a phase referred to as the "new normal". In this situation, sustainable agricultural development requires modern agricultural policies to promote efficiency, food security, resource conservation and environmental protection.

"Improving agricultural competitiveness will be achieved by promoting technological innovation in agriculture and mandating environmentally sustainable development. China today is clearly one of the major agricultural world powers," Niebur said.

As the world's largest grain consumer, China has stepped up efforts to ensure food safety and security, as well as integrating new agricultural technologies to increase land productivity, while safeguarding its water and limited arable land for farming and food production, said Niebur.

However, to ensure the profitability and productivity of those producing agricultural products, China needs an effective and transparent law enactment and enforcement system.

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China must cut pollution by half before environment improves

[Reuter, 13-02-2015] [China](#) needs to slash emission levels by as much as half before any obvious improvements are made to its environment, a senior government official said on Friday, underscoring the challenges facing the country after three decades of breakneck growth.

Zhai Qing, China's deputy minister of environmental [protection](#), told a briefing that pollutants had been cut by just "a few percentage points" since 2006 and had to drop much further if any progress is to be made.

"According to expert assessments, emissions will have to fall another 30-50 percent below current levels if we are to see noticeable changes in [environmental](#) quality," he said.

China has vowed to close vast swathes of ageing heavy industrial capacity and slash coal consumption in heavily populated eastern coastal regions as part of its war on pollution.

Last November, it imposed draconian restrictions on industry throughout northern China in order to guarantee air quality during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit held in Beijing. Zhai said emissions in the region fell by more than 50 percent during the meeting.

He said China's ability to control pollution was still "limited" and its policies still needed to be improved.

Only eight of the 74 cities monitored by the ministry met national pollution standards last year, according to official data published earlier this month.

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Air pollution is bigger killer in China than smoking

[SCMP, 04-02-2015] Air pollution is a bigger killer in mainland China than smoking, says a new study released jointly by Greenpeace and Peking University.

Tiny smog-inducing pollutants, known as PM2.5, smaller than 2.5 microns in size, led to about 257,000 premature deaths in 2013 in the mainland's 31 cities, municipalities and provincial capitals in the study.

In six cities – Shijiazhuang, Jinan, Changsha, Chengdu, Nanjing and Wuhan – more than 114 out of every 100,000 people died prematurely because of the health impact of PM2.5.

These particles can lodge deep inside a person's lungs, and led to a mortality rate in the six cities that was higher than 0.1 per cent, the study shows.

The average mortality rate in the 31 places in the study was 0.09 per cent.

However, the rate of premature deaths could have been even greater because several of China's worst polluted cities, including those in Hebei, were not included in the survey.

Existing policies to tackle air pollution were based mainly on the concentration levels of PM2.5, but city officials had placed little emphasis on concerns over the impact of air pollution on public health.

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Trade and Business

Gov't moves on GM crops spur industry's cautious optimism

[Caixin, 27-02-2015] Over the past two months, China has made several moves that have aroused expectations that efforts to industrialize genetically modified crops will resume.

The first involved approving the importation of three varieties of GM corn and soybeans from the United States. Later, the Ministry of Agriculture renewed the expired safety certificates of the country's own GM crops.

While that's good news for the industry, it may be too early to celebrate, says Chen Zhangliang, vice chairman of the China Association for Science and Technology.

Chen recently said at a seminar on the industrialization of GM crops that consumers still have serious misunderstandings about this type of agriculture. He said the scientific community must communicate better with the public in order for these agricultural products to gain a commercial foothold in the country.

The technology is critical to the country's agriculture, he said. "China is experiencing a squeeze both from the ceiling and the floor," he said, parroting an expression that Premier Li Keqiang has used on the subject.

On the one hand, the country's grain prices are already higher than those globally. Meanwhile, labor costs and raw material prices are also rising, while soil pollution and water shortages are pushing up agricultural costs.

Part of the solution, Chen said, is to first solve production issues, which would include adding small plots of land to larger plots so labor can be mechanized. The second step is upgrading agricultural technology, including the development of GMO programs, Chen said.

Despite scientists' calls to accelerate the industrialization of GM crops, the government has remained very cautious and most efforts are limited to pilot programs.

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China's state-owned COFCO gets nod for reform plans

[Reuters, 13-02-2015] China's biggest agribusiness firm China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corp (COFCO) has received government approval to move forward with its restructuring plans, state media reported.

COFCO, which was selected in July as one of six central government controlled state-owned enterprise (SOE) groups to pilot mixed-ownership reforms, is working with the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), the China Securities Journal said.

SASAC is the ministry-level body that directly oversees China's 112 central government-controlled conglomerates. The Chinese government is soon expected to release its top planning documents aimed at boosting the performance of the country's massively inefficient state sector.

The plan is widely expected to reduce the number of central government-controlled enterprise groups to fewer than 60.

No details were provided about COFCO's overhaul.

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Brand is the new way for China's agricultural dream

[Xinhua, 07-02-2014] High quality, modern production and food safety are China's top agricultural development priorities this year and achieving them could be as simple as creating a brand, according to some agribusiness giants.

However, a brand is not as easy to nurture as crops.

Go Whole Industrial Chain

Chinese food brands have struggled with safety concern since a tainted milk scandal damaged consumer confidence in domestic food products in 2008. The scandal highlighted problems at all links in the production chain, from raw material to processing.

To enhance quality and safety supervision, COFCO set up a mechanism to keep an eye on the whole process of food production, from the field to the dining table.

Another bonus of the whole industrial chain is rising enthusiasm and income for farmers.

Go Overseas

COFCO acquired Dutch trader Nidera and Hong Kong-based Noble Agri last year, giving the country direct access to South American grain and oilseed supplies.

Private players also step up overseas ventures. The New Hope Group, China's largest private agricultural business, has opened more than 40 plants across 20 countries, with an expected annual growth of about ten new overseas branches each year.

Go Online

As mobile internet sparks business model reforms in nearly all sectors, entrepreneurs believe agriculture should also ride the powerful wave by integrating online and offline resources.

COFCO set up e-commerce platform WOMAI.COM to link production regions directly with customers, saving logistics costs and promoting local brands.

The New Hope Group helped establish a pasture in southwestern China's Yunnan Province online by selling milk directly to customers through internet orders and express delivery.

Yunnan Province now is home to many Internet-savvy agricultural start-ups and has nurtured a unique economy based around large plantations, with agribusiness brands featuring high-quality produce and online-to-offline interactive services.

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China's farm co-ops sow for growth

[Co-operatives News, 13-02-2015] Within the past decade, the Chinese government has opened up the market for farmer co-ops, allowing them to become legal entities and trade with other bodies across the country.

The law on farmers' specialised co-operatives (FSCs) went into effect in July 2007, allowing the sector to work in the wider economy.

As of the end of March 2013, there were more than 730,000 FSCs registered in China, made up of over 54 million rural households. Recently, more than 10,000 co-operatives have been joining up each month – meaning more than 20% of all rural households are now enrolled in FSCs.

But some of these FSCs are only loosely established. Although they are registered with the local Bureau of Industry and Commerce, they do not have established offices and some have yet to come up with a brand name. Some FSCs are simply intermediary organisations, engaged in technical services or logistics, and do not have the economic capabilities to engage in business.

There are other FSCs, which have the necessary economic capabilities and are led by agriculture-related companies, large-scale specialised farming households or big shareholders. The development of co-ops is showing signs of diversity, with variations in their quality.

If China's specialised farming households in FSCs can genuinely become the main owners of the assets of co-operatives – controlling of the affairs of those co-ops and the benefiting from their services; and if they boldly explore the change in institutional framework – then they will be able to respond to the challenges they face and resolve the various confusing issues.

Their experience of success or failure will enrich the theory and practice of co-operatives and provide a much-needed contribution to the development of the international co-operative movement.

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Cotton sustainability: Significant opportunity for brands in China

[Eco-Business, 26-02-2015] CottonConnect says the shifting cotton market in China offers a valuable window of opportunity for international companies to invest and build a more resilient cotton supply in one of the world's fastest growing cotton markets.

In a new report from Cotton Connect, 'China's Cotton: A Growing Market Opportunity' the organisation outlines the urgency of taking action at both a strategic and farm level. It says that by leveraging technical, financial and political support for the industry – as well as providing urgent support at the farm level – brands and retailers have a chance to show leadership in building sustainable cotton interventions to help build a successful supply chain in China.

Chinese government subsidy reforms last January triggered the latest downward shift in prices for cotton, which fell by around 60% to 13,605 yuan (roughly £1,417) per tonne during the last nine months of 2014, according to the latest China Cotton Association's price index.

However, at farm level, cotton is fast-becoming a less appealing crop for farmers, plantings are predicted to fall 6% to 31.6 million hectares across China by 2015-16, according to ICAC, if intervention does not happen.

CottonConnect warns that more support is needed for smallholder cotton farmers across the country as they continue to grapple with environmental, economic and social challenges. On top of falling prices, growers are also struggling with changing rural demographics, an emerging water crisis, rising labour costs and a lack of access to credit and financial literacy.

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Chinese investors ravenous for Europe food sector

[AFP, 11-02-2015] Chinese foreign direct investment into Europe appears to be becoming a fixture after hitting a record \$18 billion (15.9 billion euros) last year, with food and agriculture the top draw, a report said.

Highlights from a forthcoming report by the Baker & McKenzie law firm showed that Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) into Europe doubled last year, propelling the continent to one of the Asian giant's top global FDI destinations.

New sectors dominated, such as food and agriculture in first place at \$4.1 billion and real estate in third place at \$3.0 billion. Energy investments, which dominated several years ago, were in second place at \$3.7 billion.

While acquisitions still account for most investment, the report found that Chinese companies are increasingly investing in new projects such as research and development centres, food processing facilities, machine production and real estate.

It also pointed to a greater number of smaller deals as showing the structural character of Chinese investment in Europe.

The full report, based on research from Rhodium Group, will be released in March together with Chinese investment bank CICC.

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Chinese firm launches village public welfare projects in Myanmar

[Xinhua, 04-02-2015] China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) launched village public welfare projects in Nay Pyi Taw in cooperation with the Myanmar Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.

CITIC donated 1.5 billion Kyats (about 1.5 million U.S. dollars) for use in agricultural development projects in western Rakhine state and the donation also included three working vehicles.

The poverty-alleviation projects are being implemented in 50 villages in Kyaukphyu of the state, aimed at helping the villagers boost production and improve their livelihood.

Villagers from five villages are to be trained as the first batch of trainees starting from the end of this month.

Speaking at the projects launching and donation ceremony, Vice Chairman of CITIC Construction Company Yuan Shaobin said CITIC would totally engage in Myanmar's major construction projects of national planning and people's living.

CITIC would also give concern and take part in various social welfare projects and make more contributions to Myanmar's economic development and the upgrading of people's living standard, he added.

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China becomes attractive market for Kenyan flower farmers

[Xinhua, 19-02-2015] Kenya leads in the export of cut flowers to the European Union (EU) with a 38 percent share beating Colombia and Israel, according statistics from the Kenya Flower Council (KFC).

But as many investors continue to take interest in flower farming, exploiting new markets with huge potential for a sustainable supply is becoming an inevitable aspect in the industry.

China has turned out to be a potential destination for high value roses. Huge population in China and growing demand for quality roses provides Kenya with a viable customer base to capitalize on.

Overtime, the floriculture industry in the country currently worth more than 1 billion U.S. dollars has transformed with adventure of new technology and innovations of better performing flowers.

Since Kenya has gained popularity in high quality flower farming, breeders in rose flowers have set base in the country with the aim of enhancing the sector's productivity.

Despite the challenges of climatic changes, Kenya still holds a favourable environment for growing exceptional flowers as the industry stakeholder maintains.

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Brazil seeks more agriculture trade with China

[China daily, 02-02-2015] The Chinese market is vital to the growth of Brazil's agricultural sector, and the country plans to focus on expanding exports to the world's second-biggest economy, newly elected Brazilian Agriculture Minister Katia Abreu said.

Brazil is the world's biggest producer and exporter of coffee, sugar and orange juice, the biggest meat exporter and the second-biggest producer and exporter of soy products, as well as a major grower of corn.

China is the largest importer of Brazil's agricultural products. In 2014, Brazil's agricultural exports to China represented 22 percent of the South American nation's total agricultural exports.

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Australian farmers supportive of Chinese and other foreign investment

[Xinhua, 10-02-2015] Farmers from Western Australia are overwhelmingly supportive of Chinese and other foreign investment, new research showed.

Despite researchers expecting farmers from WA's wheatbelt to say foreign investment had destroyed local employment opportunities and caused a detrimental rise to land prices, they said much the opposite.

"The most interesting results were from the farmers," said Dr Marit Kragt, an assistant professor at the School of Agriculture and Resource Economics at the University of Western Australia

"We expected them to be quite critical of foreign investment, we expected people to say 'oh they're buying up our land and there 's all these foreigners coming to work on the farms,' but that wasn't the case at all."

"We actually didn't find any prejudice against investment from specific countries."

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African officials acclaim Sino-Africa partnership

[Xinhua, 23-02-2015] African officials have acclaimed the partnership forged between China and Africa, whereby the African continent is being benefited in terms of social and economic development.

Speaking to Xinhua, officials at the African Union (AU) said the Sino-Africa partnership is ever growing with significant results.

China is contributing greatly to the economic development in Africa, said Tumusiime Rhoda Peace, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

"Almost all countries in Africa, the presence of China is enormous in each and every member state of the African Union, which is something commendable," she said.

"When you go to the member states, you find that apart from the loans, the investments, you find that there are many, many initiatives supported, even in terms of grants by China. So, Africa is benefiting in terms of economic development from China and the partnership we have with China is really building and yielding results," she noted.

"We see China as being a useful partner in the development of the agriculture sector. China has got a very diverse kind of economy; the agriculture sector has been developed using modern technologies. And we would like to see, as in Africa, getting these technologies to adapt to the African condition," said the commissioner.

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