

China, The Netherlands to Build Food Security System

WAGENINGEN, The Netherlands (PRNewswire) — With Chinese President Xi Jinping and the King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander in attendance serving as witnesses, China and the Netherlands signed several key cooperative agreements benefiting the agriculture sectors of both countries on March 23 (local Dutch time). Among the agreements one is a strategic collaboration whereby a food security system will be jointly built by Yili Group, one of China's largest dairy producers, and Wageningen University, one of Europe's leading universities. During the signing ceremony, President Xi suggested stepping the efforts at cooperation in the dairy industries of the two countries up to an even higher level. Yili was the only Chinese company mentioned by Dutch King Willem-Alexander in the course of his speech, at which time he said the Chinese company had recently set up a European R&D center in the Netherlands, laying a solid foundation and establishing an excellent platform for further collaborations in the dairy field between the two parties.

The China-Netherlands Food Security System Project is the first systemized cooperative food security project between China and the Netherlands since the two countries first established diplomatic relations. It is also the deepest transnational cooperation between a Netherlands-based university and a Chinese company.

The signing of the agreement paves the way for the establishment of a system that will combine the practices of the two countries, on the basis of collaborating on the latest technologies targeting biological cell culture, evaluating biological cell safety and other functional factors. Meanwhile, the project will take the lead in introducing big data applications for quality analysis of the two countries' dairy products. Yili Group Chairman Pan Gang revealed that the system will be built on top of earlier developments in pasture management based on milk source upstream technologies, formulation of a feed and soil evaluation system including a backtracking mechanism. Once completed, the project will have in place dairy product monitoring systems in the EU and in China working in concert with each other. The major portion of the work on the project took place in the Yili European R&D Center and was completed in February.

Pan Gang noted that they not only felt a great sense of responsibility but at the same time were fully confident in their ability to succeed when undertaking this collaborative effort. He said: "The co-building of the food security system is very important to the development of China's as well as to the world's dairy industry. We have a solid foundation in the research and development of safe dairy products, we have first-class European partners and the European R&D Center provides us with a sound platform for our work. The key technology to realize such a system is already in a mature state."

"We hope to drive global food security, and believe Yili is the best partner worldwide

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Published on Food Manufacturing (<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com>)

that we could find," said Abraham Brouwer, leading European food safety specialist and a professor at Wageningen University. The development methods and technologies used in the food security system have become the standard in the EU, and are widely used in the Netherlands and around the world due to their great advantages in accuracy, speed and cost of inspections. The Dutch partner and Yili, will continue to make enhancements and test the technologies based on the actual physical environment in China, with the intention of bringing dairy safety inspection in both China and the Netherlands to a new level.

Just last month, Yili European Research and Development Center opened on the campus of the Netherlands-based university. The internationally renowned institution is one of the Europe's leading universities in the study of the life sciences. The R&D center targets Europe, and is also China's highest-profile overseas R&D facility. The area surrounding the university, known as the European "food valley", is home to several food research clusters. The Chinese and Dutch parties will rely on the center during the co-building efforts.

"Dairy security and scientific research need global cooperation," said Aalt Dijkhuizen, President of Wageningen University & Research Center. Wageningen University and Yili will deepen their cooperation based on the joint establishment of the R&D center. Both parties, in addition to the co-building effort, will conduct joint research on breast milk and pasture management.

"Technical support is the most fundamental and critical link in the food safety system," said dairy specialist Chen Yu. The dairy production system, a very complex system when it comes to food security, takes the lead in introducing technologies from the EU to establish a technical support system, a key component of the overall effort. Yili's contributions to the project will play an important role in improving and upgrading China's food security system.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/19/2015 - 5:47pm):

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