

Let a Thousand Web Sites Bloom

By *Ralph Bean and Freda Chao*

During the past few years, e-commerce and Web-based information resources in China have flourished, providing a broad range of information for potential U.S. agricultural exporters. According to China's Ministry of Agriculture, there are now more than 2,200 Web sites about Chinese agriculture representing agricultural enterprises, government organizations and educational institutions.

The following are a few of the more useful Web sites divided into government, industry association, state trading company and commercial categories. This list represents just a small sampling of what is available, and new sites are always emerging.

Please be advised that the mention of an entity or site does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by USDA or the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

Government Organizations

Chinese government departments use their home pages to post new laws and regulations, news releases, business opportunities and trade trends. Some of the most significant sites for agriculture are:

- **Ministry of Agriculture**—www.agri.gov.cn—provides information on commodities production, and market forecasts as well as government policies and regulations.
- **Grains and Oils Information Center**—www.grain.gov.cn—contains a wide range of information on grains, oilseeds and vegetable oil. This Web site is a subscribers-only service.



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- **Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation**—www.moftec.com—includes both Chinese- and English-language information relating to foreign trade, customs, commodities inspection and environmental protection.
- **State General Administration for Quality, Safety, Inspection and Quarantine**—www.csbts.cn.net/english/index.htm—has detailed information on the health standards for food commodities marketed in China, as well as quarantine and inspection regulations.
- **China General Customs Administration**—www.customs.gov.cn—includes laws and regulations regarding customs and trademark protection.
- **Ministry of Health**—www.moh.gov.cn—has important information on standards for food safety and hygiene, including the supervision of hygiene standards at ports.
- **State Economic and Trade Commission**—www.cacs.gov.cn—deals primarily with antidumping and trade subsidies.
- **China Green Food and Development Center**—www.greenfood.org.cn—is the official Web site for China's organic food initiative. The site has an introduction in English, but everything else is in Chinese.

Chinese Industry Associations

Several Chinese agricultural industry associations have Web sites in various stages of development. Some larger sites include:

- **China Food Industry Association**—www.cfiin.com.cn—has an English version that comprises market surveys, special reports and trade data. The Chinese language section has more detailed news on the agricultural processing industry. This association also has a Chinese-language-only Web site—

CHINA'S MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ESTIMATES THERE ARE OVER 2,200 WEB SITES ON CHINESE AGRICULTURE.

www.cnfoodnet.com—that includes all laws and regulations related to the food industry. It also contains a list of food and agricultural enterprises in China with complete contact information such as addresses, telephone numbers and Web sites.

- **China Feed Industry Information Net—www.chinafeed.org.cn**—consolidates information on the feed industry and animal husbandry. It provides up-to-date information and market analysis on all aspects of the feed industry, including price information, laws and regulations.
- **China Fermentation Industry Association—www.brewchina.com**—has information on products from wine, beer and spirits to soybean milk, soft drinks and ice cream.
- **China National Wine Association—www.winechina.com**—has an English version that describes China's wine history and provides updates on grape varieties and marketing and cooperation opportunities.
- **China Food Additives Association—www.chinaadditive.com**—has information on food safety inspections and requirements of food safety laws and regulations.

State Trading Companies

Several Chinese commodity trading companies have Web sites and they are developing more. Examples include:

- **China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corporation—www.foodec.com**—where users can find information on international and domestic marketing trends and directories of companies.
- **China National Cotton Exchange—www.cottonchina.org**—has statistics

on cotton transactions, including quantity, location, quality and price. The Web site also has links to some Chinese textile sites. The Cotton Exchange seeks to be the primary link between China's domestic cotton market and international cotton markets.

- **State Tobacco Monopoly Administration—www.tobaccochina.com**—is the online voice of China's tobacco industry providing quick access to tobacco company news, international business and government policies.

Commercial Food and Agriculture Web Sites

Commercial businesses and their Web sites have been in operation only a short time in China with little history to back them up. In addition, laws covering e-commerce in China are not well defined, adding to the usual risks of doing business in China.

Below is a sampling of these commercial sites. FAS can neither sponsor nor guarantee the content or business practices of these entities.

- **www.FarmChina.com** claims to be the first business-to-business interna-



tional trading marketplace and one-stop e-solution for the agricultural industry focusing on China. The company provides industry marketing reports, business news, trade data, a company directory by sector, match making services, advertising and consulting services.

- **www.Byte-way.com** is a Beijing-based dot com company founded by several people who have been promoting American agricultural and food products in China. The site is bilingual and the company serves as a match maker for both American and Chinese agricultural businesses.
- **www.foodbusiness.com.cn** is networked to more than 15 food-related Web sites. The site has news on the international and domestic food industry covering a wide range of products. Services include market research reports and information on technology and various databases such as a directory of food manufacturing enterprises.
- **www.cngrain.com** is China's largest grain industry Web site. It provides market information as well as crop condition reports and customs data on imports and exports.
- **www.chinafoods.com** provides data on agricultural production, food processing and trade.

General Business Web Sites

Several general business and trade sites have valuable information on doing business in China. They include:

- **China Council for the Promotion of International Trade—www.ccpit.org**—was founded in 1952 as a non-governmental commercial

organization aimed at developing foreign trade. It is China's largest private trade promotion agency. With more than 70,000 members and 17 overseas offices, its services encompass foreign liaison, international trade exhibition, foreign legal services and information consultancy.

- **China Business Associates—www.AmericaChina.com**—is a company designed to help Chinese businesses that want to do business with U.S. companies to learn about and understand U.S. companies and prod-



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For details, see FAS report CH1031. To find it—and lots of other FAS information on the Web—go to: **www.fas.usda.gov**, select **Attaché Reports** and follow the prompts.



ucts. Agriculture, however, is only one aspect of the company's business scope.

- **China Business Guide Weekly—www.cbg.org.cn**—is an information service program for the promotion of China's international trade and economic cooperation. Information covers a wide range of business matters, such as international market information, laws and regulations concerning foreign trade and data on foreign investment, customs, commodity inspection and taxation.

An examination of some of the above Web sites will lead to many more links that will have information on agriculture and trading with China. Keep in mind that while many sites have English versions, others are partly or completely in Chinese. However, the wealth of information available through the Internet is vast and is continuing to grow. This affords the prospective exporter the ability to begin research from his or her personal computer desktop. More sites are coming on line each day. ■

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