

CHINA

Pork supplies on pace to hit normal level

More pig farms, bigger herds signal bounce back from African swine fever

By WANG XIAOYU
wangxiaoyu@chinadaily.com.cn

Pork supplies in China will increase by 30 percent year-on-year during the January-February peak consumption season, and prices will be stable, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Wednesday.

Thanks to booming market demand and policy incentives, hog production has been recovering steadily around the country this year, and pig farmers have been more motivated to expand their herds, Chen Guanghua, deputy chief of the ministry's animal husbandry and veterinary medicine bureau, told a news conference.

"The pork supply situation will fare better and better in the future," he said. "Experts estimate that pork prices during next year's New Year's Day in early January and Spring Festival in mid-February will be lower than last year's level, and no price spike will occur."

"It is guaranteed that people will not have to face a shortage of pork products during these festivals."

In the first three quarters of this year, 12,500 new pig farms opened, and 13,400 idled pig farms resumed production, the ministry said.

Data shows that by the end of last month, stocks of breeding sows had been increasing for 12 consecutive months and pig inventories had been rising for eight straight months.

"In June and July, stocks of breeding sows and hogs registered their first year-on-year increases, which signaled crucial turning points in the recovery of pig production," Chen said.

The pace of recovery has accelerated since August, with Chen saying the number of breeding sows was up 28 percent year-on-year last month, with hog numbers up nearly 21 percent.

The ministry said breeding sow and hog herds have recovered to over 80 percent of the level at the end of 2017 — before African swine fever was first detected in the country in August 2018.

"If this trend continues, we are confident of realizing the goal of restoring the country's hog production capacity to the normal level by the end of this year," Chen said.

In the meantime, more hogs have been slaughtered for market, and total import volume from January

to September reached about 3.29 million metric tons, up 132.2 percent year-on-year.

As a result, pork prices have dropped for seven consecutive weeks, Chen said.

"Last week's pork prices at wholesale markets averaged 50.56 yuan (\$7.60) a kilogram, down by 9 yuan from the peak in mid-February," he said.

China has reported 18 African swine fever outbreaks in nine provinces, including one infecting wild boars.

"The overall epidemic situation is stable, pointing to achievements in our disease control work," Chen said.



Experts estimate that pork prices during next year's New Year's Day in early January and Spring Festival in mid-February will be lower than last year's level, and no price spike will occur."

Chen Guanghua, an official with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

"However, the virus has colonized and spread to large swaths of the country. Sporadic outbreaks are likely to occur in the long term, and disinfection and cleaning measures might be less effective due to low temperatures in fall and winter."

Further complicating the disease control situation is the frequent transport of breeding pigs and piglets, he said.

"The ministry will guide local authorities to enhance supervision, improve sample collection methods and enforce biosafety measures," Chen said.

In terms of grain output, a bumper harvest is guaranteed, and total grain yields will reach a new high this year, Wei Baigang, chief of the ministry's development and planning department, said.

"It is expected that this year's grain output will remain above 650 billion tons," he said.

Snow falls in Hulunbuir



People travel on a road covered by snow in Yakeshi, Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on Wednesday. It was the first big snowfall in the league this winter. Affected by cold air, many areas in northern China experienced temperature drops, with central areas of Inner Mongolia seeing temperatures fall by as much as 13 C. YU CHANGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

PLA sports teams to withdraw from national championships

By ZHANG YANGFEI
zhangyangfei@chinadaily.com.cn

The Chinese military's sports unit will withdraw from participation in national sports championships and individual sports events, PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army, reported on Wednesday.

The decision is part of ongoing structural reform of the PLA's sporting endeavors in a bid to concentrate more on combat effectiveness, it said.

PLA Daily said the Military Sports Training Center held a mobilization meeting on Tuesday in Beijing that marked the official start of the reform of the Chinese military's professional sports teams.

The reform is being carried out at the order of the Central Military Commission, which oversees the training center through its Training Management Department, and the military sports teams will undergo major changes in terms of functions, competition participation and scale and structure.

Some professional teams with distinctive military characteristics will be retained, while competitive sports teams that are more social and spectator-friendly will be cut.

The military has not revealed details of which of its 29 teams will

be disbanded or what arrangements will be made for members of those teams.

Although no more teams will compete in the China National Games, national championships and individual events, a PLA sports team will still participate in the World Military Games and other events held by the International Military Sports Council.

The Chinese Basketball Association confirmed Tuesday the withdrawal of the army-owned Bayi Rockets basketball team, one of China's most successful sports teams, from its competition.

The CBA said it had received a letter from the Military Sports Training Center confirming the Rockets and Women's Chinese Basketball Association equivalent the Bayi Kylin will no longer compete in the leagues.

The disbanding of the Bayi Rockets puts an end to a 25-year run that saw the rise of many prominent basketball players, including Wang Zhizhi, the first Chinese player to play in an official NBA game, who is now the team's coach.

The PLA Daily's report said the restructuring will highlight the sports teams' military characteristics and "shift the military sports from being arena-oriented to military-oriented".

China's military sports started developing in the 1950s when the PLA established its first professional sports team — the Bayi Sports Work Brigade — in 1951. Bayi — which means Aug 1 in Mandarin, referring to the day the PLA was founded in 1927 — has churned out numerous sports stars for China, including two-time Olympic badminton champion Lin Dan and retired table tennis player Liu Guoliang, who won titles at all major world tournaments.

In 2018, in order to boost competitiveness and optimize resources, the PLA restructured the previous 22 professional sports teams of the Bayi Sports Work Brigade into the Military Sports Training Center.

This year's reform is aimed at further refining the center's structure, clarifying its functions and positioning, and optimizing its strengths.

A Training Management Department official told PLA Daily the reform will strive to establish new professional military sports teams that are in line with the goal of building a world-class military and meeting the strategic requirement of strengthening the army's capabilities.

It will comprehensively improve the PLA's professionalism and combat skills, the official added.

Briefly

Road rage nets driver 3 months' detention

A driver surnamed Su who threw a cup of coffee at a moving car was sentenced to three months' detention for dangerous driving by the Chaoyang District People's Court in Beijing on Wednesday. The case drew widespread attention after a video of the incident went viral on Sept 21. Su became involved in a dispute with another motorist, surnamed Wang, who was trying to merge his white sedan into traffic on a busy road in Beijing. The court said Su sped to catch up with Wang's sedan, cut him off several times by breaking hard and eventually threw a cup of coffee at the white car's windshield. Wang posted footage from his car camera on the day the incident occurred. Police said Su's actions seriously affected road safety, and he should be punished according to the Criminal Law. Su pleaded guilty and did not appeal the verdict.

percent year-on-year, municipal authorities said Wednesday. The most closely watched economic indicator rebounded after a first-half contraction, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics said. Value added by tertiary industry rose 0.1 percent year-on-year during the nine-month period against a 3 percent contraction in the first half of the year. The per capita disposable income of Beijing residents reached 51,772 yuan in the first nine months of the year, up 2.4 percent year-on-year.

Over 4,600 detained for telecom crimes

Police from 29 provinces and regions across China detained over 4,600 individuals suspected of illegally selling phone cards and bank cards between Oct 10 and Tuesday, the office of an interministerial conference on fighting new types of telecom crimes said on Wednesday. More than 65,000 phone and bank cards have been seized in the national campaign, which was launched this month to curb the high incidence of telecom fraud, the office said.

Capital's GDP grows in first three quarters

Beijing's GDP totaled 2.58 trillion yuan (\$387.4 billion) in the first three quarters of this year, up 0.1

XINHUA — CHINA DAILY

Giant statue comes under fire online

By LI LEI
lilei@chinadaily.com.cn

Jianhe county in Guizhou province — a region with some of the last remnants of rural poverty in China — has been a target of criticism recently for spending 86 million yuan (\$12.9 million) to erect an 88-meter-tall statue as part of a tourism development drive.

The project has sparked concerns about extravagance and the abuse of poverty relief funds, with the hashtag "an impoverished county in Guizhou has spent lavishly on a statue" receiving 4.32 million views on the Sina Weibo microblogging service.

One user said cultural icons did not need to be super expensive and the money could have been used to improve lives more directly.

But some defended the project, arguing that the statue had bolstered the profile of a mountainous region that was not well suited to industries other than tourism.

Local authorities also brushed aside concerns, saying that scrutiny of the use of relief funds had been stepped up in the past three years in line with national directives from the top leadership.

Construction of the statue of Yangesha, a goddess worshipped by the local Miao ethnic community, began in late 2016 and was finished the next year as part of a hot springs resort and a Yangesha theme park.

Local government figures show the complex has generated more than 20 million yuan in tourism



A massive statue of Yangesha stands in Jianhe county, Guizhou province. WU DONGJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

revenue since it opened to the public on Oct 1, 2017, and has had an average of 1,000 visitors a day.

Jianhe was among 832 county-level regions labeled by central authorities as being impoverished, which suggests a local poverty rate of 3 percent or more, but the county had that label removed in March due to progress in the local anti-poverty campaign.

Local authorities started tapping the cultural and tourism value of the Miao goddess as early as 2007 by featuring Yangesha in publicity campaigns, public documents showed.

Massive statues have long been used to showcase local culture or form new landmarks aimed at attracting tourists.

But some projects have sparked controversy for being extravagant or not being in harmony with the natural landscape.

For example, the city planning authority in Jingzhou, Hubei province, was placed under scrutiny earlier this month over a 57-meter-tall statue weighing 1,200 metric tons in its ancient town area. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development urged the city to take measures to rectify problems including the statue's subsidizing foundations and its unfavorable influence on the ancient town's skyline. The statue was modeled after Guanyu, a legendary general who lost a famous battle in the city during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280).

Zhejiang cities start COVID-19 inoculations

By MA ZHENHUAN
mazhenhuan@chinadaily.com.cn

Shaoxing, a city in Zhejiang province, is carrying out an emergency COVID-19 vaccine inoculation program as the winter approaches and cases continue to rise globally.

On Tuesday, the city's health commission launched a reservation platform on its official WeChat account, allowing the public to make reservations online.

Participation in the inoculation program is voluntary, with key groups and virus-prone areas prioritized, according to a notice released by the commission.

Several COVID-19 vaccines developed by China have entered phase three clinical trials, and their safety and efficacy have met expected standards, the notice said in citing reasons for the program.

Shaoxing is the second city in Zhejiang to announce such a program. On Oct 15, Jiaxing's disease control and prevention center said in a notice that a COVID-19 vaccine inoculation program, using vaccines produced by Beijing-based Sinovac Biotech, is underway in the city. The vaccines were purchased and distributed by provincial authorities.

In the notice, Jiaxing said the program will prioritize certain "key targeted groups", including medical workers, epidemic prevention workers, port quarantine staff and customs staff. Citizens who work in public urban areas or plan to travel to medium- and high-risk countries or regions were also recommended for the vaccine.

The emergency vaccination includes two shots with an interval of 28 days. The vaccine is priced at 200 yuan (\$30) per shot, with an extra service fee of 28 yuan per shot. People aged between 18 and 59 can be inoculated.

Asked about the pricing of vaccines that get final approval, Zheng Zhongwei, head of China's COVID-19 vaccine development task force, said on Tuesday the pricing of those made in China would be decided by the manufacturers but should adhere to their nature of being a public good.

Moreover, the public demand for the vaccine would also be considered in determining the price, which is expected to be "within the public's acceptance range", he said.

Besides Jiaxing and Shaoxing, the emergency vaccination is also being carried out or will be launched in others cities in Zhejiang such as Yiwu and Ningbo, according to a report by ThePaper.cn on Saturday.

Nationwide, a trial system for the emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines was approved in June, with the program formally kicking off in late July.

Cities in Zhejiang are the first in the country to report that they are offering such vaccines to the public, particularly groups prioritized by local public health facilities such as CDCs and inoculation clinics.

At the Jiangdong community health service center in Yiwu, there are more than 500 doses of the vaccine in stock, with more on the way, according to a staff member, who added that most of the recipients would be traveling abroad soon.

In the port city of Ningbo, frontline medical workers and people who plan to go abroad are expected to get vaccinated by the end of this month, according to the local CDC.

"I've long been waiting for the vaccine, and it is a good sign that it can be made available to the public," 23-year-old Yang Shuang, a teacher at a training school in Hangzhou, said on Wednesday.

"I will definitely register for the inoculation, and I think the vaccines are affordable."

Since September, 743,000 people in Zhejiang have received influenza vaccinations to reduce the risk of flu being transmitted during any resurgence of COVID-19, Chen Guangsheng, executive deputy director of the province's leading group for the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus, told a news briefing on Friday.