

China to boost pork output as swine fever drives up prices

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In this May 8, 2019, photo, pigs stand in a barn at a pig farm in Panggezhuang village in northern China's Hebei province. Chinese agriculture officials are launching a nationwide initiative to boost pork production following a price spike blamed on shortages caused by an outbreak of African swine fever. (AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein)

China is launching a nationwide initiative to boost pork production following a price spike blamed on a devastating outbreak of African swine fever.

The government will take steps to accelerate the revival of hog production, prevent and control African swine fever and upgrade farms to further ensure pork supply and stable [prices](#), officials from several ministries said at a joint news conference Wednesday.

"We are confident and capable of rising to the challenge, dissolving the risks and doing well in keeping prices in the pig market stable," said Peng Shaozong of the National Development and Reform Commission.

He said [government agencies](#) will closely monitor and analyze pork prices, stabilize production and regulate the [market price](#).

Pork prices surged 46.7% in August from a year earlier, contributing 1.08 percentage points to a 2.8 percent rise in the [consumer price index](#), according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics this week. The soaring price has hit Chinese consumers hard as pork, essential in most Chinese households, accounts for more than 60% of meat consumption.

China raises about half of the world's pigs, and stable [pork production](#) is of great importance to people's well-being and a steady national economic performance, said Yu Kangzhen, vice minister of agriculture and rural affairs.

The implementation of these policies will play a powerful role in mobilizing farmers, promoting breeding and ensuring the pork supply in the market, he said.

Pork production fell as African swine fever ravaged pig farms in China

beginning in April. While the disease doesn't infect humans, it spreads among pigs quickly.

On Monday, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the National Development and Reform Commission jointly announced subsidies of up to 5 million yuan (\$700,000) for large pig farms to construct new facilities.

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