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Foreword

2000 is the last year of the Ninth Five-year Plan for National Economic and Social Development. Over the past five years, the people of all ethnic groups worked hard together, blazed new trails with a pioneering spirit, and obtained great achievements in economic and social development under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and government. The national economy experienced sustained, rapid and sound development and overall national strength continued to grow. Economic restructuring was extensively carried forward, and a socialist market economy was preliminarily established. We opened wider to the outside world, and the pattern of all-round opening took basic shape. People's living standards continued to improve, and generally people began to lead a relatively comfortable life. The development of science, technology and education was accelerated, and other social undertakings progressed in a comprehensive way. During the implementation of the Ninth Five-year Plan, we have accumulated a wealth of experience in improving macro-economic management and regulation to meet the requirements for developing a socialist market economy. All this has laid a solid foundation for the implementation of the Tenth Five-year Plan and the strategic objectives of the third stage in the modernization drive.

To meet the requirements of the new stage, various localities and departments conscientiously carried out the party's agricultural policies last year according to the plan of the Party Central Committee and the State Council. They worked to strengthen the foundation of agriculture

and vigorously push ahead the restructuring of agriculture and rural economy. The agricultural sector and rural economy developed steadily and positive changes resulted. New progress was also made in agricultural infrastructure construction, ecological conservation and the work for rural social development and stability. The situation in the countryside was good on the whole. The development of agriculture and rural economy and social stability in rural areas contributed tremendously to the sustained growth of the national economy and social stability. The achievements did not come about easily especially when most provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government) suffered severe droughts. They were made possible because the whole party paid attention to agriculture and agricultural development; they were made possible because of the concerted efforts of the cadres and masses of people in rural areas.

2001, the first year of the new century, is the first year of the Tenth Five-year Plan for the implementation of the third stage strategic objectives. It is also a crucial year for keeping the momentum of economic growth. Therefore, doing a good job in agriculture and rural economic work in the year is of tremendous importance in retaining sustained, rapid and sound development of the national economy and in making a good start of implementing the new five-year plan. We must seize the historical opportunities, have a clear idea of our objectives and tasks and work diligently to keep the dynamic momentum of agricultural and rural economic development at a new level.

Chen Yaobang
Minister of Agriculture
July 2001

Abstract

Agricultural Development in 2000

1. The Central Conference on Rural Work held in January 2000 pointed out explicitly that strategic restructuring of agriculture and rural economy is the central task in rural work after agriculture entered a new stage of development. To implement a series of related policies set by the central authorities, local governments made redoubled efforts to restructure agricultural production and develop rural economy despite severe droughts and other natural disasters, resulting in a smooth development of the rural economy and achieving the desired results.

2. Agricultural production. In 2000, agriculture brought about an added value of 1,421.2 billion RMB yuan, up 2.4% in real terms over 1999. Crop farming developed steadily and the output of major crops increased with the exception of grain and sugar. Marked progress was made in the restructuring of farming patterns. Crop strains were improved and the patterns of agricultural production were adjusted in different regions. Grain output that had increased for five years in a row dropped by 46 million tons, or 9% compared with the previous year, to 462 million tons, the biggest drop since 1985. Still, its supply exceeded demand due to a large stock. Cotton output rose by 15.4% to 4.42 million tons and oil-bearing crops by 13.6 % to 29.55 million tons, while the production of sugar-bearing crops was down by 8.4% to a little over 76.30 million tons. The drop in grain and sugar crop output was the result of reduction in growing acreage arranged in light of successive years of harvests and

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plentiful stock. The acreage sown to grain crops nationwide in 2000 was 108.46 million hectares, which was 4.7 million hectares less than the preceding year, the least grain crop growing area since the founding of the People's Republic of China. The acreage sown to cotton was 4.04 million hectares, which was 316,000 hectares more than the preceding year. The area sown to oil crops was 15.4 million hectares, up 10%, that to vegetables 17.28 million hectares, up 12.6% and the area planted to sugar crops was reduced by 130, 000 hectares to 1.51 million hectares. The quality of farm produce improved remarkably. The quality paddy field in 2000 was 13.33 million hectares, of which 3.47 million hectares were sown to quality early rice, accounting for 51% of the total acreage sown to early rice, or 14 percentage points higher than the previous year. The area sown to special wheat rose sharply to 4.7 million hectares, an increase of 1.9 million hectares. The area sown to special quality corn was 4.0 million hectares, an increase of 1.2 million hectares, that to quality soybean 4.1 million hectares, an increase of 1.3 million hectares, and that to quality rapeseeds rose by 993,000 hectares to 3.7 million hectares.

Animal husbandry and fishery maintained a momentum of steady development. Meat output totaled 61.25 million tons, up 5.2% over 1999; poultry eggs 22.43 million tons, up 5.1%, and dairy products 9.19 million tons, up 13.9%. The total output of aquatic products went up by 3.8% to a record 42.79 million tons, attributable to new progress in the restructuring of the fishing industry and vigorous development of aquaculture. Inland and sea fishery registered "zero growth".

3. Township enterprises. In 2000, township enterprises maintained a momentum of robust development, with their aggregate economic value constantly on the rise and their quality and economic performance steadily improved. An added value of 2,715.6 billion yuan was realized, up 9.1% over 1999 and their business income reached 10, 783.4 billion yuan, up 6.8%. Their profit tax totaled 927.9 billion yuan, up 13%, and the taxes paid to the state amounted to 199.6 billion yuan, up 11.6%. The number of workers employed by township enterprises was 128.2 million, which was 1.16 million more than the previous year. The rate of capital gains was

34.2%, up 0.3 percentage point. Loss-incurring enterprises numbered 720, 000, down 65.7% from the preceding year, with their net amount of loss down 26% to 84.1 billion yuan and these enterprises accounted for 3.5% of the total, compared with 10.2% of the preceding year.

Individual and private-owned enterprises registered a strong momentum of development, with their production index and performance indicator growing faster than the average of township enterprises. Individual and private-owned enterprises brought about an added value of 1,773.1 billion yuan in 2000, up 20.7% over 1999. Their business income amounted to 7,095.1 billion yuan, an increase of 13.6% and the taxes they paid to the state totaled 106.5 billion yuan, an increase of 22.1%. The added value they realized accounted for 65.3% of the national total of township enterprises, compared with 60.2% in 1999; their business revenue accounted for 65.8% and their tax payment 53.4%, compared with 61.9% and 48.7% respectively.

Export by township enterprises continued to grow towards recovery. In 2000, 866.9 billion yuan worth of products they turned out for export were delivered, representing a 12% increase over the preceding year.

Township enterprises have several problems in their economic performance. First, the foundation for stable and sound development is not yet solid. Second, their export situation has not turned fundamentally for the better, as their export growth rate is 14.3 percentage points less than the national total. Other problems included insufficient credit capital, sharp structural disequilibrium with products having low added value and inferior scientific contents, and expanded disparity in development between the eastern region on the one hand and the central and western areas on the other.

4. Price and market. In 2000, the prices of major farm produce continued to fall, with purchase prices dropping by an average of 3.6%. Grain prices fell by 9.8%, of which wheat prices dropped by 19.2%, long-grained non-glutinous rice by 12.7%, non-glutinous rice by 5.6% and corn by 10.1%. The purchase prices of cash crops rose by 1.8%.

Cotton price shot up by 21.2%, peanut price rose by 4.8%, but rapeseeds price dropped by 14.5%. Tobacco leaf price rose by 3.4% but sugar crops price fell by 11.2%. The prices of vegetables retained the same level as the previous year while those of meat and poultry and their products went down by 1%. Although meat and poultry products rose slightly, fresh egg prices dropped by 9.4%. Aquatic products prices rose slightly by 0.5%. Rural food consumer prices dropped by an annual average of 2.5%, of which grain prices dropped by 11.6%, meat and poultry and their products by 0.6% and fresh eggs 15.7%. The prices of aquatic products rose by 0.8% and vegetables 5.3%.

The agricultural means of production market was prosperous. China's chemical fertilizer industry turned out 31.86 million tons of fertilizer in 2000, of which 31.41 million tons were sold. Some 648,000 tons of farm chemicals were produced, of which 624,000 tons were sold. Some 813,000 tons of plastic film for use in agricultural production were turned out, but 824,000 tons were sold out. The general prices of agricultural means of production dropped by 0.9%, or 3.3 percentage points less than a year earlier. Each farmer household bought 546 kilograms of chemical fertilizer on average, almost the same level as the preceding year and there was a marked increase in their purchase of farm pesticides, plastic film and fuel for agricultural use.

Rural consumer goods market developed steadily. The retail volume of consumer goods amounted to 1,304.23 billion yuan in counties across the country and areas under them, representing an increase of 8.3%, or 2 percentage points, over a year earlier.

5. Import and export of farm produce. China's import and export of farm produce increased remarkably in 2000. Total trade value amounted to US$26.82 billion, up 23% over the year earlier. Exports stood at US$15.62 billion, up 15.4% and import at US$11.2 billion, up 36.5%, with a favorable trade balance of US$4.41 billion, a drop of 17.2% from 1999. The import and export value of farm produce made up 5.7% of the national total, or 0.4 percentage point less than the preceding year.

Great changes took place in the import and export pattern of China's

major farm produce in the year. Grain was again turned into a net export item while an increase was registered in the export of cotton, sugar, vegetables, fruits, livestock and aquatic products. Edible plant oil export increased while its import reduced. Grain export in the year totaled 14 million tons, up 85% over the preceding year while its import totaled 13.57 million tons, up 76%, with a net export 430, 000 tons. In value terms, grain exports amounted to US$1.76 billion, up 41%, while grain imports were valued at US$2.86 billion, up 102%. The deficit expanded from US$160 million in 1999 to US$1.1 billion in 2000. Raw cotton export totaled 292,000 tons, 56,000 tons more than a year earlier, with the export value increasing by 7.8% to US$300 million, while its import totaled 47,000 tons to the tune of US$70 million, an increase of 10.7%. The net export rose from 190, 000 tons in 1999 to 245,000 tons. Edible plant oil export increased by 15.4% to 112,000 tons but its export value dropped by 11.5%; edible plant oil import was reduced by 17.4% to 1.72 million tons with its value dropping by 44% as a result of the price fall on the international market. Sugar export increased by 12.9% to 415,000 tons with its value increasing by 6.9% to US$80 million, while its import increased by 53.7% to 641,000 tons with its value increasing by 35.4% to US$120 million. A total of 3.15 million tons of vegetables were exported, up 13.4%, while 86,000 tons of vegetables were imported, up 10%. Fruit export was 1.36 million tons, up 14.3% and fruit import 938,000 tons, an increase of 41%. China exported US$3.82 billion worth of livestock products, up 19%, while importing US$5.36 billion worth of livestock products, up 34%. The export value of aquatic products was US$3.83 billion, up 22% and their import value US$1.85 billion, up 42.3%.

China's trade with countries across the world increased in the year, putting an end to the situation in which Chinese farm exports to Asia and Europe fell continuously under the impact of the Asian financial crisis. China's export value to Asia and Europe increased by 16% and 10% respectively over the year earlier level.

6. Distribution of rural income. The gross income of rural economy

in 2000 amounted to 9,972.1 billion yuan, up 5.7% over the preceding year, but the expenditure grew by 7.2% to 7,702.54 billion yuan, higher than the income's growth rate, indicating rural economy's poor efficiency. The total rural net income for distribution in 2000 was 2,537.64 billion yuan, an increase of 3.4%. The farmers' total operation income was 1,954.54 billion yuan, an increase of 2.3%, but the proportion of the operation income to the distributable net income dropped by 0.9% percentage point.

7. Farmers' income and consumption. In 2000, the farmers' income continued to increase slowly but the growth rate fell for the fourth consecutive year. According to a sample survey of 67,000 rural households from 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, the farmers' annual per capita net income was 2,253 yuan, which was 43 yuan more than the preceding year, but the actual growth was 2.1% if the price factor is taken into account. Still, the growth rate was 1.7 percentage points less than 1999. The income growth was chiefly a result of an increase in wage payment, especially cash earnings from non-agricultural labor. Their income from agricultural undertakings, from crop farming in particular, continued to drop in the year. The discrepancy in incomes between farm households and between regions further widened.

Farmers' per capita living expense in 2000 was 1,670 yuan, up 5% over 1999,signaling an end to years of drop in living expenses. Their consumption structure further improved, with spending on food dropping by 2.5 percentage points to 50.1%. Expenses on dress material dropped while those on ready-made clothes continued to grow. Per capita housing space was expanded and residential quality improved remarkably. Expenses on transportation, communications, cultural activities, education, entertainment and health care went up rapidly, claiming a larger share of their living expenses. Per capita expenses on transportation and communications went up by 35.5%, health care 25.1% and entertainment 10.9%.

8. Agricultural investment. In 2000, the state fiscal outlay for agri-

culture was 140 billion yuan, 30 billion yuan more than in fiscal 1999. Of the additional 100 billion yuan state bonds issued by the central government in the year, 38.6 billion was used in agricultural construction, an increase of 2.9% over the preceding year. The actual investment by the state in the fixed assets of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery and water conservancy amounted to 87.41 billion yuan (not including the investment by rural collectives or urban and rural individuals), an increase of 8.6% compared with the level a year earlier. But it was lower than the 9.3% and 9.2% growth rate of fixed asset investment by the whole society, state-owned and other economic enterprises. Agricultural investment in the year accounted for 3.8% of the national total, the same as the preceding year.

The balance of loans for agricultural production provided by state banks and financial institutions reached 488.9 billion yuan, up 2% over 1999,with a growth rate dropping by nearly 6 percentage points. Agricultural loans made up 3.6% of the balance of all loans provided by various banks and financial institutions in China, indicating that credit input in agriculture was seriously inadequate.

In 2000, the operation expenditure of each farmer household was 654.26 yuan, up 9.1% over 1999 when the spending was reduced. Of the total, 63.91 yuan was invested in productive fixed assets, up 10.9%, or 4 percentage points more than the preceding year.

9. Comprehensive agricultural development. The state fiscal outlay for comprehensive agricultural development exceeded 6 billion yuan in 2000. The money was used to transform 2.67 million hectares of land with intermediate and low yields (including the development of water-saving irrigation on 867,000 hectares). The acreage of fine grain strains was expanded by 203,000 ha, quality animal feed crops by 80, 000 ha, water-efficient agriculture demonstration area by 109,000 ha ,ecological farming demonstrtion area by 87,000ha and grassland by 167,000 ha. Priority support was given to some 100 industrialized management projects that play a leading role, and 39 scientific and technological demonstration projects.

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10. Poverty relief and development. The state invested 24.8 billion yuan in the year, 800 million more than the preceding year to help the poor. To make aid-the-poor programs more effective, small amount credit and loans were granted directly to poor households. The annual credit and loans totaled 15 billion yuan, of which 5 billion was allocated for the development of crop farming and fishery breeding and poultry raising to meet the immediate needs of poor households. Efforts continued in the year to strengthen infrastructure construction in impoverished areas, and improve their basic production conditions and ecological environment. Local governments at various levels increased poverty-relief funds and there was a warm social response and participation in relief efforts. Poverty relief between the east and the west of the country was further strengthened. The strategic goals set in the seven-year plan to help 80 million people get out of poverty had been basically implemented by the end of the year.

11. Agricultural mechanization. Continued growth was reported in agricultural machinery and equipment nationwide in 2000. The original value of the fixed assets of farm machinery was 282.8 billion yuan, up 7.1%. The total power capacity of agricultural machinery was 526 million kilowatts, an increase of 7% over 1999. The number of tractors totaled 13.74 million, up 6.2%, combines 265,000, up 16.8%, and transportation vehicles for farm use 7.8 million, up 20%.

Agro-mechanization improved steadily. In 2000, tractor-ploughed acreage was 62.09 million hectares, an increase of 0.3% over 1999,accounting for 47.8% of all cultivated land. The acreage sown by seeders and planters was 39.9 million ha, making up 25.8% of all sown areas, which retained the same level as the preceding year. The machine-harvested acreage was 26.45 million ha, up 4%, accounting for 18.3% of the national harvest area. Agricultural restructuring affected the level of mechanization of wheat, rice and corn production. Mechanization of rice harvest rose by 21.5% and of rice planting by 8.6% while that of wheat and corn production was reduced slightly.

Trans-regional operations and services of agricultural machines con-

tinued to expand in scale. The combines participating in trans-regional wheat harvest rose by 34,000 to 123,000 in 2000, while those for trans-regional rice harvest totaled 20, 000.

Socialized farm machine services developed vigorously. There were more than 27.43 million agricultural mechanized service organizations across the country, up 9.2%. Households that own farm machines amounted to 27.15 million, an increase of 10.5%. There were more than 230, 000 farm machine repair shops and centers, up 15%. Earnings from operations by agricultural machinery nationwide grew by 8% over 1999.

12. Agricultural science and technology, education and technical popularization. Reforms in agricultural science and technology research system started in 2000, resulting in the improvement of research facilities and research work. Twenty agricultural items won the national prize of science and technology advancement in the year and 200 items were awarded national bumper harvest prize for agriculture, husbandry and fishery.

In the field of agricultural education, the "green certificate project" was in full swing. New progress was made in the training of young farmers in science and technology at the turn of the century. A "hundred, thousand and ten thousand project" to integrate agriculture with science and education was carried out smoothly. (The project refers to the selection of 100 counties, 1,000 towns and 10, 000 villages from various regions all over the country to be pilot counties, towns and villages for integration of agriculture with science and education.) The "electromagnetic waves reaching households.project" also developed smoothly.

Vigorous efforts were made to popularize new farming technologies. The "Surmounting Project" for agricultural science and technology produced an initial effect. Industrialization of agricultural science and technology was further developed.

13. Agricultural disasters. China was hit by heavy natural disasters in 2000, affecting a total of 54.69 million ha of farmland, 4.81 million more than in 1999. Among them 34.37 million ha were seriously affected and 10.15 million ha were a complete crop failure, representing

an increase of 7.64 million and 3.35 million ha respectively. The disaster-affected acreage was only smaller than in 1991 and 1993,ranking third since New China was founded, but in terms of seriousness 2000 was the heaviest. Grain loss was 65 million tons, more than double the 30 million of the preceding year. Cotton output decreased by more than 700, 000 tons as a result, or 100, 000 tons more than a year earlier, and oil-bearing crops plunged by 8 million tons, which was 6 million more than the comparable figure of 1999. The total direct economic loss was more than 100 billion yuan.

Droughts caused severe losses. Extremely severe and extensive droughts rarely seen in the history of New China occurred in the spring and summer of 2000 when 40.54 million hectares of farmland were hit. Of the total, 26.78 million ha were severely affected and 8.01 million ha were a complete failure, representing a respective increase of 10.39 million, 10.17 million and 4.09 million ha over a year earlier. The grain loss caused by droughts made up two thirds of the annual grain loss and the droughts also led to the outbreak of severe plant diseases.

While plant diseases and the plague of insect pests were moderate in general nationwide, the plague of rats and insect pests on the grassland was rampant. Floods, low temperature, icy weather, gust winds, hailstorms and fires caused less damage than the preceding year.

14. Sustained agricultural development. Marked progress was made in the development of ecological agriculture in 2000. State-level ecological agriculture demonstration counties extended from 50 to 101,leading to the establishment of more than 200 such counties at provincial level. Green agricultural products developed rapidly. Incomplete statistics show that by the end of 2000, the production bases for agricultural products free of chemicals had grown to 932,000 ha and significant progress had been achieved in the development and comprehensive use of renewable energy resources and the establishment of legal system for environmental protection in agricultural production. To protect agricultural environment, China actively observed international environment conventions and carried out extensive international exchanges and

cooperation.

Agricultural Policies in 2000

15. The Central Conference on Rural Work held at the beginning of 2000 called on various regions and departments to conscientiously carry out the decisions of the third plenary session of the 15th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and implement the party's various rural policies. The decision of the party Central Committee and the State Council on doing a good job in agricultural and rural work in 2000 was discussed and adopted at the meeting. The Decision and a series of related documents published later stressed continuous efforts to implement the land contract system, consolidate administration of collective finance and alleviate the farmers' burden. They also called for new measures involving the reform of rural taxes and fees, industrial management of agricultural production and the development of small towns. In general these policies were well implemented.

16. Rural management. Rural management centered on management of land contract, farmers' burden, and collective assets and finance played an important role in improving rural economic organizations and management system and in adjusting the relations concerning different economic interests in rural areas. By the end of 2000, the work to extend the terms of land contracts for 30 years had been completed in 98% of the villages. A new land contract relationship had thus been established smoothly. Some 80% of the villages across the country had adopted the system of making accounts known to the public and a new financial accounting system of rural cooperative economic organizations had been put into practice. A comprehensive campaign to make an inventory of the collective assets and liabilities and straighten out the debts at the township and village levels was unfolded, resulting in the strengthening of the auditing work at the basic levels of the countryside. The policy of stabilizing the fees for three years at least paid by farmers for public funds was carried out in rural areas along with the three systems – the

budget and final account system, burdens card system and separate item auditing system. Farmers' burdens that had been mounting for years were tentatively alleviated as a result. Priorities were laid on checking up on charges by primary and middle schools, rural electricity charges and apportionment of money for newspaper subscription and removing irrational charges. Serious cases involving farmers' burdens were investigated and dealt with. A tax-for-fee reform was carried out on a trial basis in Anhui Province and in some areas of other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. The reform held in check the tendency to increase the burden of farmers. It was carried out smoothly, experience was accumulated and initial achievements were made.

17. Lightening farmers' burdens. In 2000, the Chinese government put the alleviation of farmers' burdens and increase of their incomes on top agenda. Local governments were requested to carry out the party's rural policies in real earnest, and persist in "one system" and "eight bans". The "one system" refers to the policy of stabilizing the rational charges from farmers for at least three years. The bans mean to reduce excessive and high fees imposed on farmers include sharing out special agricultural product tax and animal slaughtering tax. All activities asking farmers to contribute more money, goods and labor, and administrative fees imposed without legal basis are banned. Also banned are fund collection, acts of allotment, forced labor substitution, entertainment for cadres going to villages (Entertainment allowance for supervision teams are canceled), and fines by illegal means.

Various departments concerned made great efforts to implement the policies according to what is requested by the central government and formed groups to examine the work. Local governments also made redoubled efforts to accelerate institutionalization, explore ways to tackle problems at their roots and enhance supervision and examination, thus pushing ahead the work to lighten the farmers' burdens and maintaining social stability in rural areas. The examination results showed, however, the issue of burden alleviation had not been completely resolved and many problems still remained. The three-year-no-change policy was not

properly implemented in some places, the eight-ban policy was not well enforced in some other places and severe cases involving farmers' burdens occurred time and again in different areas.

18. Tax-for-fee reform on a trial basis. To settle the problem of farmers' burden once and for all, the central government decided to conduct, starting 2000, a reform to turn fee payment to tax in the rural areas in east China's Anhui Province. It was also decided that other provinces, autonomous regions and centrally governed municipalities could also experiment with the reform in a few selected counties and cities.

The main contents of the reform included abolishing all administrative fees imposed exclusively on farmers, such as contributions to township and village public accumulation funds, fees for education and animal slaughtering. Also abolished were accumulated labor and voluntary labor. Policies for agricultural tax and special agricultural product tax were adjusted and the methods on the use of the public accumulation funds were reformed.

A series of subsidiary policy measures were adopted to ensure a smooth implementation of the reform. Local governments conducted the trial experiment step by step in a planned way in accordance with the spirit of the policy of the central government and in light of their actual local conditions. In addition to Anhui Province, some parts of other 9 autonomous regions and provinces including Gansu had also been selected for the experiment.

The tax-for-fee reform was carried out smoothly over the past year. Experience was accumulated and positive results were achieved. In the reform areas, farmers' burdens were eased noticeably and distribution between farmers, state and collectives was preliminarily standardized. The reform helped transfer the grass-roots administrative functions, streamlined the administrative structure and brought relations between cadres and farmers closer. However, difficulties and problems cropped up because the reform involved a wide range of fields and parties at interest, and conditions varied at different locations. They included re-

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