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Policies

China to become innovation powerhouse by 2020

[GOV.CN, 20-07-2016] China aims to become an innovation powerhouse by 2020, according to a newly adopted national plan on scientific and technological innovation during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020). The plan was passed at the State Council executive meeting on July 20.

According to the plan, China is to further advance its global ranking in innovation competence, with the country's combined efforts in enhancing original innovation, building key science innovation parks, and attracting top-tier science and technology researchers.

According to the new plan, China will start implementing a series of key scientific and technological innovation projects. The plan also stressed research emphasis on areas that will contribute to China's industrial upgrading and new economy, including modern agriculture, clean and efficient energy, and mobile telecommunication.

The plan also singles out measures to tackle particular obstacles that have long been hindering science and technological innovation, such as a more systematic technological transfer from research institutions to companies, reform of the management system for science and technology, better coordination to improve resource distribution as well as IPR protection.

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China to resolutely implement supply-side structural reform

[Xinhua, 26-07-2016] As China's economy faces continued downward pressure and settles into a "new normal" stage, supply-side structural reform becomes ever more important, according to a statement released by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee after meeting Tuesday, 26 July.

China's economy held steady in H1, and supply-side structural reform has seen progress, noted the statement.

"However, the downward pressure facing the economy remains, and potential risks deserving attention still exist," it noted.

The statement underlined the importance of proactive fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy, as well as the careful management of the speed and direction of macro-economic policy.

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Top 10 new economy issues in China

[China Daily, 14-07-2016] According to a report released by Ali Research, the Alibaba Group's research arm, there are ten most important issues around the topic of new economy:

1. New infrastructure: cloud, internet, terminals
2. New element: data
3. New structure: mass collaboration
4. New business model: Consumer to Business (C2B)
5. New organization model: cloud system
6. Platform economy
7. Free connector
8. Micro Finance
9. Cross-border economy

10. Internet governance

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China's grain security framework

[China Daily, 25-07-2016] A new book titled "Global Agriculture Strategy: China's Grain Security Framework with an Eye on World Market Performance" was published by Cheng Guoqiang, Development Research Center of the State Council.

This book focuses on the redefinition of the position for national grain security strategy and the establishment of a new strategy of "seeking global supply based on China's domestic market". The author suggests that China should center on ensuring national grain security and the provision of major agricultural products. China's key task is to enhance the ability of utilizing the resources and markets both at home and abroad, so as to comprehensively implement strategic measures relating to direct trade, diversified channels for imports, the introduction of overseas investment in agriculture and international cooperation in new-type agriculture. China should profoundly integrate the industrial chains of production, processing, logistics, marketing and trade in global agriculture and build a sustainable, stable and secure agricultural product supply network around the world.

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Marine economy calls for insurance support

[CE.CN, 01-07-2016] As China's marine economy rapidly develops, the impact of uncertainty resulting from all kinds of marine risks, marine disaster for instance, on development of marine economy is increasingly highlighted.

Currently, China's marine insurance is generally classified to the following three categories: The traditional marine insurance, primarily including cargo transportation insurance, vessel insurance, ship owner's liability insurance, personal accident insurance for passengers by sea, etc. The fishery insurance, primarily including personal accident insurance for fishers at sea and aquaculture insurance. The emerging insurance, such as offshore petroleum exploration and development insurance, yacht (hull) insurance, public liability insurance for offshore platform, etc.

"The development of marine insurance counts on support and control of laws. UK's London is positioned as an international shipping center, which counts on its complete law system. UK's marine insurance act and marine insurance clauses are almost criterion on a global scale. In comparison, our marine insurance is to be further improved in terms of legal policies, judicial environment, etc.," said Jin Chengbo from Teaching and Research Department for Politics and Laws in Party School of the Central Committee of C.P.C.

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Strengthening regulation of farming crucial to food safety: lawmakers

[Xinhua, 01-07-2016] Legislators on 1st July called for better regulation of cultivation and breeding to ensure that food safety begins at the source.

While deliberating an inspection report on the implementation of the Food Safety Law, lawmaker Huang Huahua suggested that farmers should be given better guidance on pesticides, veterinary drugs, chemical fertilizers and feed additives.

"In China, a rather low proportion of farmers know how to use pesticides appropriately. Unfettered and excessive use of pesticides has contaminated ground water and soil," said lawmaker Li Xiaohong.

Li stressed making legislative efforts to strictly regulate the use of pesticides, veterinary drugs and other related substances.

The report, which was submitted to National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, said China's food safety situation remains "severe," and risks exist in this initial link of farming.

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China, Britain vow to make G20 Hangzhou Summit a success

[Xinhua, 06-07-2016] China and Britain vowed on Wednesday 6 July to make the Group of Twenty (G20) Summit to be held in the Chinese city of Hangzhou a great success as the two sides agreed to deepen cooperation in various areas.

The consensus was reached when Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi held a phone conversation with British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond.

During their talks, Yang suggested the two countries, under the current circumstances, make concerted efforts to advance bilateral ties and expand cooperation in various areas.

The Chinese side, the state councilor said, stands ready to work jointly with the British side to ensure the 2016 G20 summit, scheduled for Sept. 4-5 in Hangzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, is a great success, so as to inject fresh momentum into global economic development and world economic governance.

For his part, Hammond said Britain stands ready to continue to develop its ties with China in a positive manner and continuously deepen cooperation with China in various areas. He stressed Britain's willingness to work closely with China to make the upcoming G20 summit a successful event.

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ADB says China 'on track to meet growthprojections' this year and next

[Xinhua, 18-07-2016] A new Asia Development Bank (ADB) report said China is "on track to meet earlier growth projections" of 6.5 percent for 2016 and 6.3 percent for 2017 despite weak global prospects and Brexit.

In East Asia, growth forecasts are unchanged at 5.7 percent in 2016 and 5.6 percent in 2017, with China, the world's second largest economy, on track to meet projected growth of 6.5 percent in 2016 and 6.3 percent in 2017, the Manila-based bank said in a statement.

To support its targets, it said the Chinese government is expected to continue using fiscal and monetary stimulus measures.

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Science, Technology and Environment

Making agriculture resilient to bad weather

[China Daily, 11-07-2016] Climate variability is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods. Linked to El Niño, the recent floods in Central and Southern China are a reminder to the negative impacts of climate change - it is feared the floods are the worst in decades.

Yet China's agriculture sector remains vulnerable and smallholders continue to face high weather-related risks. So more needs to be done.

How can China's agriculture sector be made more resilient? It is important to continue to invest in infrastructure such as flood control and irrigation, and the development of drought-tolerant crop varieties. Just as importantly, disaster insurance and agricultural insurance will continue to play a big role. Scaling up agricultural insurance is particularly needed to safeguard farmers against weather shocks.

There is an immediate need for China to take precautionary measures against weather-related agricultural risks. The last few years have shown that natural disasters are some of the biggest threats to China's agricultural productivity, food security and people's nutrition. To build the resilience of small farmers, the provision of agricultural insurance at scale with government support together with market-based mechanisms is the key.

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Big data could make China's food safer

[Xinhua, 10-07-2016] Over fears of adulterated or substandard food, many Chinese rely on word-of-mouth to find safe groceries, but officials and technicians say it is time to take a more scientific approach and use big data to address food safety concerns.

A popular trend currently is ugly vegetables, as many take this as an indication of limited artificial interference.

Guizhou Vice Governor He Li spoke about this, and other trends besides, during a food safety discussion at the Eco Forum Global Annual Conference concluded Sunday in the provincial capital Guiyang, calling it ill-informed and misleading.

Big data could be used to ease the public's concerns, He said.

Guizhou, a pioneer of China's big data economy, allows consumers to access food inspection data with their cell phones.

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Digitizing China's agriculture industry

[China Daily, 22-07-2016] 'Internet+ Agriculture' is the newest and more dynamic approach to accelerating the development of modern agriculture. Through creative applications of information technology, the construction of an agriculture demonstration area, and the establishment of a social service platform, the agriculture industry will be transformed to achieve a wide array of social and economic benefits.

Since last year, over 45 million yuan has been invested in building a digitally-integrated agricultural service center, covering an area of 2,400 square meters, to serve the whole agriculture industry chain. Providing for the practical demands of Wuchang agriculture production, four service systems supported by big data collection and cloud platform technologies haven been set up.

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Chinese scientists push for GMO food industrialization amid objections

[ECNAS, 16-07-2016] Chinese scientists have lately been pushing for the nation to embrace genetically modified foods. Many say that GMOs (genetically modified organisms) may be the answer to China's limited farmland and scarce water resources.

Addressing a seminar in Beijing on July 17, Wang Dayuan, former dean of the Department of Biological Engineering at China National Rice Research Institute, said that China has a sufficient crop supply to meet the country's current needs. However, the changing Chinese

diet, which is shifting further and further toward meat and animal products, adds to food security concerns.

GMO food has long been a sensitive topic in China, as many people oppose the technology for fear that it will jeopardize human health, Chinese farmland or both. The seminar was even interrupted by an anti-GMO protester who passed out flyers and shouted anti-GMO slogans. Some also rallied outside the venue to voice their opposition.

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Chinese hybrid rice produces record-breaking yield

[People's Daily, 21-07-2016] With an actual yield of 832.1 kilograms per mu (0.0667 hectares), scientist Yuan Longping's rice cultivation has broken a world record for the yield of "double-season" early rice. This is a step toward success for a project focusing on the production of double-season early rice in southern China.

In 2015, the average yield of the early rice was 703.9 kilograms per mu, and that of late rice was 759.7 kilograms. The total yield of both harvests was 1,463.6 kilograms, which was just 36.4 kilograms below the goal.

According to Luo Xiwen, an academic with the Chinese Academy of Engineering, the yield of late rice is generally higher than that of early rice in Guangdong. As long as the average yield of early rice exceeds 750 kilograms per mu, then rice growers are on target to reach their goal. However, success still depends on the yield of late rice.

Experts believe that the answer lies in better seeds, better techniques and better opportunities. These upgrades will improve both the yield and quality of rice.

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Sky-high farms: Rooftop agriculture growing in popularity

[CCTV, 26-07-2016] Crops, vegetables, and animals... They are not only in the countryside, but on the rooftop. For many, a farmland built on top of a shopping mall in the high-tech zone of Chengdu is a brand-new experience.

One of the founders of this city farm, Mr. Liu, has been running a vast rural farm in the suburbs of the city for the past eight years. He thinks young people, especially children, know very little about agriculture.

Liu's rooftop farm occupies nearly ten thousand square meters. It claims to be the biggest one of its kind across the whole country. After two months of operation, the farm has become a platform for people to relax and get to know more about agricultural production.

This farm not only has crops. It has animals too. The interaction is popular for parents and children. It's also a place for young people to learn, and for others to relax. Liu believes the farm is a positive by-product of the shopping mall.

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China developing water cycle observation satellite

[Xinhua, 11-07-2016] China will launch a Water Cycle Observation Mission (WCOM) satellite around 2020, to help in forecasting hydrological events including flood and drought.

As the International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium (IGRSS) 2016 kicked off in Beijing Monday, 11 July, China announced its plans for the WCOM satellite, the first geoscientific satellite to provide integrated observation of key elements of the global water cycle.

The WCOM was initiated jointly by the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth and the National Space Science Center with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The CAS has completed key research and tests of the satellite's payload in anticipation of further development.

The CAS will cooperate with U.S. and European research teams to initiate a satellite constellation based on the WCOM, aiming to form a worldwide water cycle observation network.

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China discovers huge potassium deposit

[Xinhua, 29-07-2017] A huge deposit of potassium, which China desperately needs for agriculture, has been discovered in the northwestern province of Qinghai, the Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) announced Friday, 29 July.

More than 156 million tonnes of potassium chloride was found during a preliminary exploration in the western part of the Qaidam Basin, according to the MLR.

More deposits are expected to be discovered, said the ministry.

The MLR called the recovery a "milestone" as China currently imports 70 percent of its potassium.

About 450 million mu (30 million hectares) of farmland in China uses potassium and about 6 million tonnes of potassium fertilizer is imported every year.

Canada, Russia and Belarus own 60 percent of the world's potassium fertilizer resources and production.

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The rise of China's crayfish capital

[Xinhua, 02-07-2016] Thirty years ago, crayfish were little more than a nuisance for the rice farmers of eastern and central China, but the invasive species has become big business for one city.

Nearly two of three crayfish eaten in Europe hail from the small town of Qianjiang in Hubei Province. In late May, Qianjiang announced it sold 190 million U.S. dollars' worth of the crustacean to foreign buyers in 2015, up 27 percent year-on-year, becoming the country's largest crayfish export base.

To sharpen its edge in the industry, the town set up a research institute dedicated to breeding crayfish in mid-June, shortly after it opened a vocational school to train cooks in preparing crayfish dishes.

China is the world's largest producer of crayfish, with annual output accounting for over 70 percent of the world's total.

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Chinese scientists rediscover lost fungus

[Xinhua, 15-07-2016] A fungus described only once 164 years ago has been rediscovered by Chinese scientists in southwest China.

The fungus, known as pleurotus placentodes, which was originally described by British botanist M.J. Berkeley in 1852 and known only from one specimen he collected, has been found in the eastern Himalayas and Hengduan Mountains.

"The original and the only specimen [holotype] is now in very poor condition," said Yang Zhuliang, a researcher with Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences. "The new specimen can be used to identify the species as the original specimen degrades."

The fungus is hard to find because it grows only at high altitude from June to September, during rain season, Yang said.

The findings were published on the botanic journal *Phytotaxa* earlier this month.

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Flooding fuels food safety concerns

[Xinhua, 27-07-2016] Severe flooding across large parts of the country has raised fresh concerns about food safety.

Since the rainy season began in early June, millions of domestic animals have been washed away in flooding, authorities said.

In Anhui Province, one of the worst-hit areas, about 80,000 pigs and more than 12 million chickens and ducks were carried off by floodwaters.

In Hubei Province, more than 80,000 pigs and over 3.6 million chickens and ducks died, while in Jiangxi Province, about 5.2 million chickens and ducks were lost.

Many are worried that the meat might find its way to markets around the country.

China's food safety credentials took a hit when high-profile food scandals shook consumer confidence, particularly in 2008 when melamine-tainted baby formula caused at least six infant deaths and made a further 300,000 ill.

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China congratulates foreign PhD graduates in agriculture

[China Daily, 07-07-2016] July is the month of graduation. Together with millions of college graduates in China, 38 PhD students from 31 countries got their tassels turned in the graduation ceremony of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences Wednesday, 6 July.

CAAS is one of the scientific research institutions in the field of agricultural sciences in China that confers doctorates, and has trained nearly 200 foreign PhD and Masters graduates since 2008.

"China's agricultural development and techniques rank high worldwide, and we'd like to share our experience with more youth in the Third World and even more Western countries," said Wang Xunqing, director of International Education Office of Graduate School, CAAS, adding that it is welcoming more international scholars and graduate students in agriculture.

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China skilling Uganda's agricultural technicians to boost production

[Xinhua, 28-07-2016] About 21 km north of the Ugandan capital Kampala, in the quiet environs of Makerere University Agricultural Research institute, a Chinese instructor demonstrates how to use Chinese farming technology to boost production.

His students, agricultural technicians drawn from different parts of the east African country carefully listen and watch every move with a keen eye.

The over 30 technicians are attending a one month Chinese funded training course on cultivation techniques. The participants are focusing on increasing the production of rice and millet which are key cereals in ensuring food security in Uganda.

After acquiring skills from the Chinese experts, the technicians are expected to go back to the rural areas to share the knowledge in a bid to boost production.

The training program is a pilot of skilling African agricultural technicians in their home countries instead of flying them to China as has been the case.

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Trade and Business

China-UK ties to remain strong despite Brexit, envoy says

[China daily, 01-07-2016] China-UK relations will stay strong on despite Britain's decision to leave the European Union, said Liu Xiaoming, Chinese ambassador to the UK.

Liu, who was speaking on Thursday 30 June at the Young Icebreakers 8th Annual Dinner, said China respects the choice of the British people, and Britain's choice for its own development path, and hopes that the UK and EU will consult and negotiate and reach an early arrangement that is acceptable to both sides.

In particular, he said China's relationship and business exchanges with the UK will stay strong, and the two countries' cooperation to tackle issues of global significance will continue.

"Firstly, China values its relations with the UK. Secondly, China is committed to business cooperation with the UK, and this position remains unchanged. Thirdly, China continues to attach importance to its cooperation with Britain on global issues and this position remains unchanged, Liu said.

Liu also said that China and the UK's cooperation so far this year is very strong, demonstrated through government exchanges, business cooperation and cultural exchanges.

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Brexit's impact on China's foreign trade and investment

[CCTV, 05-07-2016] The spokesman for China's Ministry of Commerce, Shen Danyang, says Britain's decision to leave the EU will not significantly impact Chinese foreign trade and investment.

Shen said China respects the British people's decision, and will closely watch economic developments in Europe after Britain leaves the bloc.

The European Union is China's largest trading partner and an important investment partner. The United Kingdom is China's second largest trading partner among EU countries. Shen said China is still confident about the future of China-EU trading relations. And China would like to continue to work with both the EU and the UK to deepen economic and political ties.

Shen acknowledged that the Brexit referendum result has shaken international financial markets and created uncertainties for some Chinese companies. But said Beijing believes the impact of Britain's exit from the EU on China's economy will be limited.

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UK explores multi-billion pound free trade deal with China

[BBC, 24-07-2016] Chancellor Philip Hammond has begun discussions with China on an ambitious free trade deal which could see greater access for major Chinese banks and businesses to the UK economy.

The Chancellor told the BBC it was time to explore "new opportunities" across the world, including with China, one of the UK's biggest inward investors.

That is despite a short term economic shock from leaving the European Union.

He added that the EU is not in "punishment mode" over the Brexit vote.

"What we now need to do is get on with it in a way that minimises the economic impact on the UK economy in the short term and maximises the benefit in the long term," Mr Hammond said, admitting that there had been "global disappointment" about the Brexit vote.

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China's JD.com says Brexit could boost imports of British goods

[Reuters, 01-07-2016] Chinese online retailer JD.com said that Britain leaving the European Union could make British goods cheaper to buy but it was premature to say if the move would significantly impact the group's business.

"British products will be more competitive. It is however too early to say if there will be a significant impact on business," Tony Qiu, head of JD Worldwide, told a news conference in Paris.

JD.com, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd's main rival in online shopping and China's largest e-commerce company by revenue, is an import site that sells products from France, Britain and elsewhere, though Qiu also said that "mid- to long-term we may sell to people in Europe".

Alibaba and JD.com together account for more than 80 percent of online retail sales in China, a market that saw more than 2 trillion yuan (\$304 billion) of transactions last year, according to iResearch.

The amount of goods transacted on JD.com's platforms, or gross merchandise volume (GMV) reached \$71.5 billion in 2015 and 72.4 pct of the transactions were done on mobile phones.

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China's summer harvest expected to produce 140 million tonnes of grain

[Reuters, 02-07-2016] China's grain output from the summer harvest is expected to reach 140 million tonnes this year, the same as last year, the agriculture minister said in an interview with the official People's Daily.

Han Changfu warned that El Nino might weigh on output this year, adding volatility in grain prices might reduce income for farmers.

China's summer harvest usually last for one month from late May to the end of June.

China's parliament said that it expected total grain output to reach more than 550 million tonnes this year.

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Merger to create grain trading force

[China Daily, 16-07-2016] The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission announced the merger of China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corp with Chinatex Corp, in the process of creating a bigger rival to compete with the so-called ABCD companies.

The term ABCD refers to the companies that dominate global grain trading, serving as middlemen between farmers and buyers. The groups are ADM Co, Bunge Ltd and Cargill Inc from the United States, and the Netherlands-based Louis Dreyfus SAS.

Chinatex, one of the nation's main textile and grains trading groups, will become a subsidiary of COFCO, the country's biggest food trader after the merger, the SASAC said on

its website, indicating that the central government would push further ahead with its efforts to restructure State-owned enterprises this year.

The government had put three companies — COFCO, Chinatex and China Grain Reserve Corp, also known as Sinograin — in charge of its grain purchasing and storage business. They acted based on a government plan to ensure grain sales, maximizing processing activities, stimulating commodity trading and stabilizing the market.

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Agri-food trade in 2015: China boosts EU exports

[EU, 14-07-2016] The ranking of the top world agri-food exporters remained unchanged in 2015, after the EU28 took over the leading position from the US in 2013. EU28 exports reached €129 billion, with an annual increase of 5.7 %.

With total agri-food exports in value of EUR 10.3 billion and imports in value of EUR 5.1 billion, China is the second most important destination (8 % of all EU agri-exports) and the fourth most important origin (4.5 %) for EU agri-food trade. In the course of 2015 the euro/Chinese yuan exchange rate was favourable for EU exports.

The EU being a net exporter of agri-food products to China since 2011, the trade balance is increasingly in favour of the EU amounting to EUR 5.2 billion in 2015, when exports increased again considerably after a standstill in 2014.

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Chinese plan \$500m food and agriculture investment fund

[The Australian, 25-07-2016] A Chinese-based venture capital funds business specialising in green technology is spreading its wings into Australia, establishing a \$500 million specialist food and agriculture investment fund by the end of this year.

Tsing Capital plans to create a vertically integrated Australian farming and food business to supply the booming Chinese market for health and wellbeing supplements.

The fund will focus on investing in cutting-edge technology based on fermentation to extract, boost and process grain, cane and vegetables to produce high-protein health supplements, tonics, pills and sports drinks, as well as vitamins and nutraceuticals.

The initial investments would be made in technology and existing food processing businesses that could be adapted to produce health-focused foods and pharmaceuticals.

The bigger picture, once the fund exceeds \$1 billion in size, is to buy or co-invest in sugar cane, vegetable, legume and grain farms to secure the supply of plant-based proteins needed by the business.

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Chinese company in funding New Zealand milk powder plant

[Xinhua, 28-07-2016] A state-owned Chinese agricultural company has taken a cornerstone share in small New Zealand dairy firm Mataura Valley Milk to enable a major expansion, the dairy company said.

China Animal Husbandry Group (CAHG) will hold 71.8 percent of Mataura Valley in exchange for funding the construction of a nutritional powders manufacturing plant, valued at 200 million NZ dollars (142.06 million U.S. dollars), near the South Island town of Gore.

The new plant, which would create at least 100 new jobs, was designed to tap into the growing global demand for nutritional powders, especially infant formula.

The state-of-the-art pharmaceutical standard plant would produce infant formula, ultra-high temperature cream and small amounts of skim milk powder, using locally sourced raw milk for global markets.

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China to invest \$3bn in Iran's fish farming

[PressTV, 27-07-2016] More signs have appeared to show that East Asian countries are interested in Iran's fish farming business. China has joined South Korea to announce that it is planning to invest \$3 billion in Iran's fisheries.

Hassan Salehi, the head of Iran Fisheries Organization, has been quoted by the media as saying that China's decision to make the investment had been communicated to him through the country's deputy agriculture minister during a recent visit to Tehran.

Salehi added that the priority points for the discussed investment are Iran's southern island of Qeshm as well as the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

The official further emphasized that China's fishery output presently stands at 30 to 40 million tons in oceans worldwide. The country, he said, can provide huge potential for Iran's fishery industry.

Iran is seen as the largest fish farming nation in the Middle East, annually producing some 325,000 tons of fishery products through farming.

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Beef export bonanza for Brazil as Chinese eat more foreign steak

[Bloomberg, 28-07-2016] About a year after recovering from a mad-cow scare, Brazil has supplanted Australia as the biggest seller of beef to China, where a production deficit is widening and imports are heading for a record. Brazil's ample supplies and low prices helped companies including JBS SA, Minerva SA and Marfrig Global Foods SA to boost exports to China by 65 percent in the first half of the year.

While the Chinese eat far more pork than any other meat, consumption per-capita is falling while beef demand rises. Only the U.S. imports more beef than China, where rapid growth over the past decade created the world's second-largest economy and an expanding middle class that can afford more protein in their diets. At the same time, Brazil has plenty of surplus beef, as domestic demand stagnates, and the country's exports are appealing to buyers after its currency plunged last year.

Australia had been China's top foreign supplier, but its output declined. That created an opportunity for Brazil, where a 33 percent plunge in its currency last year made its exports more appealing to buyers.

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Belt & Road Initiative expected to boost Mongolia's development

[Xinhua, 11-07-2016] More and more Mongolians think the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative provides a good chance to boost the landlocked country's economy.

In a recent interview with China Radio International, Mongolian Ambassador to China Tsedenjav Sukhbaatar said China is Mongolia's largest foreign investor and trading partner, adding that the plan to build a China-Mongolia-Russia economic corridor is a milestone in

history and that Mongolia is planning to develop special foreign investment zones to attract investment.

"Mongolia will contribute to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative" and "will also greatly benefit from the increased trade turnover and good shipment," he said.

Mongolia's agriculture is also expected to benefit from the Belt and Road Initiative.

Mongolia boasts 73 million heads of livestock farmed by about 200,000 herder households in the vast countryside. Currently, the country's agricultural products lack market access and the government wants to sell them to big consumer markets including China, according to Mongolian media.

However, the country's poor infrastructure and ineffective veterinarian and vaccination services have proved to be a big hindrance.

With the Belt and Road Initiative, these herders face a better prospect of shipping their meat and dairy products to China in a better and fresh condition, media reports said.

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Compiled by Yuelai Lu, SAIN Secretariat (UK).

If you have any further enquiries, please contact Yuelai Lu at: y.lu@uea.ac.uk; for more information about SAIN, please visit: www.sainonline.org/English.html