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## Policies

### **China to boost sustainable growth in agriculture**

[Xinhua, 20-03-2015] The State Council has issued a plan to boost sustainable development of agriculture by 2020, said vice minister of agriculture Chen Xiaohua.

Speaking at a routine briefing on government policies, Chen said here that China's agricultural growth should shift from the extensive mode, which features high resource consumption, heavy input and disregard for the ecological environment, to the intensive mode that emphasizes improving quality and efficiency.

According to the plan, the country will promote scientific and technological advance in agriculture, protect farmland, raise irrigation efficiency, fight environmental pollution and restore agricultural ecology.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China wants to overcome its poor food safety reputation**

[Business Insider, 25-03-2015] China will no longer chase bumper grain harvests and instead make safer foods a priority and boost imports as it bids to tackle its rural environmental problems, government officials said.

China has been beset by a series of food safety scandals in recent years. These included the contaminated milk controversy in 2008 when at least six children died after drinking baby formula containing the industrial chemical melamine.

Han Jun, the deputy director of the Office of Central Rural Work Leading Group, the country's top decision maker on rural policy, said. "In our current grains policy, one of the most important ideas is to speed up the transition in the way we boost grain output.

"In the past we were exhausting our resources and environment in pursuit of yield and now we have to focus equally on quantity, quality and efficiency and particularly the quality of grain output growth, environmental protection and sustainable development," Han said.

He said China had recently published its sustainable development plan for agriculture, which will cap water use as well as reduce the use of chemical fertiliser and pesticides in its agriculture production. China should remain self-sufficient in cereals given its huge population, while making full use of international markets for farm products that are in short supply.

Qian Keming, chief economist at China's agriculture ministry, said the country could achieve an 85 per cent self-sufficiency ratio by 2020, which was lower than the controversial 95 per cent rate that Beijing has been aiming to maintain over the past few decades.

China's grain production should be capped at 610 million tonnes, rather than the previous level of 650 million tonnes, which is close to the country's maximum capacity and puts its resources and the environment under strain, said Qian.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China to pilot scheme to reform rural land use**

[Xinhua, 20-03-2015] China announced a pilot program, allowing the trade of rural land use rights for stakes in farming entities.

The pilot program will be run in three experimental rural reform regions in Jiangsu, Sichuan and Guizhou, and four counties in Heilongjiang, Shandong, Zhejiang and Chongqing Municipality, the Ministry of Agriculture said in a statement.

There are two kinds of land ownership in China - urban land is owned by the state and rural land is normally under collective ownership. Farmers are part of the collective community and enjoy land use rights, but with restrictions.

Under the pilot scheme, farmers will be allowed to turn their land-use rights into shares in farming enterprises or cooperative societies, according to the statement.

The ministry has ordered local governments in the seven chosen localities to submit detailed plans before May.

It urged protecting farmers' rights and interests during the reform.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Rural land rights transfers in NE China**

[China daily, 25-03-2015] The Chinese government's priority to rural reforms and modern agriculture have had a major impact, one example being in Jilin province where the first group of farmers is benefiting from the right to mortgage their land for use in agriculture.

The State Council emphasized the importance of rural land reforms in a document last year which said for the first time that farmers need to be able to get a mortgage on land that they have the right to use to secure financing, on the understanding that the land is not to be transferred or land use changed.

Therefore, agriculture-oriented Jilin province decided to closely follow the central government's policy with a pilot program that encouraged farmers to get a mortgage on their land to get more agricultural plots to increase financing and incomes in rural areas.

The shortage of this sort of cash has been biggest major obstacle to Jilin in its agricultural development for a long time and, according to the local Jilin Daily, the province could only come up with about 30 percent of the financial needs, leaving them as much as 80 billion yuan short.

So, it was against this backdrop that it came up with the pilot program as a way to push farmers to leverage their land rights which according to the Jilin agriculture official, is expected to eventually cover 28 grain-producing counties.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Lack of clear land rights holding back development of Chinese agriculture**

[SCMP, 03-03-2015] With growing demand for food and rural tourism among China's increasingly wealthy urbanites, there is plenty of demand for credit among farmers who want to increase their output. But increased rural lending will only happen when banks figure out how to price the loans. That will require clarification about land ownership rights. It will also require an extension of insurance to farms and livestock so banks are confident enough to accept them as collateral.

While the country's commercial banks continue to be wary of lending to individual farmers, there's plenty of private capital available to large-scale agricultural projects. Organic farming, irrigation technology, fruit and dairy are all attracting investment as Chinese consumers seek safer and more nourishing food products. Private capital has also been keen to tap into rising prices for agricultural produce.

A shortage of land, not cash, is the barrier to investment by private capital. Investors have been hesitating until the ultimate direction of China's reform of land distribution is more certain.

A healthy rural banking sector - and private capital - will all be required to improve the efficiency and productivity which Chinese officials often say the agriculture sector requires. That will require huge investment in research and development as well as spending by individual farmers.

Click [here](#) for details

### **China urges banks to speed up agriculture sector loans**

[Reuters, 03-03-2015] China urged its banks to speed up lending to agriculture in an effort to bolster a sector that employs almost one third of its 1.4 billion people, but remains in desperate need of funding.

Policymakers have cut interest rates, increased lending targets and freed up banks' reserves to lend more, but this has done little for farming, which produces some 9 percent of China's GDP, though with low productivity.

Inefficient and obsolete farming techniques have been blamed for causing major soil and water pollution and food scandals, and economists say the sector needs investment from banks that have so far been reluctant to lend, despite repeated demands from Beijing.

Banks should "persist in improving rural finance services and forcefully support agriculture modernisation," a statement posted on the website of the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) said.

Financial institutions should also "strive to achieve rural lending speeds that exceed the average level of all loans," the regulator said, adding that water conservation and rural road construction would be a priority.

China's "number one" planning document, issued by state media in February, listed modernising farms as a key priority for 2015, including plans to encourage private investment and cheaper financing.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Cultivating legal changes to protect new seed varieties**

[China Daily, 17-03-2015] Proposed amendments to the law regulating seed varieties will heighten protection and be "a step forward in the seedling intellectual property sphere", said a senior official during this year's National People's Congress.

Liu Zhenwei, vice-chairman of the NPC Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, said amendments to the law will focus on research, protection of new plant varieties, supervision of the seedling industry and seed variety certification, "providing a legal guarantee for building up a modern seedling system".

In response to complaints in the industry that the variety approval process is too long, Liu said the revised version will "reduce application traffic" from varieties that need review from 28 categories to just five.

At the same time, large seed companies will be authorized to use national standards for evaluation on their own rather than joining the already long queue for uniform certification by designated organizations, he said.

Those companies will then be responsible for the authenticity of their own evaluation, he noted.

The new Seed Act will increase protection of original developers and help increase motivation for innovation, he said.

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### **China to boost "Made in China 2025" strategy**

[Xinhua, 25-03-2015] China's State Council pledged to boost the implementation of the "Made in China 2025" strategy, which will upgrade the manufacturing sector.

The "Made in China 2025" strategy proposed in this year's government work report can empower the manufacturing sector, while boosting "innovated in China," it said, adding that this will help the country achieve a medium-high-level economic growth.

On March 5, Premier Li said China will implement the "Made in China 2025" strategy alongside an "Internet Plus" plan, based on innovation, smart technology, the mobile Internet, cloud computing, big data and the Internet of Things.

Following this, informatization and industrialization will be unified and priority will be given to the development of ten particular fields, including information technology, new materials and **agricultural machinery**, the statement said.

More efforts will be made to boost the integrated growth of productive services and the manufacturing sector, and improve the levels and core competition of the manufacturing sector, the statement said.

Favorable policies will be mapped to help forge an upgraded version of the manufacturing sector, it said.

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### **Migrant workers' representation rises at China's top legislature**

[Xinhua, 10-03-2015] Vegetable farmers, security guards, construction workers and foot masseurs are among more than 2,900 people reviewing the draft revision of China's Legislation Law at this year's parliamentary session.

Workers and farmers are increasingly seen at the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, reviewing drafts and voting for the passage of laws alongside government officials and industry tycoons.

The share of workers and farmers elected as deputies to the 12th National People's Congress rose to 13.42 percent, up 5.18 percent from the previous term.

Click [here](#) for the full story

## **Science, Technology and Environment**

### **Top meteorologist warns of climate change risks to China**

[SCMP, 23-03-2015] The mainland's top weather official has issued a stark warning on climate change, saying that rising temperatures could have "huge impacts" on the world's most populous country, state media reported on Sunday.

Global climate change would reduce crop yields, lead to "ecological degradation" and create unstable river flows, Xinhua quoted Zheng Guoguang, chief of China's Meteorological Administration, as saying. "As the world warms, risks of climate change and climate disasters to China could become more grave," Zheng said.

China is the world's largest source of carbon dioxide emissions which cause climate change. Beijing has said it aims for those emissions to peak "around 2030".

Temperature increases on the mainland over the past century had been more extreme than global averages, Zheng added.

He described climate change as a "serious threat" to several mega-projects including the vast Three Gorges Dam, a railway connecting Tibet with northwest China, and a huge scheme to divert water from the country's south to its dry north. Zheng called for China to take a "low-carbon development path". But Xinhua also quoted him as saying the potential for wind and solar energy was "limited", without giving details.

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### **China facilitates agriculture modernization with pilot zones**

[Xinhua, 03-03-2015] By the end of 2014, China had established 4,272 national level demonstration zones over eight stages, edging it closer to its goal of agricultural standardization, said Tian Shihong, head of the Standardization Administration of China (SAC).

Demonstration zones are large-scale farming areas set up by the SAC as model estates to test agriculture, forestry, husbandry and fishery systems to improve production capacity, according to SAC.

The SAC encouraged local governments, leading agricultural enterprises and farmers to collaborate in the zones.

China's vision for agricultural standardization involves infrastructure construction, products circulation, information feedback, as well as brand and talent building.

As the economy shifts from high-speed to medium-to-high-speed growth, the consolidation of agriculture as the foundation of the economy and farmers' incomes have become more pressing.

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### **China's scientists must engage the public on GM**

[Nature, 03-03-2015] The country's shifting stance on genetic modification for crops needs the support of researchers to persuade a sceptical public.

China is about to get serious on the use of genetic modification (GM). After years of uncertainty, funding cuts and public arguments, the country's central government has issued a clear edict: China needs GM, and it will work to become a world leader in the development and application of the technology.

The new responsibility placed on Chinese researchers to communicate with the public is a significant and positive step forward. It could help to counter the widespread and irrational fear in China that GM food is unsafe to eat. A 2010 online poll of nearly 50,000 Internet users conducted by the news portal *China Daily* found that 84% would not choose GM food for safety reasons. Irrational opinions have sometimes been so strong that scientists have been intimidated and shied away from speaking out.

China cannot afford to turn its back on GM. Policy-makers are right to include the technology in a new agricultural model for the country. To be self-sufficient, China must grow food for nearly one-fifth of the world's population, with access to just 6% of the world's fresh water and 7% of the world's arable land. In recent decades, China has performed heroics and produced more and more grain — nearly doubling production between 1978 and 2013. But at what cost? The increase was driven by a six-fold rise in the use of chemical fertilizers, which pollute the land and water. Despite China's reputation as a global factory, national reports identify agriculture, not industry, as the biggest source of pollution.

GM technology has the potential to produce more food with less pollution. Without it, China seems likely to become more dependent on imports to feed its people. China imported a record 90 million tonnes of grain last year; cereal imports were up one-third on 2013.

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### **Chinese scientists produce TB-resistant cows**

[BBC, 03-03-2015] Scientists in China have produced a herd of genetically engineered cows that are better able to ward off bovine TB infection.

The long-term goal of the research is to avoid the need to cull livestock by breeding disease resistant cattle.

Bovine TB is a risk in many areas, including New Zealand, England and Wales, and parts of Africa and Asia.

In the UK over 26,000 cattle were slaughtered in 2013 at a cost to taxpayers of £100m.

Researchers at Northwest A&F University, Yangling, China, used hi-tech genetic technology to insert a mouse gene into Holstein-Friesian cattle.

The gene protected the animals against low levels of TB infection.

In research published in the journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the scientists said: "Our results contribute to the control and prevention of bovine tuberculosis and provide a previously unidentified insight into breeding animals for disease resistance."

Commenting on the study, Prof Heiner Niemann, of the Institute of Farm Animal Genetics at Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut, Germany, said the findings were another step towards the creation of disease resistant livestock animals based on advanced genetic tools.

"Whether this approach protects cows against TB infection when exposed to high doses of the pathogen remains to be determined," he added.

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### **Genetically modified food in China: time to reap what scientists sow?**

[SCMP, 18-03-2015] Angel or demon, transgenic crops have become one of the "frontier technologies" that China is determined to embrace.

In contrast to China's usual modesty in academic matters, mainland scientists claim that genetically modified organisms, utilising recombinant DNA technology, is among the few fields in which China can claim to be globally competitive.

Genetically modified rice, in particular, is the achievement that China should be most proud of, they say. But they fear the government's persistent hesitation to commercialise their successes could make China's GM quest lose momentum.

A quarter of the world's top research papers on rice have been written by Chinese researchers. With vast funding and a big team, China was ready to bring to market an insect-resistant transgenic rice it developed on its own a decade ago.

But the government has chosen so far not to commercialise its GMO expertise as the technology remains controversial around the world and has triggered fierce debate at home.

China was the first country to commercialise transgenics in the early 1990s with the introduction of virus-resistant tobacco.

In the mid-1990s, China was behind only the US in planting transgenic crops, with 1.1 million hectares of such crops, or 39 per cent of the world's total, being sown in 1996. But progress slowed considerably as controversy arose at home and abroad.

In the government's first policy directive this year authorities called for improvements in safety management and public education on GM crops.

Led by the Ministry of Agriculture, various departments have increased their propaganda about GM technology to create a favourable environment for the commercialisation of GM crops.

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### **China's tech industry turns attention to food safety**

[NDTV Food, 02-03-2015] With a quick scan of a code, shoppers can look up the fruit's complete thousand-mile journey from a vine in a lush valley along the upper Yangtze River to a bin in a Beijing supermarket. The smartphone feature, which also details soil and water tests from the farm, is intended to ensure that the kiwi has not been contaminated anywhere along the way.

Controlling China's sprawling food supply chain has proved a frustrating endeavor. Government regulators and state-owned agriculture companies have tried to tackle the problem in a number of ways - increasing factory inspections, conducting mass laboratory tests, enhancing enforcement procedures, even with prosecutions and executions - but food safety scandals still emerge too often.

Chinese technology companies believe they can do it better. From the farm to the table, the country's biggest players are looking to upgrade archaic systems with robust data collection, smartphone apps, online marketplaces and fancy gadgetry.

The founder of the computer maker Lenovo started Joyvio, the agricultural company that tracks kiwis and other fruit from planting to delivery. The Internet giant Alibaba directly connects consumers with farmers via an online produce-delivery service. A gaming entrepreneur is running a pig farm on the side. And Baidu, the country's leading search engine, is developing a "smart" chopstick that tests whether food is contaminated.

Click [here](#) for full story

### **200,000 algae-eating fish released to clean China Lake**

[Xinhua, 11-03-2014] A school of 200,000 silver carp has been released to help clean up algae in Taihu Lake, the country's third largest freshwater lake, authorities said on Wednesday.

The fish will not only increase fishery resources, but also clean up the lake, it said.

A silver carp can consume about 42 kg of algae for every kilogram it gains.

The local government began using silver carp to clean the lake in February 2009 after huge clusters of blue-green algae appeared in the lake in 2007 as a result of rampant pollution, affecting the drinking water of 17 million residents.

Since then, about 12 million silver carp fry are released into the 2,400-square-km lake every year.

Click [here](#) for details

### **10,000-square-meter farm built on rooftop**

[Xinhua, 06-03-2015] This 10,000-square-meter farm in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality may look ordinary at first glance. Yellow rapeseed, crops, greenery and a pond can be seen.

But this is no ordinary farm - it's actually situated on top of a factory that manufactures doors.

The farm is big enough that a tractor is needed to help with farming. The factory's staff grow crops there, as well as raise poultry and livestock. There's even a few peacocks roaming around the farm.

Employees volunteer to take care of different parts of the farm. After crops are harvested, they can take the vegetables and fruits they grow there home.

Greening the rooftops of city buildings, or maintaining "living roofs," consists of partially or completely covering the roof of a building with vegetation planted over a waterproof membrane. Such efforts have been seen in other cities in addition to Chongqing.

The Beijing Rooftop Landscaping Association said the gross area of green rooftops in Beijing had reached up to 1.2 million square meters as of 2012.

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### **Chinese province imports saline tolerant plant to improve environment**

[Xinhua, 15-03-2015] North China's Hebei Province has imported a saline tolerant plant in a move to better use its large areas of alkaline land, authorities said.

Cangzhou City has ordered Szarvasi 1, a grass used in power production, from Hungary, which can be planted on saline and alkaline land.

Cangzhou has nearly 3.8 million mu (about 250,000 hectares) of saline and alkaline land in the city's eastern regions. They are left uncultivated since trees planted on it only live two to three years at most.

The city's academy of agricultural sciences has signed an agreement with a Hungarian company to import such grass in a move to restore local vegetation, improve regional ecosystem and economy.

The grass proved to grow well in the city's saline and alkaline land after two years of trial, it can be used to feed cows and goats, replace coal as a renewable fuel, and work as additive in paper making and chemical engineering.

Szarvasi 1 is a fast-growing, high yield and low cost plant that can adapt well to different environments.

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## **Trade and Business**

### **China's top industrial firm eyes farming amid economic slowdown**

[Xinhua, 22-03-2015] China's leading construction machinery producer Zoomlion has contracted a large rice field in central China's Hunan Province as the company launches into mechanical farming.

A 253-hectare farm that will demonstrate modern agriculture and be operated by Zoomlion Heavy Industry Science & Technology Development Co., Ltd. in the outskirts of Changsha, Hunan's provincial capital, was officially inaugurated.

Zoomlion specializes in making large construction machinery and has eyed the agricultural sector as a new growth area amid decreasing income from industrial manufacturing. It signed a deal worth 340 million U.S. dollars in August last year to purchase a majority share in farm machinery maker Chery Heavy, paving the way for its march into the agricultural sector.

Zoomlion also contracted a 2,333-hectare demonstration farmland in Henan Province earlier in January.

Through the farming operation, the company is expected to explore new techniques, devices and management modes to carry out smart farming.

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### **China's agricultural insurance up 6.2 pct in 2014**

[Xinhua, 04-03-2015] China's agricultural insurance pocketed 32.57 billion yuan (5.29 billion U.S. dollars) in 2014, an increase of 6.2 percent year on year.

The number of insured farms reached 247 million, up 15.71 percent year on year, according to a statement on the commission's website.

Over 1.5 billion mu (100 million hectares) of crops were covered, accounting for 61.6 percent of the nation's total.

Corn, rice and wheat recorded high insurance coverage rates of 69.5 percent, 68.7 percent and 49.3 percent respectively.

Agriculture insurance in China has seen rapid growth since a subsidy program was piloted in 2007. Following the success of the project, the Ministry of Finance allocated 12.69 billion yuan to subsidize agricultural insurance in 2013.

The China Insurance Regulatory Commission, and the ministries of finance and agriculture vowed to further improve agricultural insurance by increasing coverage and reviewing the items.

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### **Chinese pork imports to soar to all-time high**

[AgriMoney, 13-03-2015] Chinese pork imports will soar to record highs this year, as rationalisation of the country's hog industry, witnessing an exit by small-time producers, leaves the world's biggest pigmeat market reliant on foreign supplies.

There are signs that the Chinese domestic market - which consumes more than half the world's pork - will see more sluggish growth.

Pork consumption this year will reach 57.20m tonnes, only slightly up on last year's forecast of 57.17m tonnes, the US Department of Agriculture's Beijing bureau said, highlighting growing health awareness by consumers.

It also noted that "urban consumers are also paying more attention to feed safety, resulting in growing popularity of branded pork", while beef is also growing in popularity as an alternative protein.

Pork production is forecast to fall to 56.10m tonnes this year, compared with 56.71m tonnes in 2014.

The growing production shortfall is creating a void which the bureau forecast being filled by imports, which it forecast soaring more than 50% to a record 1.20m tonnes.

However, European, rather than the US, pork exporters will prove the biggest beneficiaries of increased Chinese custom.

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### **China set to topple Germany as top UK pork importer**

[Reuters, 26-03-2015] Though China is home to half the world's pigs, it still imported 564,000 tonnes of pork - equivalent to about two-thirds of Britain's production - and 814,000 tonnes of offal last year.

Pork exports from the UK to China have more than doubled to 65,000 tonnes between 2012 and 2014, while exports to Germany - the number one destination for British pork for the last three years - has fallen about 5 percent.

Privately owned Karro Food Group Ltd, one of the three UK pork producers with a permit to supply to China, plans to raise exports by 80 percent this year.

Cranswick Plc and Tulip Ltd are also boosting shipments to the world's No. 1 pork consumer.

China has already overtaken the Netherlands as the biggest market for UK offal, with imports nearly tripling since 2012.

Britain ranked sixth among pork exporters to China in 2014, shipping about 27,500 tonnes, or 5 percent of total imports.

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### **Wales sets the table for Chinese investors**

[China Daily, 27-03-2015] **Welsh government aims to grow sales in food and agricultural industry**

As China expands its investment in the UK, especially in energy, infrastructure, property and transport, Wales, best known for its food and drink as well as its agricultural industries, is keen on drawing some of that investment its way.

The Welsh government says foreign investors are offered lots of financial support and a multitude of grants as well as quick processing of their applications.

The Welsh food and beverage industry employs nearly 170,000 people and it contributed 17.3 billion pounds in gross sales last year. Workers in the industry work not only in retail, wholesale and hospitality, but also fill vital roles in research and development centers and primary production and manufacturing sites.

Several institutional collaborations are being developed between Wales and China.

Take, for example, the Wales' grasslands project, led by Professor Mike Humphreys at IBERS, Aberystwyth University, in collaboration with the Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences and Shanxi Agricultural University, to reduce environmental pollution by using novel grass varieties to restore soil quality.

David Chadwick, professor of sustainable land use systems at Bangor University in North Wales, is also deepening ties with Chinese institutes. His links with China began with a collaborative project funded by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office on improving efficiencies in the production and use of nitrogen fertilizer in China.

His expertise is in food products before they leave the farm and how resource efficiencies can be improved in producing more sustainable products, such as goods whose production entails lower carbon emissions.

"With the increasing population in China, and the growing demand for livestock products, more livestock will be reared in intensive systems in the peri-urban areas of China's cities. Hence, manure management from these growing numbers of intensive farms needs to be done carefully to avoid nutrient losses to the environment. We need to optimize the supply chain to reduce the production of organic material wastage, and develop technologies that allow us to use the nutrient and organic matter from these resources on agricultural land, and importantly to develop value-added products from those organic 'wastes'."

Chadwick says new research funding will allow him and his researchers to develop value-added products from livestock manure.

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### **Norwich food-testing firm opens first international branch in China**

[EDP24, 11-03-2015] A food-testing laboratory from Norwich has opened its first international branch in Shanghai as the demand for trustworthy ingredients grows.

Food Forensics, based at Norwich Research Park, UK, has partnered with Chinese company Centre Testing International Corporation (CTI) to set up a new laboratory for both European and Chinese customers.

Alison Johnson, who co-founded Food Forensics in 2011, said with the horsemeat scandal in 2013 and recent evidence of nuts being used to replace cumin in some supermarket products, food authenticity had never been more in demand.

While the Elliott review investigated the integrity of UK food supply networks, Mrs Johnson said Chinese customers wanted to know that their food was truly European.

"The middle class in China are keen to know that their imported goods are authentic," she said. "It's a fantastic opportunity to work collaboratively."

The laboratory in Shanghai would be working to the exact standards and operating system as the one in Norwich. Three CTI employees came to Norwich for training in November and they would be training further staff in China.

Click [here](#) for details

### **Sino-Africa cooperation in agriculture in critical phase**

[Xinhua, 12-03-2015] Sub-Saharan African countries have forged strong ties with China in order to acquire technologies and expertise that are crucial to accelerate an agrarian revolution, an African expert has said.

Emmanuel Tambi, director of policy and advocacy with the Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa, noted that Sino-Africa cooperation in agriculture has unleashed mutual benefits.

He said the Asian nation's technical support has improved agriculture productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

China's assistance has won international applause, with the International Monetary Fund saying that Sino-Africa cooperation has contributed more than 20 percent to Africa's economic growth.

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## **Alibaba to offer loans to UK businesses after striking deal with former Wonga arm**

[The Telegraph, 11-03-2015] Alibaba, China's answer to Amazon, has teamed up with the former business lending arm of Wonga to help British companies buy supplies from the online retail giant.

The company is launching a trade finance partnership with ezbob, a British internet lender that last month bought Everline, the business loan arm of the payday lender. The deal will allow British companies to set up a credit line through Alibaba's website, rather than putting money for purchases up front.

Alibaba hopes the deal will make it easier for small businesses to finance bulk purchases, worth up to £120,000, boosting trade between British and Chinese companies.

Under the partnership with ezbob and iwoca, another online lender, SMEs buying from Alibaba's manufacturers will be given a credit line of up to £120,000, allowing them to order from the company's suppliers without paying up front.

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## **Promoting agricultural cooperation between China and Chile**

[China Daily, 16-03-2014] As agriculture becomes one of the keys of cooperation between China and Latin American countries, technology in agriculture becomes a highlight, the Chinese business newspaper reported.

In 2014, China signed a contract to import cattle from Chile, making Chile the fifth country, after Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay and Romania that can export cattle to China. On Jan 27, the first herd of over 7,100 Chilean dairy cows arrived in the port of Tianjin.

Last year, the Chilean and Chinese authorities signed a record 28 agreements that certified Chilean meat products and living animals exported between the two countries. The draft of importing the heifers agreement was signed last April, and gained momentum last September, and the final edition of the agreement was completed during the APEC meetings.

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## **First Mexico-China air route for agro-food exports created**

[Freshplaza, 20-03-2015] The Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) of Mexico and the province of Henan, China, signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the launch of an air route between Guadalajara, Jalisco and Henan, for the export to China of Mexican food products.

There are plans to soon start exporting melon, papaya, and other fruits, and increasing the avocado and berry shipments.

More than 48,000 tonnes of perishable products are exported every year via the cargo terminal of Guadalajara's airport. Henan International Airport is one of the largest in China, moving around 400,000 tonnes of cargo per year.

Click [here](#) for details

## **Chinese company invests in Aus seaweed, hopes to start farming**

[ABC, 04-03-2015] A Chinese company hoping to farm seaweed in South Australia is spending tens of millions of dollars on research, infrastructure and new technologies.

Gather Great Ocean Group (GGOG) hopes to extract marine sugars from native Australian seaweed species, for use in high value products like cakes, jelly and pharmaceuticals.

The company is already harvesting wild seaweed from beaches in the south east of SA and will build a processing plant near Millicent in the next 12 months.

Initially the seaweed will be processed for use in fertilisers for commercial sale, but GGOG's long-term interest lies in marine sugar extraction.

The company has commissioned Flinders University to research native Australian species and develop safe technologies that are likely to get approval from the government.

Marine sugars are widely used as a thickening or gelling agent and emulsifier in food and pharmaceutical industries.

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### **Direct trade with China accounts for 5.5 pct of Australian GDP**

[Xinhua, 25-03-2015] Australia's direct trade with China, its largest trading partner, has accounted for 5.5 percent of the country's GDP in 2014, according to a report on bilateral trade which was launched in the Parliament House.

Commissioned by the Australia-China Business Council (ACBC), the report finds that the benefits to ordinary Australian households from trade with China keep expanding, with the 2014 figure reaching 16,985 AU dollars (13,372 U.S. dollars), a five fold increase since 2009 when data collection began.

Based on an exclusive business survey of more than 200 Australian ACBC member firms, case studies from different industries, and a new data source, the World Input-Output Database, this report demonstrates that, as in the preceding years of the resources investment boom, Australian governments, firms and households continue to benefit significantly and increasingly from Australia-China trade through growth in GDP, tax revenue, employment and real wages.

The report also finds that Australia's trade with China as a share of total trade has risen from 8 percent in 2003 to 23 percent in 2013.

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### **Bill Gates eyes China's innovation to benefit world**

[Xinhua, 29-03-2015] Bill Gates is eyeing the creative potential that China has to offer, ranging from super rice to convenient vaccine storage facilities for remote areas.

He said the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which was established in 2000, was working with high-tech companies in China on research in areas such as productive rice and vaccine freezing.

"We are investing more and more money and have a lot of specific partnerships growing," Gates said, identifying agriculture as a particular area that offered many opportunities.

"China's capacity for biological and IT breakthroughs is growing very rapidly, and China is in many way the world agriculture leader. There are many areas that we are not funding that have the potential to help other countries," he said.

"We are challenging scientists in China to help find solutions for the poor," Gates said.

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