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CHINESE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE REPORTS
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION RESTORED TO NORMAL

The Minister of Agriculture, Li Shu-chen, speaking before the People's Political Consultative Conference reported that basically agricultural production in China has been restored in the past 2 years. Grain production for 1951 has been restored to 92.8 percent of the highest prewar level while cotton has exceeded the highest prewar level by 17.8 percent.

The land-reform program has been completed in an area inhabited by over 300 million people. Pest control work during 1950 was able to save 1.6 billion catties (one catty equals to 1 1/3 lbs.) of grain, but pest damages for 1951 are both more serious and more extensive than in 1950.

During 1951, crops on 35 million mou (one mou equals 1/6 acre) of farmland were destroyed by drought. Achievement in organizing the peasants was shown by the fact that 60 percent of the peasants in North China and 70 percent in the Northeast have joined mutual-aid teams.

The Minister of Agriculture of the Central People's Government Li Shu-chen, speaking at the Third Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 29 October 1951, said that agricultural production in China as a whole has been restored to normal and, to some extent, developed further in the past 2 years. Highlights of his report are as follows:

At present, the over-all production in grain has been restored to 92.8 percent of the highest prewar mark. Cotton output has exceeded the highest prewar record by 17.8 percent and thus basically freed China from the semicolonial position of depending on imports. Because of this restoration and development of agricultural production, the living standard of the people and economic condition of the peasants have improved.

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The reasons for the rapid restoration in agricultural production in this short 2-year period are due primarily to the correct leadership of Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese Communist Party, and the people's government; the bravery and accomplishments of the People's Liberation Army; the suppression of counterrevolutionaries; and the stabilization of social order. The land-reform program, which has been completed in an area populated by more than 300 million; the Resist America, Aid Korea Movement; and the current production emulation movement have helped in bringing about the good results.

During the past 2 years farmers have constantly struggled against various natural calamities. Due to the long period of neglect and destruction of many flood-prevention projects during the Japanese occupation and Kuomintang rule, serious floods occurred during 1949. Because of the heroic effort and work on water conservation by the peasants, the 1950 agricultural quota was basically met. During 1950, pest-control work covered an area of over 100 million mou and resulted in saving 1.6 billion catties of grain from destruction. Damage by pests during 1951 was more serious and extensive than in 1950. Locust, aphids, and moths have devastated more than 120 million mou. Under the leadership of governments at various levels, the mobilized peasants have contributed over 800 million man-days to pest extermination and prevention work. The pest problem, at present, is basically eliminated.

During 1951, a farming area of 90 million mou in 15 provincial ch'u were affected by drought; 35 million mou of crops were destroyed. Tremendous effort was expended under the drought-control movement to dig wells and canals. In this way, over 8.5 million mou of the affected land were irrigated. The efforts of the leadership of the Communist party were responsible for fulfilling the 1951 production quota in cotton, grains, and other farm products. Production figures for 1950 were surpassed for all of these.

The rapid recovery in agriculture during the past 2 years was achieved in part, by organizing the peasant masses. Sixty percent of the peasants in North China and 70 percent in the Northeast have joined the mutual aid teams. In the old liberated areas, these teams have grown from simple mutual assistance in labor and draft animals to cooperation in economy and production with the emergence of agricultural cooperatives and land cooperatives. The spirit of mutual aid and cooperation were important factors in the production record.

In this year's patriotic production emulation movement, many new records in yield per unit area were established. For instance, Model Worker Li Shun-ta, of Shansi, who is currently attending the conference, was able to produce 980 catties of corn per mou this year. Another model worker, Ch'u Yao-li, achieved a new record of 920 catties of cotton per mou. This is more than 12 times the average prewar cotton yield per mou. Other achievements of this sort, though not as striking, are made in many localities. They are testimonies to the possibilities ahead and encouragements to our present patriotic production emulation movement. It also shows that our current plan and emphasis on higher yield per unit, as a means to increase production, is a correct one.

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