



INNOVATION

Yunnan scientists to crack potato genome Potatoes will be grown from seeds hopefully

BY LI SIJIA

Recently, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture issued the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of the Potato Industry* (hereinafter referred to as the *Opinions*), which proposed to develop potatoes as a staple food. Yunnan experts in relevant fields believe that the *Opinions* will facilitate the development of potato cultivation in Yunnan. They have a bold idea: to crack the potato genome so that potatoes can be grown from seeds.

By 2020, according to the *Opinions*, China expects to increase its potato acreage to 16 million acres, 30 percent of which will be devoted to varieties suitable for staple food processing, with the consumption of potatoes as a staple food accounting for 30 percent of total potato consumption.

As a traditional potato-growing province, Yunnan leads the country in terms of acreage, yield, cultivation level and research.

Last year, Yunnan was not included in the first batch of pilot provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) for developing potatoes as a staple food. However, Yunnan experts believe that given the

province's natural advantages, the *Opinions* will still facilitate the development of the potato industry in Yunnan.

Guo Huachun is Dean of the School of Agriculture and Biotechnology at Yunnan Agricultural University. He said that the industrial development of potatoes as a staple food "will promote the breeding of potato varieties, as well as the development of food processing enterprises." He also expressed the hope that Yunnan could become a potato staple food production base and win more support.

Currently, Yunnan Normal University is planning to build a special school to enhance potato-related talent training and scientific innovation. So far, a strategic cooperation framework agreement has been reached between the university and Agricultural Genome Institute at Shenzhen, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

"Through joint efforts, we hope to crack the potato genome and hopefully cultivate 'tailored' potato varieties that can be grown from seeds rather than tubers, thus increasing potato yields," said Li Canhui, director of the Tuber Research Institute, Yunnan Normal University.

FRIENDSHIP



A half Marathon was held in Kunming on February 28. More than 18,000 runners took up in the contest. Emanuel Giniki Gisamoda from Tanzania won the men's half with a time of 1 hour 4 minutes and 2 seconds, while Rebecca Kangogo Chesir from Kenya was crowned in the women's race with a time of 1 hour 12 minutes 57 seconds. Photo by Chen Fei

TRADE

Yunnan's foreign trade rallies as a whole

BY WU PING

In January, according to Kunming Customs, Yunnan's foreign trade amounted to 13.3 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 4.6 percent.

More specifically, the province achieved exports of 8.71 billion yuan (a 6.5 percent decline year on year) and imports of 4.59 billion yuan (a 34.7 percent increase year on year). The trade surplus of 4.12 billion yuan ended the declining streak since March

2015, marking a good start for the province's foreign trade in 2016.

In January of this year, the province's general imports rallied strongly. Yunnan achieved substantial growth not only in the export of agricultural products, steel and non-ferrous metals, but also in the importation of natural gas and metal ores. Market demand has improved both internally and externally.

This year, trade maintained its strong momen-

tum between Yunnan and ASEAN countries including Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand. In January, the imports and exports between the province and ASEAN countries totalled 7.37 billion yuan. This figure represents a year-on-year increase of 13.9 percent while accounting for 55.4 percent of the provincial total. The province also achieved a trade volume of 400 million yuan (a 1.5 times growth) with South Korea.



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INTERCONNECTION

Yunnan to usher in high-speed rail era in late 2016

According to China Central Television News Channel, the Yunnan sections of the Shanghai-Kunming and Yunnan-Guangxi high speed railway lines are set to go into operation in late 2016. It will mark the completion of China's "four vertical and four horizontal" high-speed railway lines.

Both Shanghai-Kunming and Yunnan-Guangxi high speed railway lines are included in China's Medium and Long-term Railway Network Planning.

As the country's longest east-west high speed railway line, the Shanghai-Kunming high-speed railway line has a total length of 2,264 kilometres. The Yunnan section of the railway is 184.7 kilometres in length. Its opening will usher in the era of high speed rail in Yunnan. By then, a train trip from Yunnan to Shanghai will take just eight to ten hours.

Additionally, the Yunnan-Guangxi high-speed railway line will also go into operation by the end of this year. This trunk railway between Kunming, Yunnan and Nanning, Guangxi has a design speed of 200 kilometres per hour. Upon its opening, people will be able to travel from Kunming to Nanning by train in four hours, and a train trip from Kunming to Guangzhou will be shortened from the current 17 hours to just seven hours. (CCTV News Network)

VISA

Sweden to set up a visa application centre in Kunming

BY LI SIFAN

Starting April, according to the country's Tourist Board, Sweden will set up visa application centres in 10 Chinese cities including Kunming, Xi'an, Chongqing, Nanjing, Chengdu, Shenyang, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Ji'nan and Changsha.

Sweden has already set up visa application centres in Beijing and Shanghai, which are operated by VFS Global, a company working in partnership with the Embassy of Sweden in China.

In recent years, China has become one of Sweden's fastest growing tourist source countries. In 2015, Chinese tourists registered about 261,000 room nights in Sweden, a 28.5 percent increase from 2014.

For the convenience of Chinese tourists, Sweden's Stockholm Arlanda Airport has introduced Chinese signs, Chinese-speaking service personnel and a Chinese language website. Additionally, the airport launched a series of promotions intended for the Chinese market.

EXPORT

Lijiang konjac powder first exported to South Korea

BY LIU ZIYU and WANG SHIXUE

16 tonnages of konjac powder worth 160,000 US dollars were exported to South Korea in three batches recently, according to the Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau in Lijiang City, China's southwestern Yunnan Province. The powder is produced by a Lijiang-based green-food manufacturers.

Before the export, the Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau has done series of quality testing and risk analysis to ensure food safety.

Since the China-South Korea Free Trade Agreement took effect on December 20, 2015, Lijiang has been trying to help local enterprises to obtain necessary certificates, to get tariff concession. Meanwhile, procedures at the check point have been simplified to speed up clearance at the custom.

STORY

"This is the first time I've gotten so close to my dad." Descendent of a Flying Tiger traces footprints of her father

BY LIU ZIYU

"I am deeply touched. Thank you for everything you did for my father!" said Judy, the daughter of a Flying Tigers lieutenant named William Wallace. On February 22 and 23, Judy, along with her husband traced her father's footprints in Yiliang and Songming Counties, Yunnan Province.

The monument to William Wallace is about a 30-minute walk from Qingshuitang Village in Yiliang County. When the monument finally appeared, Judy, now in her seventies, burst into tears. "I've never seen my father. This is the first time I've gotten so close to my father. The monument is exquisitely carved. Thank you for everything. I grew up in the United States. I've look up to father as a hero since I was a little girl, but I did not expect that he is also regarded as a hero in China," said Judy. After a three-minute silence, she did down a bunch of flowers before the monument.

The monument to William Wallace weighs about one ton. It was erected in February



Judy pays tribute to her father in Yiliang County. Photo by Liu Ziyu

2006 at the proposal of Patrick Lucas of the United States and Zhou Zuxin of Guizhou Province. Both are members of Shared Glories, a non-governmental organisation studying Sino-US cooperation during World War II. When Shared Glories got in touch with Judy last September, Patrick Lucas began to make arrangements for Judy to come to China and trace her father's footprints.

According to Li Junhua, a

villager who participated in the erection of the monument, Qingshuitang Village even gave William Wallace a Chinese name, Li Shuhua, so that he became a member of the Li family. Li Junhua considers Judy as an elder sister, and was happy to see this distant relative from afar. "I myself was once an armyman, so I know peace and happiness are hard-won," said Li Junhua. He hopes that the monument will

be protected from generation to generation and Judy's family will often come to Qingshuitang Village.

It happened to be Lantern Festival, or the fifteenth day of the first month of the Chinese lunar calendar, when Judy and her husband visited Qingshuitang Village. The couple joined villagers in celebrations and made a donation to students at the local primary school. Judy only had a cursory understand-

ing of Yunnan before the visit, but now she felt attached to this land. "I was the only child at home. Now I'm part of a big family," Judy said.

Judy and her husband also visited Yangjie Airfield in Songming County, which was in use during World War II. She communicated with the still living airfield construction workers and gave them gifts. She said, "By visiting this place and communicating with the people here, I've developed a clearer and more complete understanding of my father. I'm also deeply touched by the local people's enthusiasm, hospitality and protection of history."

The Flying Tigers, or the American Volunteer Group of the Chinese Air Force, came to China and participated in the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in July 1941. William Wallace came to China in late 1943. He was the captain of a Flying Tigers B-24 bomber. In June 1944, the bomber crashed near Qingshuitang Village in Yiliang County and William Wallace lost his life at the age of 25.