

Brazil to expand agricultural export to China: minister

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Rio de Janeiro, Feb. 1 (Xinhua) -- Brazil plans to expand exports to China, as Chinese market is vital to the growth of its agricultural sector, a minister said.

Katia Abreu, the new agriculture minister stressed at a recent press conference the importance of channeling Chinese investment to Brazil's agricultural sector.

Abreu, who is also president of the National Confederation of Agriculture, said Brazil and China should expand cooperation in the agricultural sector by not only boosting direct trade but exchanging more high value-added products.

"We need to sign more trade agreements with China. This desire is very strong for us," said Abreu.

To further explore the Chinese market, Abreu will visit China in March this year, aiming to cut China's import tariff on Brazilian coffee and convince Chinese authorities to accept Brazilian health inspection standards for Brazil's meat industry.

According to the Brazilian Agriculture Ministry, beef exports to China are expected to increase significantly, with exports to China rising from 37 million U.S. dollars in 2012 to at least 700 million dollars in 2015.

Following an atypical case of mad cow disease in Brazil, China suspended Brazilian beef imports in 2012 and lifted the embargo last year.

China is currently the largest importer of agricultural products of Brazil, representing 22 percent of the South American nation's total agricultural exports in 2014 and more than the total amount of its second to fifth largest export destinations, namely the United States, The Netherlands, Russia and Germany.

Brazil is an agricultural powerhouse, whose total volume of agricultural production in 2014 accounts for 22.5 percent of the GDP.

It is also the world's biggest producer and exporter of coffee, sugar and orange juice, the biggest meat exporter and the second-biggest producer and exporter of soy products, as well as a major grower of corn.

On coffee export, Abreu said, "Brazilian coffee is vigorously promoting its brand worldwide and expanding its awareness. I hope that more Chinese can drink Brazilian coffee."