

## CHINA

# Pork prices expected to rise sharply

Swine fever hurt supply, but govt says farmers can now increase their profits

By WANG XIAODONG  
wangxiaodong@chinadaily.com.cn

The price of pork, a staple in China, may jump significantly in the latter half of this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Wednesday, urging pig farmers to increase their stock. Pork prices have been declining since the first African swine fever outbreak in August, but have started to rebound since February, Tang Ke, chief of markets and information at the ministry, said at a news conference.

In March, the average wholesale pork price in China was about 19 yuan (\$2.80) per kilogram, a rise of 6.3 percent from the previous month, and a rise of 7.6 percent from March last year, he said.

In the latter half of the year, Tang said, prices could be more than 70 percent higher than in the previous year.

Because of African swine fever outbreaks in recent months that have hit almost all regions in China, the number of pigs declined by more than 18 percent in March, year-on-year, while the number of female pigs for reproductive use declined by 21 percent, the biggest decline of the past decade, Tang said.

The reduced production capacity means prices can be expected to continue rising in the second quarter, he said.

"A further decline in pig stocks in the latter half of the year, coupled with the arrival of peak season for pork consumption, the price of pork is likely to see a rapid rise," Tang said. "We suggest pig farmers increase production and pay attention to disease control and prevention to earn higher profits. The measures will also help stabilize pork prices and meet market demand."

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Tang Ke, chief of markets and information at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

China reported 122 African swine fever outbreaks in 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities as of April 8. Since the country's first outbreak of the disease in Shenyang, Liaoning province, in August, more than 1 million pigs have been slaughtered to control its spread, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Quarantine measures have been lifted in areas involved in 108 of the outbreaks, and the production and supply of pork remain stable in general, Han Changfu, minister of agriculture and rural affairs, said last week.

African swine fever is fatal to pigs but does not harm humans. China is the world's largest producer and consumer of pork, producing about half of the world's total.

Zhu Zengyong, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said that because fewer pigs are being raised the production of pork this year may drop by as much as 10 percent.

## Yi ethnic tradition



Dancers perform at a ceremony on Wednesday in Dafang county of Bijie, Guizhou province, as part of the Chinese Yi ethnic tradition of offering sacrifice to the gods of water. The activity is designed to educate and guide the next generation to protect and revere the environment. LUO DAFU / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Travel agencies adjust itineraries in aftermath of Notre Dame fire

By CHENG SI  
chengsi@chinadaily.com.cn

While the world watches the aftermath of the fire in Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, travel agencies moved quickly to alter the itineraries for tourists who had planned to visit the iconic building.

According to Ctrip, an online travel agency based in Shanghai, tourists who booked a Notre Dame visit were informed of the blaze and offered free cancellations.

Zou Yu, director of Ctrip's European market, said the previously set schedule for group and self-guided travelers to visit Notre Dame changed to Sacre-Coeur Basilica, another heavily visited structure in Paris.

She said the agency will also offer cruises on the Seine River to compensate travelers who were unable to see Notre Dame.

Also, a message notifying travelers of the fire is shown on the agency's website to persuade them to stay away for safety reasons.

Liu Yang, a 28-year-old from Beijing, was astonished when she heard

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Wang Jing, 29, from Beijing

the Gothic church had burned.

"I visited the cathedral just last month," she said. "I can't believe the tragedy happened to this gorgeous landmark. If I had another chance, I would cherish every moment staying with the beautiful lady."

Xu Xiaolei, chief branding officer at Aoyou, an online travel agency under China CYTS Tour in Beijing, said the blaze brought great loss to the world. He said Notre Dame is a must-see attraction for most travel-

ers going to France.

Wang Jing, a 29-year-old from Beijing, was distressed over the news, as she and her husband had planned to spend their honeymoon in Paris in June.

"It was like a bolt out of the blue. I am a fan of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and dreamed of visiting the cathedral with my husband. Now, it's ruined," she said.

According to a report by the China Tourism Academy focusing on outbound tourism to Europe in February, France was among the 10 hottest destinations in Europe for Chinese travelers last year.

Data from Ctrip indicate that, so far in April, the number of travelers who reserved trips to France rose 50 percent from the same period last month, and that Notre Dame is among the three most-visited attractions for Chinese visitors.

Built in the 12th and 13th centuries, Notre Dame sits on a small island in the Seine named Ile de la Cite in Paris, and is seen as one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture and the landmark of Paris.

## Vision check



Ye Yingqing, a doctor from Aier Eye Hospital in Hefei, Anhui province, provides free eye health examinations for residents of a community on Tuesday. GE YINIAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Couple who poisoned birds to be schooled in ecological protection

By CAO CHEN in Shanghai  
caochen@chinadaily.com.cn

A couple who poisoned wild birds on Shanghai's Chongming Island will perform two years of ecological service work in the area, according to the Shanghai Railway Transport Procuratorate.

The couple — a man surnamed Shen and his wife, surnamed Chen — must also pay 30,000 yuan (\$4,400) for environmental conservation. The husband was sentenced to seven months in prison.

The pair, who were detained in August on suspicion of illegal hunting, laid poisoned wheat seeds in open farmland on Chongming Island in July and August, killing 1,763 wild birds, including a Chinese spotted neck dove, oriental

turtle dove and red turtle dove, which are of high research and economic value.

According to the investigation, the dead birds were worth more than 500,000 yuan.

The procuratorate said the couple's behavior harmed the environment of Chongming Island.

Both of them must participate in daily maintenance, patrols and other ecological conservation work three times per week until they serve 1,800 hours.

They will also be responsible for promoting environmental awareness to the public, such as by distributing brochures and posting environmental protection slogans.

It was the first time that the authority had allowed people to pay for losses ecological resources

through public service work, rather than only paying in money.

"The convicted couple will understand ecological conservation and why wild birds need protection through service, which is an efficient way to promote awareness of ecological protection," said Zhang Dongsheng, associate professor in the College of Fisheries and Life Science at Shanghai Ocean University.

Shanghai is one of the stops in the migratory path of birds from Siberia to Australia. Chongming Island is home to an assortment of natural parks, wetlands and ecological villages.

Chongming Dongtan National Nature Reserve, the largest wintering site in China, plays host to about 1 million migratory birds

every year. No bird-watchers or photographers are allowed in the area.

Hunting has been prohibited on the island since 2016, and the local government has formed a 16-member patrol team.

"We frequently receive reports from our volunteers that many cases of poisoning are found during their patrols all year, especially during spring migration seasons," said Wang Huo, deputy secretary-general of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation.

To tackle the issue, Wang encouraged public participation in combating bird poisoning. For example, the foundation has developed a free app called RiverEye, which

allows people to report poaching.

"It enables enforcement authorities to quickly respond based on the public's real-time sightings. In addition, the technology further protects biodiversity through big data analysis and AI species identification," she said, adding that public awareness of the importance of a healthy ecosystem and not eating wildlife should also be promoted.

"Market demand drives wildlife crimes. But many migratory birds migrate due to food shortages in the northern Siberian region. They may be carrying viruses and various diseases," she said. "To mainstream biodiversity, the concept of ecosystem services should also be further reinforced in policies and laws."

## Mercedes dealer settles dispute with woman over defective car

By ZHANG YANGFEI  
zhangyangfei@chinadaily.com.cn

A woman involved in a dispute with a Mercedes-Benz dealer in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, got some satisfaction on Tuesday night when the dealer agreed to give her a replacement car and a full refund of a so-called financial service fee she had been required to pay.

The dealer also invited the woman to visit the Mercedes-Benz factory and assembly line in Germany, offered to give her 10 years of VIP service and threw a belated birthday party for her.

An image of the written agreement was posted online.

The woman had complained that she had been sold a defective car by the dealer on March 27. She said the engine of the Mercedes-Benz CLS300 developed problems soon after she drove it off the lot, but she was unable to get a refund or exchange.

She also said she was asked to pay a financial service fee of 15,000 yuan (\$2,240) to an employee without knowing what the money was for.

The incident caused an uproar online and culminated in a video showing her complaining while sitting on the hood of another car at the dealership.

The China Consumers Association said on Wednesday that financial services in the automobile industry should be clear and that forced transactions, such as the financial service fee, should be eliminated.

In a discussion on Wednesday morning, the association concluded that car dealers fabricate required items to get more money out of customers and fail to provide invoices or other certificates.

When disputes about quality arise, consumers often experience difficulties negotiating with dealers or lodging complaints.

Participants in the discussion were told that some dealers force consumers to purchase insurance or demand financial service fees without issuing invoices, both of which are illegal and should be severely punished, the association said.

## Briefly

### BEIJING IM tools shut down for porn content

China's internet regulators have launched a campaign to clean up instant messaging tools that are involved in fraud or spreading illegal information. Authorities have shut down nine instant messaging tools they say were used to spread pornographic content, offer prostitution or sell pornographic audio and video products, according to the Cyber-space Administration of China. An official with the administration said that because instant messaging tools have a low entry level and a large number of users, they present a challenge.

### YUNNAN Money may have been fed to giraffes

A safari park is searching for a mysterious visitor on Wednesday who was suspected of attempting to feed real paper currency to giraffes in the park. It urged visitors not to feed "strange things" to the animals. Staff members at Yunnan Safari Park in Kunming found about 10,000 (\$1,495) in Chinese yuan notes scattered on the ground of the enclosure where giraffes were on display at around noon on Tuesday, and immediately gathered it up, according to the park. The park has been searching for the owner of the money through various means over the past day but did not find the owner.