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Report Highlights:

The 2023 Central Rural Work Conference (CRWC) placed high importance on preservation and construction of farmland and the facilitation of grain yield increases in larger areas. The RCWC, which was held on December 19-20, also called for prioritized efforts to improve the development of rural industries and explored ways to build a more beautiful countryside.

Ensuring Food Security by Increasing Grain Yields and Improving Farmland Quality

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Attended by senior leaders of CPC Central Committee and the State Council, the annual Central Rural Work Conference (CRWC) reviews the agricultural and rural work of the year and formulates overarching guidelines related to agriculture and rural development for the coming year.

The 2023 CRWC reiterated that ensuring food security remains the top priority of China's agricultural and rural development policies. The conference set the goal of achieving grain production of more than 650 million metric tons (MMT) in 2024 (Note: The National Bureau of Statistics data indicates that China's grain production has remained at above 650 MMT for 9 consecutive years). To ensure that the goal can be achieved, the CRWC proposes to facilitate grain yield increases in larger areas. There is little room for China to increase its arable land area. But the potential to improve grain yields is much greater, especially for corns and soybeans, according to a senior official at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) - which activated an action plan to increase yields of major grain and oilseeds crops at the beginning of 2023.

Improving farmland quality is another way to ensure food security. This year's conference says that the government focus in 2024 will be upgrading the quality of farmland by increasing subsidies on high-standard farmland, with the priority of turning the regular farmland in northeastern black soil areas, plain areas, and areas with irrigation into high-standard farmland (Note: high-standard farmland refers to farmland with contiguous area, supporting facilities, high and stable yield, strong disaster resistance, and modern agricultural production methods. China has 66.7 million hectares of high-standard farmland and aims to turn all 120 million hectares of its farmland into high-standard farmland).

The conference also proposes to explore the establishment of an inter-provincial interest compensation mechanism between grain producing and consuming provinces. Despite such a large amount of manpower and resources being devoted to grain production, the main grain-producing provinces are relatively behind in economic development. Meanwhile, the main grain-consumption provinces benefit from the rapid development of industries and services. The gap between grain producing and consuming provinces is widening. So, the CRWC proposed an interest compensation to encourage rich provinces to cooperate and assist the poorer provinces in capital, technology, talents, and education.

The conference sets other priorities such as supporting the development of rural industrial chains, including agriculture production, processing, transportation, storage, and services. It also calls on local governments to learn from the Zhejiang model and explore ways to build a living and ecological environment that incorporates rural industries, public services, and sound governance.

Attachments:

No Attachments.