

China's No.1 Central Document Focuses on Agriculture for 12th Consecutive Year

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Agriculture, rural community and farmer related issues are once again the topic of China's "No. 1 Central Document" this year, the first policy document jointly released by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Feb. 1, 2015.

The Document calls for reforms and innovation in agriculture to speed up the modernization drive in this sector. It marks the 12th consecutive year that the "No. 1 Central Document" has focused on agricultural issues.

Highlighting the vital role of agriculture in national socioeconomic development, the Document notes that a strong agricultural sector is the prerequisite of a strong China. Likewise, a better-off rural residents is the prerequisite of a prosperous China and a beautiful countryside is the prerequisite of a beautiful China.

This year's document lists 32 tasks in 5 areas. These highlighted five areas are listed below:

- 1) accelerating shift of agricultural development pattern with focus on agricultural modernization;
- 2) intensifying pro-farming and pro-farmer policies with focus on increasing farmer's income;
- 3) pushing forward the development of a new countryside through an integrated urban-rural development,
- 4) deepening rural reforms in an all-round manner to inject new vitality into rural development; and
- 5) strengthening rule of law in dealing with rural issues.

Food security was listed as the top priority. To increase grain productivity, the Document highlights the designation of permanent basic farmland, high-quality farmland development, soil fertility conservation and improvement of farmland, innovation in agricultural investment and financing mechanisms, follow-up or supporting projects for medium-large-scale irrigation facilities, water-efficient technology and breakthrough in environmentally-friendly production system.

To increase farmers' income, the Document rolls out specific measures, including ensuring investment in agriculture, improving efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural subsidy policies and improving pricing mechanism of agricultural products.

To promote the development of new socialist countryside, the Document emphasizes rural infrastructure, rural public services, rural environment improvement, channeling investment of social capital into rural development and others.

To comprehensively deepen rural reforms, the Document calls for fostering new-type of agricultural management systems, pushing forward the reform of land tenure system, rural

financial system and water resources management system, and innovating rural governance. It is expected that rural reforms will reinvigorate the rural community by liquidizing the "sleeping" assets including farmland.

Strengthening the rule of law in rural community is another highlight of this year's Document, which emphasizes the importance of rule of law in dealing with issues such as protection of rural property rights, regulation of rural market, implementation of pro-farming policies and the rural reform at large.

Source: MOA, 2015-02-05

Date submitted: March 27, 2015

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: March 27, 2015