

**CHINA AGRI-SCIENCE  
 NEWS DIGEST**  
**中国农业科技新闻摘要**  
**August 2016 (Issue No 1)**

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**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

## **China congratulates foreign PhD graduates in agriculture**

[China Daily, 11.07.2016] -- The Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) has awarded 38 PhD students from 31 countries their PhD degrees in a graduation ceremony on 6 July 2016. The CAAS is welcoming more international scholars and graduate students in agriculture, as mentioned by Wang Xunqing, Director of International Education Office of Graduate School, CAAS.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **Chinese scientists push for GMO food industrialization amid objections**

[People's Daily Online, 18.07.2016] – At a seminar in Beijing on 17 July 2016, different Chinese scientists have been supporting genetically modified foods (GMO foods), in a bid to maintain Chinese food security in view of China's limited farmland and scarce water resources, and the changing Chinese diet, which is shifting further toward meat and animal products. A Ministry of Agriculture official also stressed that the stringent safety assessment also ensures that these foods are up to the same safety standards as non-GMO products.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **China's technology innovation plan to support GM crops research**

[Xinhuanet, 11.08.2016] -- A five-year plan for science and technology progress, listing science and technology targets for the 2016-2020 period, as well as the government action needed to achieve the proposed results, was published on 8 August 2016 by the State Council. According to this plan, China will allocate more resources to GM crop R&D, with emphasis lying on innovation, advantages of hybrids and breeding by molecular design, which are to help elevate GM research to the next level.

[Full article](#)

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## **Chinese hybrid rice produces record-breaking yield**

[People's Daily Online, 21.07.2016] – In a project organized by Guangdong province's Department of Agriculture focusing on the production of "double-season" early rice in southern China, a world record for the yield of "double-season" early rice has been broken by an actual yield of 832.1 kilograms per mu (0.0667 hectares). This is the fifth cultivation project related to super hybrid rice undertaken by Prof. Yuan Longping's research team, and this is the first project focusing on double-season rice.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **Archaeologists find evidence of domesticated rice in China 9,000 years ago**

[Sci-News.com, 23.06.2016] -- 9,000-year-old domesticated rice (*Oryza sativa*) has been found at a site in Zhejiang Province by an international team of archaeologists led by Dr. Yunfei Zheng from the Zhejiang Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology in Hangzhou, China. This finding indicates that the domestication of rice, with characteristics of japonica rice (*Oryza sativa subsp. japonica*) has been going on for much longer than previously thought.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **1,000-year-old agricultural practice, China's solution to sustainable farming**

[China Daily, 07.06.2016] -- The symbiotic rice-fish aquaculture system, a farming practice of raising fish in rice paddies that has been preserved by farmers in Longxian village, Qingtian county, Zhejiang Province for over 1,000 years, was visited by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Jose Graziano da Silva, on 5 June 2016. The system was listed by the FAO among its Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems in 2005.

[Full article](#)

## **Scientists find geological evidence of China's legendary 'Great Flood'**

[Sci-News.com, 05.08.2016] -- An international team of researchers, led by Dr. Qinglong Wu of Peking University and Nanjing Normal University, has found geological evidence for the 'Great Flood.' Dr. Wu and co-authors said the flood occurred in roughly 1920 BC, which is several centuries later than traditionally thought. According to Chinese legend, Emperor Yu successfully handled the Great Flood, thereby earning the divine mandate to establish the Xia dynasty.

[Full article](#)

## **Global warming a challenge for country's crops**

[China Daily, 18.08.2016] -- At the 7<sup>th</sup> International Crop Science Congress, hosted in Beijing 14–19 August 2016, experts stressed that extreme weather patterns, pests and diseases were impacting food security in China and the world. A scientist pointed out that for every 1 °C rise in the Earth's temperature a 6 percent decline in global wheat production can be expected.

[Full article](#)

## **China discovers huge potassium deposit**

[Xinhua, 29.07.2016] -- The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) announced that a huge deposit of potassium has been discovered in the northwestern Chinese province of Qinghai. About 30 million hectares of farmland in China uses potassium, with China currently importing 70 percent of its potassium, or about 6 million tonnes of potassium fertilizer every year.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **Nature Special: Science in China**

[Nature, 22.06.2016] -- A "Special" of "Nature" looking at the state of science in China today and the challenges it faces in the future.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 42, June 2016)

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## **The future of Chinese research**

[Nature, 22.06.2016] – This editorial states that China must strengthen its scientific foundations in order to boost its research quality and innovation. Though rapidly catching up with the United States in the number of scientific papers published, there are still questions about the quality and inventiveness of science in China.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 42, June 2016)

## **China to become innovation powerhouse by 2020**

[english.gov.cn, 20.07.2016] – A new national plan on scientific and technological innovation during the 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) was adopted at the State Council executive meeting on 20 July 2016, chaired by Premier Li Keqiang. China will start implementing a series of key scientific and technological innovation projects according to the plan. With combined efforts, China is aiming to further advance its global ranking in innovation competence.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **China sets R&D targets for 2020**

[Xinhua, 08.08.2016] -- According to the country's five-year plan for science and technology progress by 2020, China expects knowledge-intensive services to contribute 20 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020, up from 15.6 percent in 2015. Besides many other measures, joint research projects between Chinese and foreign institutes and enterprises are to be encouraged, in order to attract more high-level foreign experts to work in China.

[Full article](#)

## **Digitizing China's agriculture industry**

[China Daily, 22.07.2016] – China is aiming at accelerating the development of modern agriculture via 'Internet+ Agriculture'. Specifically, a Rice Tracing Service System, an Agriculture Social Service System, an Agricultural Products E-Commerce Service System, and a Governmental Resource Service System are to be set up.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

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## **Sky-high farms: Rooftop agriculture growing in popularity**

[CCTV, 26.07.2016] -- A rooftop farm in Chengdu occupies nearly ten thousand square meters. Comprising not only crops but also animals, it is one of the biggest one of its kind in China. It is also aiming at providing the public with a free place to learn the science of planting and experience agricultural production.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

## **EC Joint Research Centre Director General Vladimir Šucha visits China**

[Delegation of the European Union to China, 15.07.2016] – The Director General of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), Vladimir Šucha, visited Shanghai and Beijing on 04-06 July 2016. The aim of the visit was to review on-going cooperation with Chinese counterparts, and to assess opportunities for expanding cooperation to new areas and partners.

[Full article](#)

## **China, UK start three-year agricultural collaboration project**

[China Daily, 06.08.2016] – A three-year, 1.3 million pound collaboration project on sustainable agricultural technology research started on 18 July 2016 between China and the UK. The project focuses on improving the efficiency of agricultural remote sensing tools, so that farmers in China can apply water and nutrients to areas of farmlands that need them the most. The project is also part of the China-UK Sustainable Agriculture Innovation Network (SAIN), which aims at translating the results of research into policy and farming practices.

[Full article](#)

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## **BASF and Kingenta to jointly address tough agriculture challenge in China**

[FoodIngredientsFirst, 24.06.2016] -- Novel fertilizers coated with BASF's new Limus technology are to be brought to Chinese farmers via a partnership between German BASF and Chinese fertilizer supplier Kingenta. Limus is a very effective urease inhibitor, reducing the volatilization loss of ammonia in urea-based fertilizers by up to 90%. The result is that more food can be produced with less nitrogen, significantly increasing resource efficiency.

[Full article](#)

## **Technology promising risk-free vegetables**

[Shanghai Daily, 21.06.2016] – “Hydroponics”, the mass-cultivation of plants without pesticides, fertilizers or soil could be the future of agriculture in China. A 12-square-meter greenhouse housing a variety of vegetables was exhibited at a recent expo in Beijing on the country's major technological achievements over the past five years.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 42, June 2016)

## **Chinese geneticist defends high-profile findings**

[Xinhuanet, 03.08.2016] – A controversy has arisen in China lately over the claim by a Chinese scientist to have invented new genome-editing technology, NgAgo that could be an alternative to the mainstream CRISPR/Cas9 technique. However, other researchers have been unable to reproduce his results, and the issue is now under investigation by the scientific journal in which the research was published through a well-established procedure.

[Full article](#)

## **Antibiotic resistance poses fatal threat**

[China Daily, 21.07.2016] – According to Professor Xiao of Peking University, antibiotic abuse in animal farming is still widespread in China, and the country has no maximum residue limits for antibiotics detected in animal products, such as meat and milk. According to the latest report on international antibiotic use, every year 50 percent of the antibiotics employed in the world are used in China, with 52 percent of them used to treat animals bred for food.

[Full article](#)

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**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES**

## **China's tainted soil initiative lacks pay plan**

[Caixin Online, 08.06.2016] – The Action Plan for Soil Pollution Prevention and Control was released May 31 by the State Council, after undergoing some 50 draft revisions over the previous three years. Moreover, a soil pollution prevention law has been drafted and is likely to be submitted next year to the standing committee of the National People's Congress. However, costs of soil remediation projects on the agenda for the next five years will be huge, and the Action Plan lacks a budget schedule.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 42, June 2016)

## **Over 4,800 projects included in the 2016 central government pool of projects on water pollution control**

[MEP News Release, 09.08.2016] – The Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) set up of late the 2016 central government pool of projects under the framework of the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution, in an effort to implement the major deployments of the State Council on accelerating the startup of major projects.

[Full article](#)

[Original article \(in Chinese\)](#)

## **Interim evaluation report on implementation of Action Plan targeting air pollution released**

[MEP News Release, 12.07.2016] -- The interim report on the evaluation of the progress in implementation of the Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Air Pollution (hereinafter referred to as the Action Plan) was released 05 July 2016. The report held that the Action Plan has set a correct path and direction for pollution control, that the implementation of the safeguard measures has been efficient, and that the air quality improvement has proven effective. In 2013, the State Council printed and distributed the Action Plan.

[Full article](#)

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### **Jilin to better implement green growth**

[China Daily, 11.07.2016] – After a meeting in Beijing between the Jilin provincial government and the Ministry of Environmental Protection, a consensus was reached on key environmental programs and the construction of a big data platform. The programmes and projects include the comprehensive treatment of the Songhua River, the better implementation of the policy on prevention and control of water pollution, the implementation of the energy conservation and emission reduction policy, making good use of straw and building the ecological compensation mechanism.

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**ENVIRONMENT**

## **Air quality of Chinese cities improves in first half of 2016**

[Xinhuanet, 03.08.2016] – The Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said that the air quality in 338 Chinese cities showed improvements in the first half of 2016. Beijing, Tianjin and 11 main cities in north China's Hebei Province saw cleaner skies with about 57.4 percent of the January-June period having "good air quality", while in Beijing, the rate was 58.8 percent. However, six out of the 10 cities with the worst air quality were still located in Hebei.

[Full article](#)

## **China's investment in environmental protection to reach \$2.5 trillion**

[People's Daily Online, 25.07.2016] – According to experts, about 17 trillion CNY is expected to be invested in environmental protection in the 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020). The National Development and Reform Commission is currently assembling action plans in three categories: energy conservation, water conservation and cycling development. Great effort is to be put into the development of "green manufacturing".

[Full article](#)

## **Floods devastate pig farms across China**

[ThePigSite.com, 04.08.2016] -- Heavy rain, landslides and flooding in the north of China since 18 July 2016 have affected 10 provinces or regions, killed more than 100 people and destroyed farms and killed livestock across a vast area of the country, as reported by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. According to the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, the five provinces hardest hit by flooding produce about one third of the country's pork.

[Full article](#)

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## **New Beijing water reservoirs to hold 10 mln cubic meters of rain**

[Xinhuanet, 01.08.2016] – The Beijing city government plans to add 73 rain storage facilities capable of holding over 10 million cubic meters of water as flood prevention measures. In order to help store rainwater and prevent mountain torrents, five new reservoirs will be built in mountainous areas of Beijing, and "buffer zones" will be set up along riverways.

[Full article](#)

## **Nurturing the shoots of China's sustainable agriculture**

[www.iied.org, 23.03.2016] – According to an article by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), a growing trend towards sustainable food offers hope for addressing environmental, social and food safety concerns associated with China's food system. Chinese agriculture currently faces major environmental challenges, including overuse of fertilisers and pesticides, soil erosion, soil pollution, water scarcity and the loss of agricultural biodiversity. Food safety is also a source of great public anxiety – driven by a series of incidents such as the 2008 milk-melamine scandal. However, there is a growing interest in sustainable food production in China.

[Full article](#)

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**AGRI-BUSINESS AND TRADE**

## **China's farmland remains above "red line"**

[Xinhuanet, 10.08.2016] – The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) said that China's total area of arable land stood at 135 million hectares at the end of 2015. This is well above the official lower limit or “red line” set by the government [120 million hectares]. According to the MLR, China must retain at least 124 million hectares of farmland by 2020, in order to safeguard food security.

[Full article](#)

## **Drop in corn prices hurts profitability of agriculture**

[Global Times, 02.06.2016] – Following 12 consecutive years of extraordinary growth of China's annual grain production, the country's grain stocks have reached the highest level on record. Ren Zhengxiao, head of the State Administration of Grain, told a press conference on 31 May 2016 in Beijing, that efforts were being made to introduce a market-oriented mechanism of grain procurement. This beginning price reform has been contributing to drops in domestic grain prices.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 42, June 2016)

## **Consumers still unsure of Chinese dairy quality**

[China Daily, 11.07.2016] – Despite a reassuring report from the Dairy Association of China stating that the quality of domestic milk products has improved substantially, many Chinese consumers remain skeptical about domestic dairy products. According to the Association's report published on 16 August 2016, 99.5 percent of dairy products checked last year were up to standard, and no illegal additives, such as melamine, had been detected in fresh milk for the past seven years.

[Full article](#)

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## **Merger to create grain trading force**

[China Daily, 16.07.2016] – The two State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corp and Chinatex Corp are to be merged with the aim of creating a bigger rival to compete with the so-called ABCD companies (a term referring to the companies that dominate global grain trading). According to the website of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), 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.

[Full article](#)

## **US nod for ChemChina's deal for Syngenta**

[Shanghai Daily, 23.08.2016] – The planned US\$43-billion takeover of Swiss pesticide and seed giant Syngenta by China's state-owned China National Chemical Corporation CHEMCHINA has received clearance on their proposed transaction from the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, according to a joint statement by the two companies on 22 August 2016. The statement also said the transaction was expected to close by the end of 2016.

[Full article](#)

## **Report: Rural incomes rising, but country may miss some key targets**

[China Daily, 04.08.2016] – According to the China Rural Development Report, released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on 03 August 2016, local governments will have to make a more serious effort to bring down discharges of chemical fertilizers to meet its goal of raising all people to moderate prosperity by 2020. Based on an evaluation system that includes economic and social development, living standards, ecology and urban-rural integration, the report said that rural development progressed steadily from 2011 to 2014. However, environmental and social development problems and the development of political democracy in rural China still hinders efforts to build a well-off society, the head of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Development (IAED) at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) said.

[Full article](#)

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**AGRICULTURAL POLICIES**

## **Global Agriculture Strategy: China's grain security framework with an eye on world market performance**

[China Daily, 25.07.2016] – A new book titled, “Global Agricultural Strategies, China's Food Security framework from a Global Perspective” has been published by Mr. Cheng, Guoqiang, of the Development Research Center of the State Council (DRC). The 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.

[Full article](#)

## **Focusing on Agricultural Innovation and Sustainable Development - Successful G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting in Xi'an**

[www.g20.org/English, 08.06.2016] -- The G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting was successfully convened in Xi'an of Shaanxi Province on 03 June 2016. The meeting, the third Agriculture Ministers Meeting since the G20 was established, was held against the backdrop of the still challenging situation in global food security, the commitment of all countries to the eradication of hunger and poverty, and the newly-started implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. G20 members spoke highly of the significance that China, as the G20 presidency, attached to agriculture, and have made positive responses to the Meeting, which was attended by more than 260 participants in 32 delegations from 20 members, 6 guest countries, and 6 international organizations.

[Full article](#)

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### **Call to assess effect of South-South cooperation**

[China Daily, 22.07.2016] – The chairman of the China International Development Research Network, Prof. Li Xiaoyun, said that a customized mechanism is needed to measure the benefits of South-South cooperation, a term used to describe the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. According to Li, China has yet to have its own mechanism (of measuring such cooperation) and instead uses the old one developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which does not conform to China's prevailing situation.

[Full article](#)

### **Strengthening regulation of farming crucial to food safety: lawmakers**

[Xinhuanet, 01.07.2016] – An inspection report on the implementation of the Food Safety Law was submitted on 30 June 2016 to an ongoing bi-monthly session of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee. The report said China's food safety situation remains "severe," and that risks exist in the initial link of farming. Several lawmakers called for better regulation of cultivation and breeding to ensure that food safety begins at the source.

[Full article](#) (From China Agri-food News Digest No 43, July 2016)

### **Strukturdaten zum ökologischen Landbau in Deutschland 2015 veröffentlicht**

[BMEL Pressemitteilung Nr. 85, 11.07.2016] -- Der ökologische Landbau in Deutschland ist 2015 weiter stabil gewachsen. Das geht aus den Jahresmeldungen der Länder hervor. Die Zahl der ökologisch wirtschaftenden landwirtschaftlichen Betriebe betrug 24.736, das waren 5,7% mehr als im Vorjahr (2014: 23.398). Die ökologisch bewirtschaftete Fläche von 1.088.838 Hektar wuchs im Vergleich zum Vorjahr um 3,9% (2014: 1.047.633 ha).

<http://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/2016/085-Oekolandbau.html>

(Press release of German Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL): Structural data on organic farming in Germany 2015 published. All non-German speakers, please excuse!)

## **National Experience Exchanging Meeting on Cultivating New-type Professional Farmers and the Work Meeting of the Agricultural Broadcasting and Television Schools Held in Suzhou**

[Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, 28.06.2016, Translation by DCZ]

From the News Office of Ministry of Agriculture, June, 28, 2016:

From 27 to 28 June 2016, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) held the national experience exchanging meeting on cultivating new-type professional farmers and the work meeting of the agricultural broadcasting and television schools in Suzhou. The Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu made an instruction to stress that the new type of professional farmers is the major force of the construction of modern agriculture and underlies the new rural construction. The agriculture departments of different levels should strengthen the policy support, improve the cultivation and training systems and spare no efforts to organize and carry out the cultivation projects of this new type of professional farmers so that a group of high-quality agricultural producers and operators can be formed as soon as possible.

Vice Minister of Agriculture Zhang Taolin pointed out at the meeting that since the work of establishing cultivation pilot and demonstration of the new-type farmers was launched, the agriculture departments of various levels have been sticking to the principle of fostering industry-oriented teams, managing outcomes through innovating mechanisms, overseeing management through regulating the process and enhancing their ability through laying a solid foundation. The layout of this new-type farmers cultivation work has been basically formulated. The institutional framework has been built on the whole. The training system is being more quickly constructed. Besides, the input of expenditure reaches a new high. A group of new-type professional farmers is cropping up throughout China and they will play a leading role in modern agricultural construction.

Zhang stressed that the cultivation of this new-type farmers is essential for the development of “agriculture, farmer and rural area”. It is also closely related to the direction of agricultural modernization and the overall situation of building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way. During the 13th Five-year Plan, we should give more priority to the cultivation of this new-type farmers by focusing on the main line of developing modern agriculture and accelerating the pace of constructing professional farmers teams, by actively implementing the rotation training plan of the leaders of the new-type management body and the training program

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of modern young farmers and by improving the cultivation system which combines educational training, standardized management and the policy support. Therefore, the quality of those professional farmers, the development capability of the new-type agriculture management body and the security of the new-type farmers' education and training system will be improved, and so does the management and service ability of those farmers.

It is reported that in 2016 China is giving more support to the cultivation work of the new-type professional farmers. The central finance invested 1.39 billion CNY into it. Zhang emphasized that the agriculture departments of various levels should put more efforts on innovation, carry out the cultivation process, and strengthen the supervision of funds to achieve the goal of cultivate 1 million new-type professional farmers this year. The local governments should take the initiative to strengthen organization and leadership to get collaborating work, do well in creating demonstration cultivation to enhance quality and productivity, implement the supporting policies to promote the development of start-ups and other enterprises, and strengthen the standardized management to improve the supervision and assessment. The construction of institutions, teams and conditions of the agricultural broadcasting and television schools should be strengthened in real terms so that the leading role these schools play in fostering professional farmers can be given full play. And these schools will become the specific institutions for cultivating new-type professional farmers. Thereupon, these schools of various levels should develop a kind of educational training with various forms and rich content through working out teaching plans, selecting teaching staff, and exploring teaching resources.

After the meeting, a training class of the project management for the new-type professional farmers cultivation program was organized.

**Disclaimer:** This translation by the DCZ is provided as a working tool, and is provided "as is." No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, correctness, or reliability of any translations. Only the original official version should prevail as a source of reference.

[Full text \(in Chinese\)](#)



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**News about DCZ**

For news on activities carried out and forthcoming events at the German-Chinese Agricultural Center (DCZ), please directly consult our website, which is updated frequently:

[www.dcz-china.org](http://www.dcz-china.org)

**Vacancies for internships at DCZ**

- For Chinese native speakers, with very good knowledge of English. Tasks include working on documents, translations, as well as support in office management.
- Für internationale Studierende der Agrarwissenschaften, mit sehr guten Englischkenntnissen, und bevorzugt mit chinesischen Sprachkenntnissen. Die Aufgabenfelder orientieren sich an den Schwerpunktthemen des DCZ und werden von Fall zu Fall vereinbart.

Interested candidates please contact the DCZ under [yingjuan.li@giz.de](mailto:yingjuan.li@giz.de)

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