



Press Release

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Can China's new agricultural strategies boost food and nutrition security? Focus is now on international trade, food safety, and farmers' rights

May 13, 2015, Beijing—China is a rising economic powerhouse that is simultaneously home to roughly 82.5 million impoverished people, many of whom are undernourished. New agricultural strategies that seek to shift away from food self-sufficiency and toward heavier reliance on international trade and stronger farmers' property rights, could have a positive impact on the country's ability to feed itself.

This promising shift in focus is one of many China-related topics discussed in the 2014-2015 [Global Food Policy Report](#), an annual publication by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) that examines major food, agriculture, and nutrition developments and trends with a view toward reducing poverty around the globe. The report is being unveiled in Beijing on May 13.

“Rapid changes are taking place in China that increase the need for policies that will safeguard the most vulnerable and ensure food security for all,” said Shenggen Fan, Director General of IFPRI. “China has an opportunity to focus its attention on international trade and to emulate the smallholder agriculture-led strategies for reducing hunger that have been successful elsewhere.”

For instance, a recent “Beijing Declaration” promises greater food security and safety in the wake of several tainted food scandals. The government has begun to implement reforms of agriculture and social protection policies aimed at providing safety nets for the most vulnerable. And it has pledged to reduce the prevalence of child stunting—a result of malnutrition—by more than two-thirds in two to three decades.

There are avenues for greater food production: according to the report, about half of the projected increase in world aquaculture production, and thereby total fish production, is projected to occur in China.

However, China also is increasingly suffering from a “triple burden of malnutrition”—it is home to the second-largest population of hungry people in the world, yet hidden hunger, overweight, and obesity are on the rise—1.5 to 2 times higher than 1991 levels—as the country’s middle class grows and consumer preferences change.

In addition, manufacturing and services are beginning to replace agriculture as economic drivers, which may impact food security. China must create agriculture and nutrition policies that account for this economic shift.

“As a middle income country with great potential, China’s role in reducing global hunger and undernutrition is critical,” Fan said. “This will require greater cooperation with Africa, continued agricultural technology transfer, and an increase in participation in global institution.”

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The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. www.ifpri.org.

