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Policies

Minister: No approval given to GMO grains

[MOA, 07-03-2017] China hasn't approved any planting of GMO (genetically modified organism) grains, said a top agricultural official Tuesday.

Agricultural Minister Han Changfu made the remarks during a news conference on the sidelines of the ongoing legislative and political advisory meetings.

The safety of GMO technology can be ensured, says Zhang Taolin, deputy agricultural minister, at the conference.

Many international authorities, such as WHO, the European Commission and International Council for Science, have done long-term tracking, evaluation and supervision on GMO safety. Results show that GMO products that have passed safety test and approved by governments are as safe as non-GMO products.

The government's stance on GMO is consistent and clear - bold in research, careful in popularization and strict in management, said Zhang.

Click [here](#) for details

GM food research to continue amid prudent approach, official says

[China daily, 07-03-2017] China will continue to encourage GM food research and take prudent steps in marketing procedures, a leading agriculture official said on Tuesday 7 March.

Vice-Minister of Agriculture Zhang Taolin told a news conference that the country will continue to support GM food research by enabling the development of domestic technology and indigenous innovation.

It will continue to follow the previously designed roadmap of GM technology development, which allows the commercial marketing of non-edible crop varieties first, before allowing the marketing of varieties that are indirectly edible.

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Campaigns target farm pollution and waste

[Chia daily, 07-03-2017] Targeted campaigns will be launched to curb pollution and animal waste on livestock and poultry farms as well as the excessive use of fertilizers in the horticultural sector in an attempt to bolster the environment in rural areas, the minister of agriculture said. Addressing a news conference on Tuesday 7 March, the minister, Han Changfu, said that the ministry will kick off a campaign this year to treat the pollution and waste products from livestock and poultry farms to improve the rural environment.

All the excrement from large-scale farms will either go through special treatment or be reused as resources, he said.

The excessive use of fertilizers in the horticultural sector, especially fruit and vegetables, will also be targeted and use of organic fertilizers will be encouraged, he said.

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Quality of agricultural products to improve

[China daily, 15-03-2017] The Ministry of Agriculture has published a five-year plan to improve the quality of agricultural products, including measures to ensure that products such as apples, tea and pork can be traced back to their producers.

According to the ministry's plan, more than 97 percent of major agricultural products involved in routine monitoring will pass quality tests in the next five years.

The ministry will also speed up the development of a platform that can trace agricultural products to their origin, according to the plan.

The tracing platform will first be implemented in more developed areas, and for products such as raw milk and turbot, it added.

The government will also encourage nongovernmental organizations to supervise the quality of agricultural products, with a mechanism that encourages whistleblowing set to be established.

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China's food safety plan includes alignment with international standards

[World Grain, 22-03-2015] China has outlined steps it plans to take to ensure food safety, including aligning its standards with international standards and launching a risk alert system.

The nation outlined four key objectives in regard to food safety in its 13th Five-Year Plan on Food Safety that was released on Feb. 21. They include:

- Enhancing sample testing to cover all types of food.
- Effective governance of resource contamination.
- Reinforcing on-site inspections, establishing a professional inspect team and standardize enforcement procedures and documentation.
- Aligning Chinese food safety standards with international standards.

According to its plan, China will establish a database that covers food safety standards developed by CODEX and other countries, conduct research and comparison of foreign and global standards.

China will actively participate in the formulation of international rules and standards and join global efforts in response to food safety incidents.

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Agricultural reform sows seed of hope for Chinese farmers

[China Daily, 23-03-2017] China has been pushing agricultural reform since 2016, urging farmers to adjust the mix of their crops to stop blind expansion and focus on sustainable development, particularly in the corn industry.

National Development and Reform Commission said that China would continue to conduct agricultural reform by letting the market play a decisive role in the pricing of corn and soy in the China's northeast provinces and northern Inner Mongolia autonomous region, the country's major crop areas.

This has given those who have adjusted the mix of what they grow hopes of a better profit.

Heilongjiang, China's biggest production base for crops, plans to reduce 666,667 hectares of regular corn and replace it with fresh corn and vegetables this year.

Such agricultural reforms are seeing substantial progress. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, while corn growth is expected to fall this year, growth of rice and wheat will remain stable, and crops in short supply, such as soy, whole grain and good-quality forage grass will see significant growth.

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New policies bring visitors into local villagers' lifestyle

[China daily, 23-03-2017] Efforts to develop holistic tourism in the country are underway and visitors to Hainan Island early last year were beginning to see and feel the emerging changes.

Village tourism, especially among those with unique ethnic cultural traditions or in areas of natural beauty, is becoming a new growth point for rural economies as holistic tourism gains momentum in Hainan.

Hainan Island, located at roughly the same latitude as Hawaii and encircled by 1,823 kilometers of charming coastline, is home to precious ecological resources.

The tropical island is considered to be one of the country's best places for both living and tourism, with a warm climate year-round, forests that cover more than 60 percent of its land area and a large number of aquatic farms that produce an impressive variety of sea products.

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China considers real-name registration for drones

[Cixin, 13-03-2017] Each drone that flies in China's skies may soon be traced back to an individual owner, as the government considers guidelines that will require real-name registration in the loosely regulated sectors.

The move comes as drones have seen soaring sales but also increasingly have become hindrances to civil aviation.

Analysts say such a registration system is long overdue. China's skies have become crowded with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), from pocket-sized selfie makers to hefty crop dusters, which have remained largely unregulated as Beijing fears stunting the industry's growth, according to analysts.

The regulation of commercial and recreational drones has recently become a sticking point in China, as over two dozen flights have been interrupted in the first three months of this year by aircraft that have strayed into no-flight zones.

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Science, Technology and Environment

China makes headway against water pollution

[Xinhua, 21-03-2017] Dianchi Lake in southwest China has hopes of restoring its lost splendor after 30-odd years of severe pollution.

Water quality in the lake, the largest on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, was once deemed "inferior to Grade V," the worst in China's water quality grading system and "too polluted for any purpose."

Decades of breakneck growth left much of China's water seriously contaminated by factory waste and agricultural fertilizer. Last year was the first time the water in the 300-square km lake was clean enough to be used for agriculture since 1985, a testament to what China has achieved.

The story of the Dianchi Lake is encouraging and nationwide, things are gradually getting better.

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Soil restoration projects proposed

[China daily, 30-03-2017] Contamination called 'alarming' for endangering food security

China's leading scientific institute will invest 20 million yuan (\$2.9 million) over the next 18 months in projects that tackle heavy metal pollution in soil, as part of efforts to safeguard food and water security, the Chinese Academy of Sciences said on Wednesday 29th March.

The soil restoration projects, spearheaded by the academy's Institute of Soil Science in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, will establish regional standards for cadmium, nickel, arsenic and other toxic heavy metals.

Two pollution control demonstration zones - one focused on mercury and the other on cadmium - will be built in Tongren, Guizhou province, and the Changsha-Zhuzhou-Xiangtan area in Hunan province respectively.

Moreover, there will be a national research network for technologies such as extracting heavy metal using plants and making heavy metals less toxic.

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China introduces tough fishing ban along Yangtze River

[Xinhua, 02-03-2017] A permanent fishing ban in all 279 aquatic reserves along the Yangtze River has begun, as China races to revive the flagging ecosystem of its largest river.

"Biodiversity in the Yangtze River has been shrinking. The Chinese paddlefish has not been seen in years and the Chinese sturgeon and finless porpoise are on the brink of extinction," said Yu Kangzhen, Vice Minister of Agriculture.

A Ministry of Agriculture four-month fishing ban comes into force in several major rivers including the Yangtze on March 1. The ban is the first four-month ban in regions south of the Yangtze.

The ministry said it will help fishermen change jobs and impose the ban in a gradual way.

The ban is required by the "No. 1 Central Document" released in February, the first policy statement from the central authorities in the year, and traditionally devoted to agriculture.

The ban has been extended to four months from three and was extended to the Huaihe River last year. This year, the Pearl River and Minjiang River are included for the first time.

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Tackling twin threats to fish in Yangtze

[China Daily, 16-03-2017] YANGTZE RIVER long-tailed anchovies, a popular delicacy for residents along the river, have become increasingly scarce and more expensive as a result of overfishing and industrial pollution. Guangming Daily commented on Wednesday 15 March.

The scarcity of Yangtze River long-tailed anchovies has led to a spike in the price of anchovy dishes in restaurants, with prices reportedly three times more than they were last year.

It is laudable that the 2017 Government Work Report included ecological recovery of the Yangtze River Economic Belt as a priority task for the government. That should serve as the fundamental cure for the scarcity of the fish, as the deterioration of river environment warrants increased vigilance and more inputs for remedial actions.

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China to relocate 22 near-extinct porpoises in 2017

[ECNS, 28-03-2-17] Four finless porpoises from Poyang Lake in east China's Jiangxi Province have been relocated to waters in a nature reserve in Hubei Province.

The four finless porpoises, two males and two females, were transferred Monday to Hewangmiao nature reserve along traffic-free sections of the Yangtze River in Hubei, according to sources with the Institute of Hydrobiology, the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The reserve has a vast body of water, which is clean and rich in aquatic bio diversity due to limitations on fishing, the sources said.

A project was launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and three provincial governments to relocate 22 porpoises, which are facing extinction, this year.

The finless porpoises, known for their "grins," live in the Yangtze River and two lakes linked to the busy waterway.

There are only around 1,000 porpoises left as their natural habitat is threatened by pollution, over fishing and river traffic.

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Dairy sector scales new heights, minister says

[China daily, 05-03-2017] The dairy sector has reached new heights with the development of large-scale farms and use of machinery after the 2008 milk scandal, Agriculture Minister Han Changfu said on Sunday 5 March.

The minister told reporters before the opening of the annual National People's Congress that large-scale dairy farms now account for 50 percent of the milk supply in the dairy sector, and use of machinery is commonplace.

Sales and production of the top 20 milk enterprises now takes up half of the whole sector, he said.

The dairy sector was hit hard after a 2008 scandal in which a number of farmers and manufacturers were found to have added melamine, a toxic chemical, to unprocessed milk.

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Mitigating greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from swine manure management: A system analysis

[Yue Wang, Hongmin Dong, Zhiping Zhu, Pierre J. Gerber, Hongwei Xin, Pete Smith, Carolyn Opio, Henning Steinfeld, and Dave Chadwick

Environmental Science & Technology **Article ASAP** DOI: 10.1021/acs.est.6b06430]

ABSTRACT: Gaseous emissions from animal manure are considerable contributor to global ammonia (NH₃) and agriculture greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Given the demand to promote mitigation of GHGs while fostering sustainable development of the Paris Agreement, an improvement of management systems is urgently needed to help mitigate climate change and to improve atmospheric air quality. This study presents a meta-analysis and an integrated assessment of gaseous emissions and mitigation potentials for NH₃, methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O) (direct and indirect) losses from four typical swine manure management systems (MMSs). The resultant emission factors and mitigation efficiencies allow GHG and NH₃ emissions to be estimated, as well as mitigation potentials for different stages of swine operation. In particular, changing swine manure management

from liquid systems to solid–liquid separation systems, coupled with mitigation measures, could simultaneously reduce GHG emissions by 65% and NH₃ emissions by 78%. The resultant potential reduction in GHG emissions from China’s pig production alone is greater than the entire GHG emissions from agricultural sector of France, Australia, or Germany, while the reduction in NH₃ emissions is equivalent to 40% of the total NH₃ emissions from the European Union. Thus, improved swine manure management could have a significant impact on global environment issues.

This publication is an output of UK-China Virtual Joint Centres on Nitrogen “N-Circle” and “CINAg” funded by the Newton Fund via UK BBSRC/NERC (BB/N013484/1 and BB/N013468/1, respectively).

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Success in Chinese radar mission: first interferograms from Gaofen-3

[ESA] The international collaboration between Professor Qinjun Zhang’s team in China Academy of Space Technology and Professor Zhenhong Li’s team at Newcastle University has led to a breakthrough: this joint team has generated interferograms using Chinese Gaofen-3 (GF-3) imagery for the first time; this is also the first interferograms from Chinese SAR missions.

GF-3 was launched from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre on 10 August 2016, and has been in operation since January 2017. Its primary users are the State Oceanic Administration (SOA), the China Meteorological Administration (CMA), the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Ministry of Water Resources. With its multi-polarised C-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensor featuring a large radar antenna 15m in length, GF-3 is able to image the Earth’s surface in all weather conditions and regardless of day or night. Circling the Earth in a sun-synchronous dusk-dawn orbit at 755km altitude, GF-3 can operate in 12 different working modes, from high-resolution (1 m) to extremely-wide-swath (650 km), from single to full polarisation. Due to its wide incidence angles and dual-sidelooking capability, GF-3 has a quick site access time of 3.5 days at most (1.5 day at 90% probability) to any point on the Earth.

“Our experiments have demonstrated that the GF-3 phase quality is in a high standard with a high spatial resolution (3.5 m in azimuth and 5.5m in range), leading to high coherence even for interferograms with a spatial baseline of c. 600m and a temporal baseline (time span) of nearly 4 months.” said Professor [Zhenhong Li](#), Professor of Imaging Geodesy at Newcastle University and European Lead PI of ESA-MOST Dragon-4, “This implies that Chinese radar missions have already reached the international advance level.”

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Shanxi uses drones to improve agricultural production

[China Daily, 21-03-217] Shanxi organized a fleet of drones on March 19 to spray crops with pesticide and fertilizer.

Shanxi Develop Technology Co donated 10 drones to assist with the project, and five groups of drones will be used in total.

Using drones should help improve the efficiency of farm work with the drones able to distribute the pesticide dose more evenly, leading to less chemicals being used on crops than when the work is carried out using manual labor.

The low-cost technology has been used for spraying pesticides and fertilizer on crops and monitoring plant diseases and pest damage, with the rental fee for a drone less than 10 yuan (\$1.45) per mu (666.67 square meters) covered.

Most rural households will be able to access the drone service once some 3,000 rural drone service sites across China, which were built by the China Association for Science and Technology and Shanxi Science & Technology Media Group of Press and Publication, are equipped with drones for crop protection.

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Potatoes, China's food of the future

[China daily, 10-03-2017] Government promotes tuber as 'fourth staple' to feed the world's most populous nation

Confronting the world's largest population and requiring a huge range of imported foods, the Ministry of Agriculture has begun promoting the food of the future - the potato, a tuber that has long been part of China's culinary landscape.

As a result, the culinary dividing line may soon be rendered moot, because potatoes, which can be grown in most areas, are set to become China's fourth staple foodstuff.

As part of the ministry's five-year plan (2016-20), which was published in February last year, potato cultivation will be expanded to 6.67 million hectares by 2020. In 2014, the figure was 5.64 million hectares.

In the future, potatoes will account for 30 percent of the nation's food, with large areas of wheat, rice and corn being turned over to cultivation of the new fourth staple, the ministry says.

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China's manufacturing and agriculture should integrate more with the Internet

[Shanghai daily, 23-03-2017] CHINA is pushing Internet Plus national strategy into the industrial and agriculture sectors nationwide, through the integration between Internet and traditional industries.

It's a deeper step for China to push information technology applications in economy and society, after the integration between Internet and service industries. Such integration, covering e-commerce, mobile payment and online video, has already boost economy and innovation.

The integration echoed the national strategy on Internet Plus and Made in China 2025 strategy, which requires China to inject advanced technologies in the domestic industries. The latest integrations cover e-commerce application in rural regions, industrial-used cloud service, smart manufacture, intelligent supply chain and product tracking system.

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China's brain gain spurs innovation

[China daily, 07-03-2017] Li Jin, the former global director of compound and computational sciences at pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca returned to China to become an entrepreneur, joining China's national "Thousand Talent" program.

He said that China's sound entrepreneurial environment and thirst for high-tech talent was the primary factor that drove him to start his business in Chengdu.

As China is improving its national strength and adding favourable policies for foreign-educated talent, it is witnessing a rising wave of overseas returnees.

Experts estimate that China will transform from the biggest source of talent in the world, into a major destination for international talent over the next five years.

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Trade and Business

Agricultural supply-side reform creates organic farming craze

[Xinhua, 01-03-2017] China, home to 1.3 billion people, maintains substantial grain reserves due to food security concerns. It introduced a corn reserve purchasing program nine years ago, aiming to protect the price and ensure farmers keep growing the staple grain.

However, excessive inventory and the former rigid pricing mechanism have resulted in waste.

China ceased the program last year to mold it into a more market-oriented one, causing the corn price to drop.

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Chinese develop a taste for healthy food and drinks

[Nikkei, 13-03-2017] Chinese diets are rapidly changing as people become increasingly health conscious. While sales of sweets and ice cream fell more than 11% in 2015, sales of yogurt jumped 20.6% and those for functional beverages were up 6%.

On the Taobao online shopping mall, sales of goods associated with health-related search terms such as "organic," "nongenetically modified" and "low-fat" are reportedly growing. Sales of nuts, which are seen as healthier than other kinds of snacks, have shown the highest growth.

Chinese consumer tastes are changeable. In recent years, "health" has attracted attention as a keyword. Companies need to consider this trend, as well as their own strengths in developing products that meet market needs.

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Farmers slash corn planting as China's stockpiles decay

[Bloomberg, 16-03-2017] While China's agricultural output has surged along with its robust economic growth, state-run stockpiles are overwhelming demand and prompting the government to re-evaluate costly buying programs intended to bolster food security. With the end of a support-price system last year and a 20 percent slump in futures, the corn harvest probably will drop in 2017 for a second straight year. The government is also trying to find other uses for the deteriorating grain reserves such as ethanol for vehicle fuel.

China's stockpile could cost 170 billion yuan (\$25 billion) in storage fees for the government, which also faces potential losses of 200 billion yuan from the price drop. The price decline cut farmers' income by a total of 92.7 billion yuan -- 157 yuan per farmer -- even after government subsidies.

China will cut corn acreage by 10 million mu (1.6 million acres) this year, after a 30 million reduction last year. It'll raise subsidies for farmers who shift to soy, silage corn and alfalfa. The country is the world's largest corn producer and consumer after the U.S.

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JD.com to expand offline presence in rural appliance market

[Caixin, 01-03-2017] JD.com, which accounts for 62% of China's online home appliance sales, plans to expand its offline presence by opening 10,000 brick-and-mortar stores this year.

JD.com, China's second-largest e-commerce platform after Alibaba Group, is counting on the new physical stores to expand into the home appliance market in rural areas, targeting populous counties and townships. JD.com started setting up physical stores last year to reach more rural consumers who rely less on online shopping and have less access to delivery and after-sale services.

As of the end of 2016, JD.com had opened more than 1,700 service stores, mainly in small township and villages. The company said these stores contribute about 30% of its total appliance sales.

JD.com said this year it would switch the focus of its physical stores from small towns and villages to larger counties to better meet consumer demand. But the expansion of physical outlets doesn't mean JD.com is shifting strategic focus to offline stores.

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Online shopping continues to boom in rural China

[Xinhua, 02-03-2017] Online shopping is thriving in rural China, with last year's transactions reaching 894.54 billion yuan (130 billion U.S. dollars), a Ministry of Commerce (MOC) official said.

The figure accounted for 17.4 percent of total online sales nationwide.

Booming rural e-commerce has played a positive role in boosting rural economic development, increasing farmers' income and improving their lives, according to the MOC.

The MOC vowed to continue promoting rural e-commerce, and efforts will be made to strengthen resource sharing, financing and credit system services.

To boost rural e-commerce, China plans to have full broadband coverage in villages and expedite construction of logistics infrastructure.

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China's New Hope breaks into soybean crushing with Cargill

[Reuters, 04-03-2017] Chinese agribusiness group New Hope plans to **build** its first soybean crushing plant in China's Hebei province in a joint venture with Cargill, its chairman Liu Yonghao said on Saturday 4th March.

New Hope and provincial state companies will own 51 percent of the project, which will have a daily capacity of 50,000 tonnes, while U.S. commodity merchant Cargill will hold the remaining 49 percent, he said at a briefing.

China is the world's top soybean buyer.

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Britain can be a key partner in China's new Silk Road

[The Telegraph, 13-03-2017] For more than 2,000 years, the Silk Road has borne witness to exchange and friendship between the East and West. With its tales of trade and travel down the ages, the route has traditions that have become a source of inspiration for those who seek new opportunities for common development. Now, China is looking to work with Britain in a new partnership, on a new Silk Road for today: the Belt and Road Initiative.

This is an ambitious idea proposed by President Xi Jinping, which aims to harness the potential of countries on the old Silk route – countries in Central Asia, West Asia, the Middle East, and Europe – to develop economic and trading partnerships through greater infrastructure and cultural links.

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Brexit to open new opportunities in China-UK trade, top Chinese banker says

[CNBC, 25-03-2017] The U.K.'s exit from the European Union (EU) will present new opportunities free trade with the world's second-largest economy, a former Chinese banker said Saturday 25th March.

"Brexit will pave a new path for free trade between China and the U.K.," Li Ruogu, former chairman of the Export-Import Bank of China, said at the Boao Forum held in the Hainan province of China.

Despite fears about rising protectionism and anti-free trade forces in the current global environment, Li said the U.K. may already be a more open market than the EU. He cited inefficiencies in EU agricultural policies and its disputes with China regarding the steel trade as examples of protectionism in the EU.

With China promoting the One Belt, One Road initiative which the U.K. is participating in, there will be a lot of room for collaboration between the two countries, he added.

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Downton Abbey boosts UK tea in China

[China Daily, 01-03-2017] A growing taste for meat, dairy, beer and "afternoon tea" products among Chinese consumers contributed to a 51 percent increase in British food and drink exports to China in 2016, making it the UK's fastest growing market.

The UK exported 439.5 million pounds (\$546.6 million) of food and drink goods to China last year, the fastest growth in exports to China in a decade, according to the UK's Food and Drink Federation. Total UK exports of food and drink grew by 10.5 percent to reach a record 20 billion pounds.

In descending order, the top five export products from the UK to China last year were milk and cream powders, salmon, pork, whisky and beer. Beer saw a 439 percent increase in exports following President Xi Jinping's visit to a Buckinghamshire pub with former UK Prime Minister David Cameron in 2015.

The FDF also noted the growing interest in China for British "afternoon tea" products such as scones, jam, tea and cakes, linking the trend to the popularity of television programs such as Downton Abbey and the Great British Bake Off. Last year, exports of tea to China were up by 63 percent, milk powder by 134 percent, and cakes by 26 percent.

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Danish Crown targets China's choosy pork eaters with plant for premium cuts

[Reuters, 02-03-2017] Top European pork producer Danish Crown hopes to gain a bigger chunk of the Chinese market by building a new factory to provide fresh meat to discerning consumers in Shanghai.

While imports were driven largely by high Chinese prices, Danish Crown chief executive Jais Valeur said changing consumer habits have also created demand for premium products like Denmark's lean pork, particularly in China's most developed cities.

A local factory will allow Danish Crown to defrost imported pork and sell fresh, packaged meat and sausages to a niche market willing to pay more for high quality, convenient food.

The company is still seeking a suitable location for the plant that is expected to process about 10,000 tonnes a year of meat when completed in 2019.

Valeur expects China's booming e-commerce platforms to be more important for the firm's sales than traditional retailers, where the competition for shelf space is fierce.

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ADM to expand animal nutrition capabilities with new facilities in China

[Business Wire, 13-03-2017] Archer Daniels Midland Company announced today that it is continuing to expand its Animal Nutrition footprint in China with the construction of a new feed-premix facility in Xiangtan, in Hunan Province, central China, and the addition of aquaculture feed production lines at its existing Nanjing complex in Jiangsu Province, eastern China.

The Xiangtan plant will have the capacity to produce 120,000 metric tons annually of premix, concentrate, animal-complete, and fish-complete feeds. It will be strategically located to supply products to customers in three provinces in central China: Hunan, Hubei and Guangxi.

The new plants will add to ADM's network of animal nutrition facilities in China; the company operates premix facilities in Dalian and Tianjin in the northern part of the country, as well as the Nanjing facility in eastern China and the company's new plant in Zhangzhou, in southern China, which is expected to be complete by summer 2017.

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Step up surveillance to stop bird flu spread from China: UN

[Reuters, 17-03-2017] Countries trading in Chinese poultry should step up surveillance at farms, markets and border checkpoints to prevent the spread of H7N9 bird flu from China after a more severe strain of the virus was detected in chickens, a U.N. agency said on Friday 17 March.

H7N9 has killed almost 500 people in China since it was first reported in 2013 but until recently had shown little or no clinical symptoms in birds, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

But in February Beijing reported it detected an evolution in the virus that caused severe disease and death in poultry within 48 hours of infection.

The highly pathogenic variant has only been reported in China's southeastern Guangdong province and will become more apparent in some flocks if birds begin to die off, making detection and control easier, FAO said.

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China calls on Brazil to take stricter safety measures on food shipments

[Reuters, 21-03-2017] China on Tuesday 21 March called on Brazil to take stricter safety measures in its food shipments, as Brazilian officials scrambled to limit the fallout from a corruption scandal that led Beijing to suspend meat imports from its top supplier.

China this week suspended imports of all Brazilian meat following a scandal in the South American country over the alleged bribery of health officials to allow the sale of tainted meat.

Brazil is the top supplier of beef to China, accounting for about 31 percent of its imports in the first half of last year. The second supplier, Australia, is still rebuilding its herd after drought and is not seen to be able to meet China's fast-growing demand.

The South American country also supplies more than 85 percent of China's poultry meat imports, according to the United States agriculture department.

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