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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Wheat production in 2015 is forecast to remain around last year's record level**
- **Aggregate cereal imports in 2014/15 forecast to reach an all-time high**
- **Prices of rice and wheat remain stable**

Wheat production in 2015 is forecast to remain around last year's record level

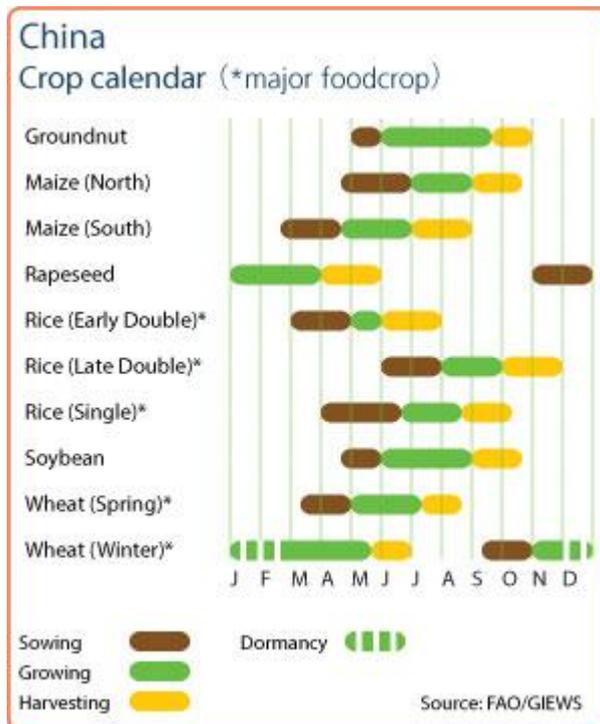
The 2015 winter wheat crop, which accounts for about 95 percent of the total wheat production, is currently in the final stages of development, with harvesting operations to start from mid-May. Following below-average precipitation in southern parts of Yangtze Valley in the first part of the season, rains improved across most of the country since mid-March, benefitting crop development after it came out of dormancy in mid-February. The vegetation response captured by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), as of the first dekad of April, shows overall good growing conditions of winter wheat over most of the country. Nationally, the total area planted to wheat is officially estimated at 24.2 million tonnes, up 1 percent from last year's high level. Considering the small expansion in area planted and assuming favourable weather in the remaining of the growing season, FAO's preliminarily forecasts the 2015 wheat output to expand marginally to a record level of 126.5 million tonnes.

Planting of the 2015 minor early rice crop, which is normally grown in the southern parts of the country and accounts for about 16 percent of the total rice production, is nearing completion. Rainfall across southern China has been average to above average since the start of the season in March, benefitting planting operations and early crop development. As a result, FAO projects this season's rice output at 34.1 million tonnes, close to last year's record level. Assuming a normal upcoming monsoon season and considering a small increase in plantings, the aggregate 2015 rice production is forecast by FAO at 207 million tonnes, marginally above last year's record level.

Planting of the 2015 maize crop started in the south and will be concluded by July in the north. FAO's preliminarily forecasts set the 2015 aggregate maize production at 217 million tonnes, slightly above last year's record output. The expected increase is mainly attributed to a 2 percent expansion in the area planted, in response to rising demand for feed grains.

Cereal imports in 2014/15 marketing year forecast to reach an all-time high

Total cereal imports in the 2014/15 marketing year are forecast to reach an all-time high of 23 million tonnes, some 12 percent above the estimated imports in 2013/14. The increase is mainly attributed to considerably higher barley and sorghum imports, which are projected at a record level of 7 and 8 million tonnes in 2014/15 marketing year, almost double the level of the previous year. With higher demand from the feed industries, private buyers are increasingly importing sorghum and barley as complement to maize. Unlike maize, sorghum and barley are not



China
Cereal production

	2010-2014 average	2014	2015 forecast	change 2015/2014
	000 tonnes		percent	
Rice (paddy)	202 207	206 427	207 000	0
Maize	201 960	215 673	217 000	1
Wheat	120 304	126 171	126 500	0
Others	9 059	9 032	9 060	0
Total	533 531	557 303	559 560	0

Note: percentage change calculated from unrounded data.
Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets

subject to the annual Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) restrictions and import prices of these crops are considerably lower than the price of locally-produced maize. Maize imports are also projected to increase considerably to 4 million tonnes. By contrast, total wheat imports are set to decrease by 5.5 million tonnes for the 2014/15 marketing year (July/June), as a result to last year's bumper harvest and large carryover stocks.

Rice imports during 2015 are forecast to remain similar to last year's above-average level of 2.7 million tonnes.

Prices of rice and wheat remain stable

Retail prices of Japonica rice and wheat flour remained generally stable in March, despite good supplies from the 2014 bumper harvests. Prices were mainly supported by the high level of the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and strong domestic demand.

