

CHINA

Authorities work to boost pork supplies

Average price has fallen 18 percent from Nov 1 peak, ministry says

By WANG XIAODONG
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Agricultural authorities will redouble efforts to boost the production of pork, which has already shown signs of recovery following a slump caused by African swine fever, an agriculture vice-minister said on Monday.

The stock of hogs increased by 2 percent in November over the previous month, while the stock of breeding sows saw a month-on-month increase of 4 percent, marking the first time since April last year that both stocks had increased, Yu Kangzhen, vice-minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said.

With a narrowing of the gap between supply and demand, pork prices began falling across China early last month, figures released by the ministry showed.

The average price for wholesale pork in China was about 43 yuan (\$6.20) a kilogram on Friday, a fall of more than 18 percent from the peak level on Nov 1, according to the ministry.

"It is a very good sign, and we will further the momentum to ensure a stable supply of pork in the market during the New Year's Day holiday and the Spring Festival holiday," Yu said, adding that a range of measures to encourage pig farmers to replenish stocks since September and high pork prices were behind the recent increase in stocks.

Authorities at various levels have made full preparations to ensure an adequate supply of pork during the two holidays, including a significant rise in the quantity of reserve meat to be released to the market, he said.

Niu Qingbao, vice-mayor of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, said the city government had

released 10 measures to boost production of pork — a major ingredient for local dishes — including providing financial support, promoting more productive breeds and intensifying disease control and prevention at pig farms.

As a result, the number of hogs in stock in Chengdu stopped falling and started to rise in October, and has kept increasing since. More than 4 million hogs will be available on the market in Chengdu next year, Niu predicts.

Yu said promoting hog production will be an important task for the ministry and ordered local agricultural authorities to learn from the ministry to set up special offices for promoting pork production.

The ministry will also improve guidance to ensure measures previously released by it and other central government departments can be carried out effectively across China, such as allowing the raising of pigs in multistory facilities, and streamlining environmental evaluation procedures for pig farmers to ensure the replenishment of stock, Yu said.

The ministry will improve technical services for pig farmers to help them expand production, and will try to link restoration of pig production with poverty alleviation efforts, so impoverished farmers in rural areas can climb out of poverty through raising pigs in cooperation with major pig breeding companies, he said.

Pork production in China has been seriously affected by African swine fever outbreaks since August last year, with experts estimating pork production declined at least 20 percent year-on-year this year. Pork production is expected to keep recovering next year and rebound close to normal levels before the end of next year, the ministry said.

Using their noodles



Relatives of diplomats posted to China inspect extremely thin noodles made by Chinese chefs during a cooking competition for diplomats and their families held in Tianjin on Sunday. Organizers invited diplomats from 11 countries and their relatives to the 13th edition of the competition, as well as a number of Chinese chefs as guests. TONG YU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Foreign Ministry refutes US 'lies' about Tibet and Xinjiang regions

By WANG QINGYUN
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The United States is telling lies about China's policies in the Xinjiang and Tibet autonomous regions out of "ulterior motives", and China is firmly opposed to that, Beijing said on Monday.

"By disregarding truth and repeating lies time and again, the US has left itself in deficits of morality, credibility and reputation," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said.

Geng made the remark at a daily news conference after a tweet by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Saturday that attacked China's policies in Tibet and Xinjiang. The US Department of State posted a similar tweet the same day.

"The fact that China's Xinjiang and Tibet are enjoying political stability, economic development, ethnic unity and social harmony is

the most powerful refutation of the US' slanderous words," Geng said.

Xinjiang is witnessing sustained economic growth, social harmony and stability, as well as religious harmony, Geng said. The lives of people in Xinjiang have been improving, and cultures are prospering in the autonomous region, he said.

The population of the Uygur ethnic group in Xinjiang has increased to 11.65 million, accounting for more than 46 percent of the region's population, Geng said.

There are more than 24,000 mosques in Xinjiang, which means there is a mosque for every 530 Muslims there, he said.

Speaking of the situation in Tibet, Geng said that since its peaceful liberation in 1951, the region has enjoyed vigorous economic growth and social stability, and its traditional culture has been protected and promoted.

There are more than 1,700 venues for religious activities and about 46,000 monks and nuns in Tibet, and about one million religious people make pilgrimages to Lhasa, the regional capital, every year, he said.

Instead of interfering in other countries' domestic affairs, the US should "mind its own business" and focus on addressing its own "persistent problems", Geng said, citing statistics from an Associated Press report.

The report, published on Saturday, cited figures from a database that showed there were more mass killings in the US this year than in any year dating back to at least the 1970s.

In 2019, there were 41 mass killings, defined as when four or more people are killed, excluding the perpetrator, of which 33 were mass shootings, the report said, adding that more than 210 people were killed.

English an option in resolving disputes in Shanghai's Lingang Special Area

By ZHOU WENTING in Shanghai
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Foreigners involved in commercial disputes in the Lingang Special Area, newly added to the China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone, will be allowed to use English in litigation materials and court hearings if both parties agree, the Shanghai High People's Court said.

A simultaneous interpretation system will be used during court hearings to aid the process, Pan Yunbo, director of the court's commercial tribunal, said on Monday.

The court unveiled 21 measures on Monday designed to provide efficient, international standard judicial services as part of the city's effort to forge a top-class business environment that will enhance the international influence and competitiveness of the Lingang Special Area.

"The use of the English language is an international practice in litigation and trials involving parties from different countries," Pan said.

The Supreme People's Court started to embrace the practice in recent years. It established its first international commercial tribunal in July last year and began to allow the parties involved to submit litigation materials in English.

The adoption of the practice in Lingang was imperative due to a sharp increase in cross-border cases since the area's establishment in August, Pan said.

Since it was launched on Aug 20, the Lingang Special Area, which covers an initial area of 119.5 square kilometers, has become a pilot zone for new industries and business and trading models.

Commercial disputes related to the cross-border trade of goods, international investment, international shipping, the offshore servi-

ces trade and offshore financial transactions have cropped up accordingly, the court said.

Nearly 2,500 lawsuits related to the Lingang Special Area were received by Shanghai courts from September to Dec 25. In disputes involving at least one foreign party, the number of intellectual property cases rose 133 percent year-on-year, the number of financial disputes was up nearly 17 percent and the number of commercial disputes rose 12 percent.

"It showed that after the establishment of the special area, commercial transactions increased rapidly and so did the need for judicial settlement of commercial disputes," said Chen Meng, vice-president of the Shanghai High People's Court.

The adoption of English as an official language in such cases was aimed at offering better and more efficient legal services, Chen said.



The Pingtang Grand Bridge in Guizhou province will open to traffic on Wednesday. YAN CHUNGUI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Bridge tower as tall as 110-story skyscraper

By YANG JUN in Guiyang and LI LEI in Beijing

A super-tall bridge inaugurated in Southwest China's Guizhou province on Monday will connect the province's industrialized north and mountainous, less developed south and halve travel time between the impoverished counties of Pingtang and Luodian.

The 2,135-meter-long Pingtang Grand Bridge, supported by three towers and numerous cables, will be fully open to the public on Jan 1, the provincial transport authorities said.

It will allow drivers to travel between the two counties in about an hour via a newly completed highway with a speed limit of 80 kilometers an hour.

Construction of the cable-stayed bridge started in April 2016 and the provincial government said it cost 1.5 billion yuan (\$214 million) to build.

Its tallest tower is 332 meters tall, equivalent to a 110-story skyscraper, and is the world's tallest reinforced concrete bridge tower, while the deck of the bridge is about 190 meters above the ground, authorities said.

Addressing the inauguration cer-

emony, provincial transport official Long Pingjiang said that with the completion of the bridge, Guizhou's highway network has reached a length of 7,000 km.

Figures provided by the provincial government show it had 6,453 km of highway last year, the seventh-longest nationwide.

Guizhou, once one of China's most isolated regions, has been charging ahead with infrastructure development in recent decades.

Provincial government figures show that by August, Guizhou was home to 47 of the world's highest 100 bridges, earning it the title of "global center of bridges".

The bridges soaring over the mountains and hills that account for more than 90 percent of Guizhou's landscape have been boosting tourism and investment in the province and turning it into a gateway in southwestern China, said Sun Zhigang, the province's Party secretary.

He said the improvements had led to surges in flows of people, goods and information.

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Museum takes off

Visitors examine a model of a Z-19E helicopter at Yinchuan Aviation Museum in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui autonomous region, on Monday, as the museum, the region's first of its kind, opened to the public. It displays the development of China's aviation sector in an area of 3,800 square meters.

WANG PENG / XINHUA



Guideline safeguards app users' personal information

By CAO YIN
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The operators of smartphone applications will be deemed to have illegally collected or misused personal information if they fail to inform users why they need to collect such information and how it will be used, a guideline released by the authorities on Monday said.

The Cyberspace Administration of China, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the State Administration for Market Regulation issued the guideline, which clarifies the behavior required of app operators when they collect personal information.

The guideline, a move to implement the Cybersecurity Law that came into effect in 2017, will help law enforcement departments detect and fight privacy-related violations, the authorities said.

Under Chinese laws and regulations, personal information mainly deals with a person's identity or private activities, and can include their name, identity card number, telephone numbers, and details of their properties or their whereabouts.

The guideline orders app operators to have clear rules on collecting or using personal information, which must be disclosed when users open an app for the first time.

“Users are the ones with the right to decide whether their private information can be used or collected.”

Xu Hao, lawyer with Beijing-based Jingsh Law Firm

As well as being required to specify what private information of users will be collected, app operators must also inform users why and how they collect or use the information, especially when the information is sensitive — such as identification card and bank account numbers.

App operators who mislead users to get their permission, or intentionally hide or cover up their aims in collecting or using the private information of users, will be deemed to have illegally collected or misused it.

In January, the four authorities launched a campaign against the illegal collection or use of personal information and ordered law enforcement departments to crack down on such behavior. Monday's guideline will help them identify such misconduct.

Li Ya, a Beijing lawyer from Zhongwen Law Firm, welcomed the guideline.

"Detailing the illegal behaviors is crucial for app enterprises to regulate their behaviors when running their businesses and also helpful for users to distinguish whether the app companies are infringing their privacy or not," he said.

The guideline, effective from Monday, will help the authorities supervise the app market and prevent excessive collection or use of private information by operators, he added.

Xu Hao, another Beijing lawyer from Jingsh Law Firm, said, "Users are the ones with the right to decide whether their private information can be used or collected, so the requirement that app companies should offer clear rules on collection or usage to ensure users can understand the rules is, I think, a must."

As legislators draft the country's first law on personal information protection, Xu said the practical guideline will better fight illegal behavior and help maintain market order.