

China Agri-food News Digest

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Policies

Crackdown on illegal sale of overused pesticide

[2013-05-06, China Daily] The local government of Weifang, a city in central Shandong province, is planning to crack down on Aldicarb, a highly toxic pesticide.

The illegal sale and use of the pesticide was exposed by China Central Television (CCTV).

Aldicarb is one of the most poisonous pesticides used in China. According to the Ministry of Agriculture regulations, it can be used only for five plants under serious restrictions.

However, CCTV discovered that Aldicarb is being overused three to six times of the standard for an unlisted plant, ginger, although farmers are clear about the toxicity.

"We don't use it for the ginger we eat ourselves," a female farmer told CCTV.

The news aroused widespread attention on the Internet. People expressed concerns about the safety of ginger and the pollution of soil and underground water.

However, Sun Shubao, president of China Crop Protection Industry Association, said he does not think the situation is that bad.

"Pesticides with effects that can last for more than one season have been banned," he said.

"The effect of Aldicarb on soil and underground water won't be that big. It will be resolved by microorganisms.

"It has been used in Weifang for a long time, according to local farmers. If the effect of it on the human body is so big, it should have shown up. There is pesticide abuse in other parts of China as well. The problem is we don't have regulations on the use of pesticides. We don't have punitive measures for that."

The Weifang government said on Sunday it has started to confiscate illegal sales of Aldicarb and destroy all ginger planted with Aldicarb. A pesticide store was closed and its manager was detained.

A working team has also been sent to Weifang by the provincial government.

Click [here](#) for details

Ministry responds to public concerns about pollution

[2013-05-09, China Daily] On Wednesday, the Environmental Protection Ministry revealed how the government has handled 13 cases of pollution in the first three months of 2013.

This is the first time the ministry has released information in this manner about a group of pollution incidents. But such information will be released on a quarterly basis in the future, said an official from the ministry who asked not to be named. "We are taking this measure to respond to the public's concerns. We hope it will make public supervision more convenient and push enterprises to rectify problems and improve their operations as quickly as possible," said the official.

Many high-profile pollution incidents, which triggered nationwide outrage, are among the 13 cases the ministry has revealed its response to.

The most recent major pollution scandal to provoke a public outcry was in March, when Deng Lianjun, then-head of the local environmental protection department, responded to residents concerns over a polluted river in Cangxian county, Hebei province, by saying just because it had turned red that didn't mean the water was unsafe to drink, because "after boiling with red beans the water has that color, too".

The river was later found to contain levels of aniline that were 73 times higher than the national standard.

Click [here](#) for details

Govt environmental transparency in doubt

[2013-05-09, China Daily] More than 60 percent of respondents to a recent survey said they are unsatisfied with, or unclear of, transparent government information regarding environmental protection.

The survey, conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center under Shanghai Jiao Tong University, aims to find out residents' attitudes toward the country's environmental protection and how they evaluate government performance in this sector.

The survey, released on Wednesday, polled 3,400 residents from 34 cities across the country in March and April.

Only 37.4 percent of the respondents said they believe governments are doing a good job in revealing information about environmental protection, while the others said they are not satisfied with government performance or they have no idea of it, according to the survey.

"Given the result, it's highly necessary and important for government to adjust its method of working with the public," said Zhong Yang, director of the research center. In addition, the public has shown a very strong resistance toward neighboring facilities that have environmental risks, the survey shows.

Over half of the respondents said they strongly oppose projects with possible harmful effects on the environment. And 78 percent said they will participate in protests if pollution facilities are to be built near their residences.

Click [here](#) for details

China underlines stable agricultural production amid challenges

[BEIJING, May 8, Xinhua] The Chinese government on Wednesday urged greater effort to ensure the smooth agricultural production needed to sustain growth in the world's second-largest economy, amid multiple events that have pummelled the farming industry.

In an executive meeting of the State Council headed by Premier Li Keqiang, the cabinet underlined the importance of agriculture, describing it as the "foundation of the national economy and key insurance of stabilizing growth, controlling inflation and preventing risks."

The rural economy has been running smoothly since early this year, but agricultural production still faces difficulties, according to a statement released after the meeting.

Floods in China's northeast, which is the country's farming heartland, and droughts in the northwest and southwest will hurt output, while falling pig prices, tight supply of beef and mutton, and the outbreak of H7N9 influenza will also weaken the industry.

The 7.0-magnitude quake that hit Lushan County in southwest China's Sichuan Province also dealt a blow to regional agricultural production.

To cope with these challenges, efforts must be made to ensure stable supply and prices, according to the statement.

The meeting stressed the importance of smooth spring farming, encouraging the use of machinery in ploughing to boost output and lay foundations for developing modern agriculture.

The cabinet also pledged to raise the minimum purchase price of corn, and increase pork reserves to prevent steep falls in prices.

Facilities to raise flocks and herds should be standardized and improved. More subsidy funds should be allocated to major producers to boost beef and mutton supplies, it urged.

Click [here](#) for more details

Chongqing women migrant workers unwilling to do farming

[May 23, 2013, womenofchina.cn] A survey report on young women migrant workers' lives in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality shows that only 0.41 percent of them are willing to get involved in agriculture.

The report shows that 61.84 percent want to start their own businesses, 22.86 percent want to work in administrative roles, 8.58 percent want to find jobs as skilled workers and 4.9 percent want to be ordinary workers.

Released by the Chongqing Women's Federation on May 22, 2013, the survey covered about 1,000 women migrant workers born in the 1980s and 1990s in Chongqing's 19 districts and counties.

According to the report, 40 percent of the women polled work in the processing and manufacturing industry and 21.2 percent in the hotels, catering and entertainment industry. Only 13.7 percent of them work below eight hours a day, while 60.4 percent work eight to ten hours, 19.2 percent ten to 12 hours, 5.1 percent 12 to 14 hours, and 1.6 percent above 14 hours.

In terms of monthly salary, 14.3 percent earn below 1,000 yuan (US\$ 163), 69.6 percent between 1,000 and 2,000 yuan (US\$ 163-326), 12.4 percent between 2,000 and 3,000 yuan (US\$ 326-489), and only 4.72 percent above 3,000 yuan (US\$ 489). The survey shows that women who have education further than technical secondary school are more likely to earn higher salaries.

A total of 34.3 percent said that they work in urban areas to earn more money to improve their lives, 25.5 percent said they are pursuing their dreams, 16.3 percent said they want to gain experience, 9 percent said they want to learn professional skills, and 4.5 percent said they want to experience urban life.

Click [here](#) for more details

China's food sector to boom despite slower economic growth: expert

[ZHENGZHOU, May 17, Xinhua] China's food industry will continue to experience steady and healthy growth in the coming years against the backdrop of a sluggish economy, according to an industry analyst.

Xiong Bilin, vice president of the China National Food Industry Association, made the remarks Thursday at a food expo held in central China's Henan Province, the country's most populated administrative district.

Despite the country's lackluster overall industrial performance, he forecast that the sector will grow at a relatively rapid pace in the next five to 10 years, and he projected that the industrial output value will exceed 10 trillion yuan (1.61 trillion U.S. dollars) in 2013.

The industrial output of the food sector jumped 21.7 percent year on year to almost 9 trillion yuan last year, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Consumption capacity released by advancing urbanization and enormous potential in food processing enterprises will provide major impetus to the sector's boom, he said.

In 2012, the country's urban population increased to 712 million, 52.57 percent of China's total population, NBS data shows.

Click [here](#) for details

Chinese migrant workers exceed 260 mln by 2012

[BEIJING, May 27, Xinhua] China had 262.61 million migrant workers by the end of 2012, up 3.9 percent year on year, according to the latest official data released Monday.

A report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that 163.36 million migrant workers sought jobs away from home lasting at least six months, marking a year-on-year increase of 3 percent. Most of these workers were from less-developed central and western regions.

The per capita monthly income of migrant workers stood at 2,290 yuan (370.48 U.S. dollars) by the end of 2012. It rose 11.8 percent from the previous year, but the growth was 9.4 percentage points lower than that of 2011, said the NBS.

The average age of Chinese migrant workers stood at 37.3 in 2012, and male workers made up 66.4 percent of the total, the NBS said.

The survey covered about 200,000 rural laborers in over 7,500 villages around the country, said the NBS.

Click [here](#) for details

China cuts power prices in agricultural sector

[BEIJING, May 22, Xinhua] Electricity prices for all businesses in agricultural production and logistics will be cut from June 1, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) announced on Wednesday.

Pork and vegetable producers will now enjoy the same electricity prices as other agricultural production businesses, which were already benefiting from preferential costs, the commission said in a statement.

Agricultural wholesale and farm produce markets, as well as refrigerator storage facilities will be charged the same for electricity as industrial producers, the statement said.

The move will save 500 million yuan (80.78 million U.S. dollars) in the agricultural production and logistics (annually) sector. For example, a farm with about 30,000 pigs will save 100,000 yuan on electricity each year, according to the statement.

The move is expected to reduce soaring costs in logistics and further stabilize farm produce prices, the statement said.

The State Council, China's cabinet, in early January issued a circular asking local authorities to ensure the implementation of a range of measures aimed at cutting logistics costs for farm produce amid climbing food prices.

Click [here](#) for details

Science, Technology and Environment

Extinction nears for China's 'River Pig,' the finless porpoise

BEIJING, May 1, 2013, — It's known in China as the "river pig," the finless porpoise that has lived in the Yangtze River system for about 300,000 years but may become extinct within 10. Why?

The ecology of the Yangtze is struggling against an onslaught of human activity: overfishing, including electro-fishing, which that stuns and kills the porpoise; sand dredging; heavy pollution; dams that change the water temperature and affect breeding patterns and block migration; and injury or death from ever-increasing river traffic, according to multiple reports in the Chinese media.

"The Yangtze is home to 400 million people and is the engine that drives roughly 40 percent of the entire Chinese economy," wrote Peter Beaudoin, the chief executive of the World Wildlife Federation in China, in an article on Chinadialogue, an online environmental magazine.

"Economically, the Yangtze basin is thriving (at least for the time being). But at what price?" he asked. "Ecologically, the Yangtze is very unhealthy — if it was a human patient it would be placed in the intensive care unit."

A Chinese environmentalist and scientist asked: "The changes on the Yangtze are a reflection of China's economic development. How many species will we consume for the sake of G.D.P.?" The question was posed by Cheng Ran, a scientist at the Tongling Freshwater Porpoise Reserve, in an article in the Southern Weekly newspaper.

In fact, China's environment is under so much pressure it can be hard to know where to begin, environmentalists say.

Six years ago, the Baiji dolphin, which also lived in the Yangtze, was declared functionally extinct, "and it looks very much like its close relative, the finless porpoise, is heading in the same direction," wrote Mr. Beaudoin. The finless porpoise looks like a dolphin but has no dorsal fin.

The Ministry of Agriculture recently announced that just 1,000 of the world's only freshwater subspecies of finless porpoise remained in the river, its tributaries and adjoining lakes. It's declining at an annual rate of nearly 14 percent, the ministry said. A Chinese environmentalist Web site, Save Yangtze Finless Porpoise, is trying to raise awareness, as are a small group of dedicated scientists here.

Click [here](#) for more details

Historical responsibility of developed countries unevadable: China's chief negotiator

BONN, May 3 (Xinhua) -- As global representatives gathering at German city of Bonn for a new round of UN climate change talks, China's Chief Negotiator Su Wei warned developed countries that their historical responsibility for climate change is unevadable.

Su urged the developed countries to increase their mitigation ambition and implement their pledge for assisting developing countries.

Key issues in the talks which ended on Friday in Bonn include the scope, structure and design for a new climate change agreement set to come into force in 2020 and enhancing global ambition for efforts against climate change in the pre-2020 period.

The decision to make the new agreement was made in Durban, South Africa in 2011, when the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Actions was established

and authorized to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Convention and applicable to all parties. The process should be completed no later than 2015 and the instrument will come into effect and be implemented from 2020.

"The aim of Durban Platform is clear, that is to further enhance the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention. It is by no means a process to create a new international climate regime," said Su.

During the discussion this week, however, some developed countries tried to make a new interpretation about the key Convention principle of "equity" and "common but differentiated responsibilities", claiming that differentiation in obligations based on a developed-developing country was not suitable anymore, as the economy capacity and emission share had changed, asking developing countries to offer mitigation efforts with the same nature with those from developed countries.

"That will definitely not be accepted by developing countries," said Su.

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China rapid in response to bird flu: Nature

[BEIJING, May 4, Xinhua] China deserves credit for its rapid response to the outbreaks of H7N9 avian influenza, and its early openness in the reporting and sharing of data, a prestigious scientific journal has said.

"Today, some commentators view its reaction to H7N9 with mistrust. But from all the evidence so far ... China's response to the virus is next to exemplary," London-based Nature said in an editorial in its online edition on April 24.

China reported the H7N9 outbreak to the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 31, just six weeks after the first known person fell ill. It has also shared all the sequences with the WHO, and live virus with the WHO and other laboratories, the editorial said.

"Chinese President Xi Jinping added political clout ... when he called for an effective response, and said that the government must ensure the release of accurate information about the outbreaks," the editorial noted.

China has distributed diagnostic tests to hospitals and research labs across the country. The response, spearheaded by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Beijing, has united clinicians, virologists, and epidemiologists. Live-bird markets at which H7N9 has been found have been shut down, and birds culled, it said.

Some critics have questioned the time between the first person falling ill on Feb. 19 and China's first announcement about the virus, and have asked whether the announcement was deliberately delayed.

"This is unfair," the editorial said. "With just a handful of severe pneumonia cases caused by the virus by mid-March, it is impressive that China realized as quickly as it did that something was amiss."

Click [here](#) for details

Reducing the environmental impacts of fertiliser use

[15 May 2013, SAIN]. *Scientists have demonstrated how improvements in nitrogen fertiliser manufacture and their application could help reduce China's agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by around 60%, by 2030, compared to the current business as usual approach. This*

emissions reduction represents a 2 to 6% reduction in China's overall greenhouse gas emissions and therefore could be significant in the global battle on climate change.

In a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, the team from UK and China have quantified the total GHG emissions associated with nitrogen (N) fertiliser manufacture and use in China. They then examined several scenarios for reducing over-use and mis-use of N fertiliser, and for changing manufacturing processes, and calculated the decreases in greenhouse (GHG) emissions that could be achieved.

In this study, funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and linked closely with projects funded by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, the UK-China team concluded that a combination of technical innovations in manufacturing and changes in agricultural management could result in annual GHG emissions being reduced to of 204 teragrams of carbon dioxide equivalents (Tg CO₂-eq) instead of the projected 542 Tg CO₂-eq by 2030.

The UK leader of the project, Professor David Powlson said "China is the world's biggest manufacturer and user of N fertiliser accounting for around 30% of global manufacture. A large use of N fertilizer is necessary for the nation to feed its 1.3 bn inhabitants. However, there is scope for using N far more efficiently: there is now clear evidence of widespread over-use and inefficient use of N fertiliser in China. For example there is evidence of 30 - 60% over-use in some regions"

The project came under the [UK-China Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Network \(SAIN\)](#) that specifically supports research that has relevance to agricultural and environmental policies.

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China agrees to impose carbon targets by 2016

The battle against global warming has received a transformational boost after China, the world's biggest producer of carbon dioxide, proposed to set a cap on its greenhouse gas emissions for the first time.

Under the proposal China, which is responsible for a quarter of the world's carbon emissions, would put a ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions from 2016, in a bid to curb what most scientists agree is the main cause of climate change.

It marks a dramatic change in China's approach to climate change that experts say will make countries around the world more likely to agree to stringent cuts to their carbon emissions in a co-ordinated effort to tackle global warming.

"This is very exciting news," said Lord Stern, chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change at the London School of Economics.

"Such an important move should encourage all countries, and particularly the other large emitters such as the United States, to take stronger action on climate change. And it improves the prospects for a strong international treaty being agreed at the United Nations climate change summit in 2015," added Lord Stern, who, in his 2006 report for the UK government on the financial implications of climate change, produced what many regard as the world's single most influential political document on the subject.

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The proposal to introduce the cap has been made by China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), agency responsible for planning the country's social and economic development. Although the proposal needs to be accepted by China's cabinet, the State Council, for it to be adopted but experts said the agency is extremely influential and is

working with a government that appears to be increasingly committed to the environment. The agency also said it now expects China's greenhouse emissions to peak in 2025, five years earlier than its previous estimate.

China has agreed to cut its so-called carbon intensity - the amount of CO₂ produced per dollar of economic output - by about 40 per cent by 2020, compared to 2005 levels. However, this still allows for a considerable increase in emissions, albeit it at a slower pace. The cap proposed by NDRC would represent the first time China has committed to cut its absolute emissions - something that the US has failed to do.

Lord Stern said the move was a further sign that the EU “is losing its global leadership position on climate policy through its vacillation”.

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MOA to expand IPM-based technology pilots to nationwide

Chinese Ministry of Agriculture launched a National Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Promotion Plan in Beijing on May 27th, 2013.

The Plan was announced at the launching workshop on "National IPM Promotion Plan". This initiative aims at promoting eco-friendly alternative technologies to replace Dicofol, a DDT-based harmful pesticide, for agricultural use across China by 2015. The plan is based on a pilot project funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and jointly run by MOA, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The pilot project was conducted in three sites, namely Zhanhua County of Shandong Province, Yidu City of Hubei Province and Luochuan County of Shaanxi Province. Since April 2009, a total of 100,000 farmers at pilot sites have joined the project, and have been trained to adopt environmentally-friendly alternative technologies in farming, including combating mites with predatory mites and traps, providing alternative habitats and alternative insecticides for emergency control. Presently, the application of DDT-based Dicofol has been phased out from farming in pilot Counties (City).

Farmers who took part in the pilot found that their crops and fruit trees not only survived but actually flourished. Over the past three years, the production of cotton, citrus and apples in pilot sites has generated 1.512 billion yuan.

Many of these farmers have now become trainers, passing on their knowledge to others. This was one of the project's key features – once the knowledge has been imparted to a community, it spreads itself.

Since 2009, China and UNDP have been working together to encourage farmers to employ green techniques to ward off agricultural pests other than using Dicofol. The Plan is one of the initiatives to fulfill China's commitments under the frameworks of various international conventions.

Click [here](#) for more details

International Relations

AgriTT Research Challenge Fund: Call for Proposals

AgriTT is a new initiative between the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Ministry of Agriculture, China, and the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) to promote transfer of agricultural technologies, knowledge and management

innovations from China to low-income countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. More information can be found at www.agriTT.org.

AgriTT has three components:

1. Pilot Development Projects in selected countries
2. A Research Challenge Fund
3. Knowledge and communication of lessons on effective partnerships between China, UK and low-income countries to improve agricultural productivity and food security.

The AgriTT Research Challenge Fund invites teams of researchers to apply for grants to work on one of the following themes:

1. **Critical agricultural technologies:** taking an agricultural technology innovation originating from China, and developing and adapting it to an LIC context with attention to the whole value chain from field to consumer.
2. **Effective value chain development:** enhancing a commodity supply chain, where the commodity represents an innovation of proven technical feasibility sourced from China or elsewhere.
3. **Innovation in knowledge sharing and communication:** enhancing agricultural information and knowledge flows related to a technology innovation to enable poor rural communities to make better informed decisions about their livelihoods.

Research teams: Applications are invited from research teams that include partners from China, the UK and a low-income country in Africa/Southeast Asia. Researchers from other countries or international organisations may also be included.

Proposal requirements:

Proposals selected for funding will demonstrate a high degree of innovation in their approach to use of new technologies, new products or services, new uses for existing technology, or new processes, including new mechanisms to deliver products or services.

Application process: Concept Notes should be submitted by 28th June 2013, the best of these will be shortlisted and invited to submit full proposals. The deadline for full proposals is 30th August, 2013. Grants will be awarded in October 2013, and will run until October 2015. Grant will range between £150,000 and £300,000, depending on the theme addressed.

In addition, to the Open Call for Proposals outlined above, the RCF also supports **Targeted Research** linked to the Pilot Development Projects on cassava in Uganda, and aquaculture in Malawi. Details are as follows:

Targeted research: Uganda

Research proposals are invited on the cassava value chain in Uganda. Proposals may address variety development, production and agronomic issues, processing or value-addition, including consumer acceptance of cassava products, and policy research.

Targeted research: Malawi

Research proposals are invited on the tilapia aquaculture value chain in Malawi. Proposals may address breeding, production management, value chain or policy issues.

Targeted Research proposals should pay attention to the criteria set out in the guidance for applicants note. The need to generate useful outputs within a two year time frame should also be considered when preparing proposals.

Proposals may request funding up to £300,000.

To apply, and for guidance notes on the Research Challenge Fund please visit www.agriTT.org.

Chinese team tells Ghana to consider technology transfer to boost agric output

[Ghana, Wednesday, May 1, 2013] A delegation from China has called on Mr Clement Kofi Humado, Minister of Food and Agriculture to consider technological transfer to Ghana to boost agricultural development to make the country self-sufficient in food production.

The delegation led by Mr Li Xueming, Vice Director of Ningui State Farm said they are in the country based on a mutual sister agreement signed between the Farm and the Volta Regional Development Agency.

The sister agreement is to enable the Ningui State Farms to expose the use of modern technology into the agricultural sector in the Volta Region.

Mr Humado lauded the contribution of China over the past years to the development of the country stressing: "China has played significant role in Ghana's development."

He commended the Ningui State Farms for its bold step to partner the Region to facilitate development.

He said the Afife Rice Farm in the Volta Region needs injection of technology to expand production on a large scale.

Mr Humado urged the delegation to include livestock production and to the Krachi area.

"Ghana is rich with water resources, land, and labour but with technological gains the country will feed itself and export some of its produce in self-sufficiency, this is why we are happy to partner with China," he said.

Mr Humado said Ghana is seeking to partner with foreign counter parts with the right technology in line with the "Better Ghana Agenda."

Mr Li expressed the hope relations between Ghana and China would be strengthened.

He said they are willing to work and collaborate for the development of the Region.

Click [here](#) for details

Brazil to boost agricultural cooperation with China: minister

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 2 (Xinhua) -- The Brazilian government hopes to boost economic and trade cooperation with China, Agriculture Minister Antonio Andrade said Thursday.

Brazil wants to enhance agricultural cooperation with China, increase exports to China and attract Chinese investment, Andrade, who took office on March 16, told Xinhua in an exclusive interview before he leaves on Saturday for a visit to the Asian country.

He said choosing China as the destination of his first official trip abroad as minister is an acknowledgement of China's status as Brazil's biggest trade partner in agriculture.

During his stay in the Chinese cities of Beijing and Shanghai, the Brazilian minister will meet his Chinese counterpart among other officials and visit the Brazil Pavilion in the SIAL China International Food, Beverage & Hospitality Exhibition.

Andrade said he would ask the Chinese government to lift a ban on Brazilian meat, imposed last year after reports of a case of mad cow disease in Brazil, and import more pork, chicken

and corn from Brazil. He expressed the hope that the two countries could reach an agreement on corn export.

Brazil is also interested in attracting Chinese investments to fulfill the needs of port and transportation infrastructure to boost agricultural production, Andrade said.

With the Chinese investment, "we could increase our production and reduce export costs," he said.

Andrade added that the Brazilian Congress is expected to vote on a bill facilitating China's participation in land purchasing in Brazil.

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China's Bright Food plans dollar bond

[May 7, 2013, HONG KONG]—China's government-owned Bright Food Group Co. plans to issue a long-term U.S. dollar bond and use part of the proceeds to refinance a loan used to buy a controlling stake in U.K. cereal maker Weetabix Food Co., people with direct knowledge of the matter said Tuesday.

Bright Food is gauging investor demand in meetings in Hong Kong and Singapore on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, and will determine the size, maturity and price of the debt afterward, one person said.

It is likely to offer a benchmark-sized Regulation S bond, the person said. A benchmark-sized bond is usually around US\$500 million; a Reg S bond doesn't need to be registered with the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission and can't be sold to U.S. investors.

Part of the proceeds from the bond will be used to repay a US\$1 billion, one-year bridge loan used to buy a 60% stake in Weetabix from private-equity firm Lion Capital in May last year, another person said. The rest of the proceeds will be used as working capital, he said. Weetabix is valued at around 1.2 billion British pounds (US\$1.9 billion), including debt.

The Shanghai-based Bright Food, maker of White Rabbit candy, sought to raise up to US\$1.25 billion in loans and bonds late last year, people familiar with the matter said at the time. However, it didn't secure regulatory approval from mainland authorities until recently.

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China increases beef imports

CHINA'S appetite for Australian beef and veal continues to grow, with total volumes exported to China during the first four months of 2013 of 40,278 tonnes swt already exceeding the 2012 total of 32,906 tonnes swt.

Meat and Livestock Australia reports Australian beef and veal exports to China during April reached 11,654 tonnes swt, placing it ahead of Korea for the third consecutive month.

Grassfed beef shipments during April reached record levels at 10,821 tonnes swt, assisted by strong demand for chilled grassfed beef, at 1347 tonnes swt, the highest monthly volumes on record.

Grainfed beef exports also remained high at 833 tonnes swt, up from only 52 tonnes swt in April 2012.

Cuts in the highest demand during April included brisket (2282 tonnes swt), shin/shank (2067 tonnes swt) and silverside/ outside (1380 tonnes swt), with carcass exports also reaching new heights, at 926 tonnes swt.

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Grain imports to decline 17% in 2013

[2013-05-06, China daily] The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization expects China's grain imports to drop by 17 percent this year, because of rising global prices and increasing domestic harvests.

China's total grain imports are expected to hit 10.8 million metric tons this season (from last October to this year's September), said the FAO in a statement.

Its corn imports are projected to fall 33 percent from a year ago to 3.5 million tons, it added.

The organization said global corn prices have been caused by unfavorable weather conditions in the United States, while increased corn yield in China have also put downward pressure on its own imports.

In 2012, China's corn output increased by 8 percent from a year ago to a historical 208 million tons, official data showed.

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LatAm, China to further food security cooperation

SANTIAGO, May 6 (Xinhua) -- Latin America and the Caribbean will forge a strategic partnership with China on food security as well as agricultural and rural development, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s regional office here said Monday.

Entering the alliance, the two sides will hold an agriculture ministers' joint forum in Beijing on June 8-9 and set up a 500,000-ton joint food reserve to deal with natural disasters and offer humanitarian aid.

Officials from the Chinese government and representatives from more than 20 Latin American and Caribbean countries met here Monday to prepare for the agriculture ministers' forum.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to create a special fund of 50 million U.S. dollars to promote agriculture cooperation by establishing eight research and development centers in the region.

The cooperation proposal was first made in June 2012 by the then Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao during a meeting of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago.

Click [here](#) for details

PepsiCo's pilot project for potato farming in Ningxia

[2013-05-09, China Daily] PepsiCo Foods (China) Co Ltd and the agriculture department of Ningxia Hui autonomous region officially started operation of a demonstration potato farm in Yanchi county today using the company's advanced techniques.

The 33-hectare farm endorsed by China's Ministry of Agriculture is designed to promote development of new technologies for potato agriculture with a focus on water management and best practices to assist rural households improve the yield and quality of their crops.

PepsiCo and the ministry signed an memorandum of understanding in 2011, when the two sides committed to making joint efforts to promote PepsiCo's best practices of sustainable farming in China's agriculture.

The primary objectives of the MOU are to increase yields and income to raise the living standards of Chinese farmers. The demonstration farm in Ningxia is a major milestone in the first phase of the MOU, said company officials.

Under the plan, PepsiCo will provide seed potatoes best suited for potato chips and send its agronomists to provide free technical training and support.

The transfer of knowledge will include the overall design of a sustainable agro plan, the preparation of machinery and land, and best practices in planting, irrigation, harvesting and storage.

In addition, PepsiCo will provide a complete set of technology solutions to raise farmers' awareness of food quality and safety at the source of the supply chain.

PepsiCo began operations in China more than 30 years ago. Today it has six foods plants in China.

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Wal-Mart invests \$16.3 million into China food safety

[May 9, 2013, Bloomberg News] Wal-Mart Stores Inc. (WMT), the world's largest retailer, will invest 100 million yuan (\$16.3 million) over three years to improve food safety in China as it works to bolster its image after a series of food-related citations.

Some of the funds will be used to expand a mobile food-inspection lab program to cover 70 stores in Guangdong Province, Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart said today in an e-mailed statement. The retailer will also increase supplier training, improve store standards, recruit more food-safety experts and expand its fresh-food distribution.

Wal-Mart last year was cited by the Beijing Food Safety Administration for selling sesame oil and squid with hazardous levels of chemicals. In October 2011, police arrested Wal-Mart workers in Chongqing amid a probe of allegations the retailer mislabeled ordinary pork as organic.

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Smithfield Foods sale to Chinese firm gives US pork giant entry to China

[Guardian, 29 May 2013] *Boards approve Shuanghui International's buyout of world's largest pork producer but deal likely to face regulatory hurdles*

China's Shuanghui International has made a \$4.7bn bid to takeover Smithfield Foods, the world's largest pork producer, in what would be the biggest takeover of a US company by a Chinese firm to date – if it passes regulatory hurdles.

The deal is likely to run into heavy opposition in Washington, where a series of Chinese takeovers have been blocked by politicians and regulators. Shuanghui, also known as Shineway, is China's largest pork producer and is part owned by an investment firm run by Goldman Sachs.

A takeover would give Smithfield entry into China, the biggest and fastest growing market for pork. Per-capita pork consumption last year was 86 pounds, up from 70 pounds in 2002, according to Northstar Commodity Investment. In the US consumption was 58 pounds last year, down from 66 pounds in 2002.

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