#### ОРИГИНАЛЬНАЯ СТАТЬЯ

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### Стратегии развития сельского хозяйства в России\*

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Основываясь на изменениях, происходящих в сфере сельского хозяйства в России, авторы статьи рассматривают основные направления, а также перспективы китайско-российского сотрудничества в этой области. Аграрная стратегия в России долгосрочная. В разные периоды менялись цели развития сельского хозяйства с учетом национальных интересов. Основная причина роста сельского хозяйства во время экономического спада заключается в долгосрочных субсидиях и поддержке национальной стратегии. В настоящее время продуктивность сельского хозяйства в России значительно повысилась, в сельскохозяйственную стратегию были внесены корректировки, а введение новых планов развития призвано справиться с ограничениями, вызванными несбалансированностью экономической структуры. Новая стратегия углубит реформу структуры сельского хозяйства, что гарантирует инновационное и устойчивое развитие этой области. Помимо этого, активное сельскохозяйственное сотрудничество является важной частью реформ. Оно в России сосредоточено на национальных интересах и направлено на привлечение прямых иностранных инвестиций, которые могут улучшить пассивную ситуацию дипломатической изоляции при открытии торгового рынка. Кроме того, развитие китайско-российского партнерства углубит двустороннее сотрудничество в сельскохозяйственной сфере.

**Ключевые слова:** экспортно-ориентированное сельское хозяйство; экономическая структура; многостороннее сотрудничество; технологическая инновация

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### ORIGINAL PAPER

## The Orientation and Influence of Agricultural Development in Russia\*\*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Based on the changes and impacts of Russian agricultural strategy, this paper combs the agricultural policies and main adjustment directions of Russia in various stages after the Cold War, as well as the prospects of Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation. Agricultural strategy in Russia is long-term. With the adjustment of national development and national interests, agricultural development goals have changed in various periods. The fundamental reason for agriculture growth during the economic downturn lies in the national strategy's long-term subsidies and supports. Nowadays, agricultural productivity in Russia has been dramatically improved, new adjustments have been made to the agricultural strategy, and the introduction of new development plans is to cope with the constraints resulted from the imbalance of economic structure. The new strategy will deepen the reform of the agro-industrial structure and guarantee the innovative and sustainable development of this field. Among them, active agricultural cooperation is an essential part

<sup>\*</sup> Данная статья представляет собой поэтапные результаты исследований крупного проекта ключевой исследовательской базы гуманитарных и социальных наук Министерства образования 13-й Пятилетки Ляонинского университета «основная корректировка и анализ последствий внутренних и внешних дел России после переизбрания Путина президентом» (LNUJD 201702) и проекта Фонда планирования социальных наук Ляонина 2017 г. «исследование роли России в китайско-американском сотрудничестве и конкуренции в период Трампа» (LNUJD 201702).

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of the reform process. Agricultural cooperation in Russia is centred on national interests and aimed at attracting foreign direct investment, which can improve the passive situation of diplomatic isolation while opening up the trade market. Also, the upgrading of the Sino-Russian partnership will deepen bilateral cooperation in the agricultural field. *Keywords:* export-oriented agriculture; economic structure; multilateral cooperation; technological innovation

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lacksquare ince the Ukraine crisis outbreak in 2014, Russia-US relations have entered the lowest period since the end of the Cold War. In dealing with the Ukraine issue, the United States and its Allies have taken economic advantages to carrying out a series of sanctions against Russia, such as "encirclement and suppression" against Russia in the areas of finance, credit, foreign trade, etc. In a series of anti-crisis policies issued by Russia, the agricultural sector has achieved remarkable results as an important implementation area of the "import substitution" policy. As agriculture is a key area of economic transformation in Russia, new agricultural strategies have been introduced one after another. Active expansion of industrial cooperation, promotion of relevant infrastructure construction, expansion of product export, improvement of product processing capacity and improvement of pertinent cooperation mechanisms have become new contents of Russian agricultural cooperation mechanism. So what adjustments have been made in Russian agricultural policy? What risks and challenges will Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation face? Therefore, based on the adjustment of Russian agricultural strategy and Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation, this paper systematically combs the changes of Russian rural policy in the post-Cold War period, summarises the development trend of agricultural policy and evaluates the prospects of Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation.

# THE BASIC COURSE OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOVIET UNION

### Stage I: the period of import quota

After the Soviet Union's disintegration, Russia implemented powerful de-collectivisation measures and marketisation in the agricultural sector during the transition to the market economy, and a large number of collective farms converted into private

farms and agricultural companies. In 2000, only about a quarter of the producers were profitable, and the share of agriculture in GDP dropped from 15.4% in 1990 to 6.5% in 1997. Meanwhile, due to the long periodicity of agriculture, a large volume of loans imposed a considerable burden on the national banking industry.1 Against this background, imported meat began to enter the Russian market in large quantities. In addition to people's living needs for meat products, Russia's market was facing severe challenges from well-functioning agricultural enterprises in developed countries, especially in the aspect of international trade, its response capacity was quite limited. Russia received targeted loans and humanitarian assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for "highpriced" food purchases, severely hitting the Russian poultry industry. As the US chicken was delivered at dumping prices, there was no opportunity for domestic products of price competition.

In the article "Russia at the turn of the Millennium" published by Putin on December 30, 1999, he proposes that one of Russia's basic projects is the promotion of modern agriculture, intending to be able to organically integrate national support and national control measures with market reforms in rural areas and land ownership. After coming into power, Putin put forward a specific development direction with Russian characteristics for agricultural policy, a new mechanism for the coordinated development of various agricultural organisations enhancing the production vitality of agro-industrial complex through the orderly guidance of national planning. He stressed that the development of agriculture was a prerequisite for Russia to return to the world stage and an inevitable requirement for implementing the strategy of strengthening the country and enriching the people. In 2003, the government of the Russian Federation formally proposed that the annual import volume of poultry should be reduced by 25%, and the import volume of beef and pork should be reduced by 20%; poultry was subject to import quotas (the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> URL: http://madeinrussia.rbc.ru/article/1990-ye-gody/.

Table 1

Demand, output, and growth rate of meat products (thousand tons)\*

Item	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Domestic production	4936	-	4972	5259	5790	6268	6688
The growth rate compared with the previous year	105.6%	-	-	105.8%	110.1%	108.3%	106.7%
Domestic personal consumption	7464	-	7871	8287	8774	9353	9545
The growth rate compared with the previous year	103.6%	-	-	105.3%	105.9%	106.6%	102.1%

Source: Report of "Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forestry" issued by the Statistics Office of the Russian Federation.

amount of import could not exceed the quota), while pork and beef were subject to tariff quotas, with a tariff rate of 60% for beef exceeding the quota and 80% for pork.<sup>2</sup> The comparison between the annual growth rate of domestic meat production and the annual growth rate of national demand indicated that domestic production was slightly faster than the living needs of residents, which directly reflected the positive trend brought about by the quota system during this period (*Table 1*).

## Stage II: the formation of long-term agricultural strategies

The food security strategy adopted by the Russian Federation in 2010 implies that the country maintains reasonable consumption standards for residents based on the economic situation, and the guarantee of material and economic access is the main condition for ensuring food independence. Food security is generally assessed by countries based on the level of food self-sufficiency. However, import quotas stimulated the production capacity of domestic producers; nearly 30% of the food still needed to be imported, which had seriously threatened Russia's food security. Therefore, further development of agriculture in the context of market relations would not be possible without strengthening the

From an economic perspective, Russia's high dependence on certain food imports significantly reduced its own economic security. Against the background of increased external debts, the massive purchase of foreign food and food ingredients further increased the pressure on limited foreign exchange resources. Moreover, the increase in food imports was increasingly forced to be paid with non-renewable natural resources and undermined Russia's role in the global economy. As a result, Russia proposed that food security's main goal was to promptly predict, identify, and prevent internal and external threats to food security: the sustainable development of domestic food production and raw materials was sufficient to guarantee its food independence. In this regard, the state proposed that the market share of various domestic foods was: cereal products account for at least 95%; sugar account for at least 80%; vegetable oil account for at least 80%; meat and meat products account for not less than 85%; milk and dairy products account for not less than 90%; fish products account for at least 80%; potatoes account for at least 95%; salt account for at least 85%.<sup>3</sup> This principle can be regarded as an upgrade of agricultural protection policy in the previous stage, which has raised the reduction of imports to the height of food security protection.

<sup>\*</sup> URL: https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b04 38/Main.Htm.

country's role and supporting this most important economic field.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> URL: https://www.rbc.ru/economics/28/01/2003/5703bfe49a 7947afa08cdf41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> URL: http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/30563.

## Stage III: the period of hindered agricultural development

Russia's WTO accession negotiations lasted for 18 years until 2012 when Russia officially became a WTO member. Opinions on the impact of WTO accession on Russia varied in the country. Most experts and scholars believed that WTO accession might not bring significant positive implications in the short term. It might even hit the fragile domestic manufacturing industry due to the reduction of tariffs. In the past decade, Russian agriculture had gradually resumed production under the support of several national protection policies. However, it still lacked competitiveness compared with a large number of cheap imported agricultural products. Therefore, the domestic people held a negative attitude towards the open agricultural market after it accedes to the WTO. In the process of reaching an agreement, opening up the agricultural market had become one of the important conditions for Russia's accession to the WTO. Since Russia had long been a major importer of agricultural products from European and American countries, and its domestic agricultural productivity was far from reaching the level of food security, opening its domestic market was bound to hit the newly developed agricultural production. In the final agreement, the main restrictive provisions included the cancellation of the beef quota, the pork quota's cancellation by January 1, 2020, and the reduction of the "Amber Box Subsidy" 4 according to the agricultural agreement within the framework of the organisation.

Accession to the WTO has an important impact on participation in the redistribution of world resources and integration into the world order, which may take longer than the accession negotiations to achieve such a strategic advantage. At that time, at the level of domestic agricultural productivity was far from the level of food security. The reduction of tariffs and control of the "Amber Box Subsidy" would definitely deal a significant blow to the newly developed agricultural production. Meanwhile, Russia achieved a 5–7 years transition period for the agricultural sector during the negotiation. It was determined in the final agreement that the import

quota system for meat products could be retained. Still, the pork imported within the quota was duty-free, and the tariff for additional imported pork fell by 10%.<sup>5</sup> National subsidies to domestic producers should not exceed the US \$ 9 billion in 2013 and would gradually be reduced to the US \$ 4.4 billion by 2018.<sup>6</sup>

### Stage IV: import substitution

In response to Western sanctions, Russian leaders announced the implementation of import substitution policy. One of the purposes of introducing an import substitution policy was to promote the Russian economy's diversification because of the difficult economic situation. From domestic production development to innovative development, it was necessary to get rid of dependence on foreign technologies and products gradually. Strengthening national management in the field of foreign trade and formulating a standard mechanism for effective implementation of import substitution could be a rare opportunity for Russia's economic growth, scientific and technological development, overcoming technological gaps and improving the investment environment.

In August 2014, Russia formally implemented anti-sanctions retaliation measures against the US and European sanctions, imposing restrictions on certain types of food imported from European Union countries and the United States, Australia and Canada. The restrictive measures involved importing beef, pork, poultry, fish, seafood, cheese, milk, fruits, vegetables, and many other types of agricultural products and food, contributing to the production growth of domestic agricultural enterprises replaced imported products in some areas. After restricting imported products' entry into the market, domestic agricultural producers gained development opportunities and replaced importers' share; domestic agricultural food began to dominate the Russian market. The agricultural sector almost became the only growing sector in Russia during the economic downturn.

According to a report released by the Ministry of Agriculture in August 2017, national budget support for agriculture increased by 27%, from 190 billion roubles in 2014 to 242 billion roubles in 2017. Besides, Russia introduced a series of subsidy and loan policies. The Ministry of Agriculture

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The WTO 's "Agricultural Agreement" restricts the relevant protection policies of member countries on domestic agriculture, and is divided into yellow box, blue box and green box policies according to the degree of possible distortions to trade. Yellow box policy refers to the protection policy with a high degree of trade distortion, including the government's intervention in the price of agricultural products and subsidies for agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> URL: https://ria.ru/20120823/729063890.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> URL: https://ria.ru/20130614/943153184.html.

launched a single regional subsidy, enabling each region to independently determine the priority of supporting various industries according to the region's specific conditions. The comprehensive effect of these measures led to the successful implementation of import substitution policies in agriculture, among which the meat industry achieved the most remarkable results. The import share of pork consumption fell by two-thirds (from 26% in 2013 to 8% in 2016), while poultry meat fell by three fifths (from 12% in 2013 to 5% in 2016). Vegetable imports fell by half (from 866,000 tons in 2013 to 463,000 tons in 2016), while domestic vegetable production increased year by year. Over the past three years, greenhouse vegetables' output had risen by 30% (*Table 2*).

Due to the construction of new greenhouse complex and the achievements of further farmland reclamation, the harvest of fruits and vegetables in 2017 remained at the same level as the previous year under the unfavourable weather conditions such as frost, storm, hail and flood.<sup>7</sup>

## RUSSIA'S NEW AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN THE CONTEXT OF US AND EUROPEAN SANCTIONS

Against the backdrop of geopolitical factors and renewed macroeconomic challenges, Russian agriculture has entered a new development period after basically achieving self-sufficiency in food. Despite multiple pressures, import substitution's overall trend is still positive since all products have maintained high profitability levels. In October 2018, Putin attended the agricultural conference held in the Stavropol region in Russia. He assessed the agricultural sector's achievements and determined the strategic guidelines for future industrial development in key areas. Putin described the agroindustrial complex's achievements as a breakthrough, pointing out that agricultural production had increased by more than 20% over the past five years, and domestic producers could supply almost all necessary food products to the country. Besides, they had actively opened up foreign markets and conducted many foreign trade activities with China, India, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Persian Gulf countries. In 2017, export deliveries of food and agricultural raw materials increased by 21% to more

As early as November 30, 2016, Russia approved the priority project of "Export of Agricultural Products", indicating that the agricultural sector was gradually shifting to "export-oriented". At the Russian agricultural products export conference in July 2019, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev first affirmed the remarkable achievements in the field of agriculture in the past five years. With the rapid development of the agro-industrial complex and the increasing production and processing of grain, feed, milk and meat increasing, food security issues had been preliminarily solved. In 2018, the export volume of agricultural products and food was close to the US \$ 26 billion, even exceeding the target of US \$ 23 billion set in the federal project "Export of Agricultural Products".8 Russia has been one of the leading countries in cereal export. With the continuous expansion of its export areas, Asia Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East have become Russia's main partners.

It is estimated that Russia's agricultural exports will reach the target of US \$ 45 billion by the next stage of 2024. First of all, the country will support investment projects in the deep processing of agricultural products, change the export structure, and transform from raw materials' advantages to deep processing products. Cereal products have begun to change in this direction, and the development of seafood products will be accelerated in the next stage. At present, 90% of seafood is only frozen before export, and it is planned to increase the share of high value-added fish products to 40%. Second, the logistics infrastructure needs to be further developed, and the network of wholesale distribution centres that exporters need will continue to be improved. In addition to the eight centres putting into operation in 2018, another 14 will be built within four years. In the comprehensive plan for the modernisation and expansion of major infrastructure in 2024, considering the needs of farmers in the transportation of agricultural products, part of the cost of railway transportation of agricultural products will be compensated to agricultural producers through preferential tariffs. Thirdly, to boost exports, domestic products will be subject to uniform quarantine standards, thereby

than the US \$ 20 billion, which exceeded the sales of weapons by the US \$ 5 billion and became the country's second-largest export commodity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> URL: http://mcx.ru/press-service/news/minselkhoz-rossii-podvyel-itogi-realizatsii-programmy-importozameshcheniya-za-3-goda/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> URL: http://mcx.ru/upload/iblock/c2a/c2a05c48403632531 fc69dc891db4a97.pdf.

Table 2
Production and consumption of vegetables and dairy products in the past five years (thousand tons)\*

Vegetables

Item	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	RATIO (%)	
						2017	2018
Domestic production	14352.1	14967.8	15 064.4	15 426.7	15 655.0	61.2	61.5
Import	2952.5	2643.6	2356.7	2669.9	2484.6	10.6	9.7
In total	24161.1	24632.0	24608.4	25 195.2	25 471.0	100	100
Loss	483.2	509.3	510.4	511.5	472.2	2.0	1.9
Export	76.4	197.5	269.1	248.0	282.2	1.0	1.1
Personal consumption	14833.4	14918.3	14946.9	15 219.4	15 651.0	60.4	61.5

### **Dairy products**

lta	2014	2015 201		2047	2040	RATIO (%)	
ltem	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2017	2018
Domestic production	29 995.1	29 887.5	29 787.3	30185.0	30 611.1	77.5	79.0
Import	9157.9	7951.3	7578.6	6996.9	6493.0	10.6	9.7
In total	41 134.8	39 95 9.2	39 313.6	38 927.9	38743.0	100	100
Loss	35.2	33.7	30.3	29.4	31.3	0.1	0.1
Export	628.9	606.0	644.8	607.6	576.3	1.0	1.1
Personal consumption	34953.1	34148.2	33832.9	33736.9	33552.0	86.6	86.6

Source: Report "Consumption of basic foodstuffs by the population of the Russian Federation in 2019" issued by the Russian Statistical Office.

reducing importing countries' doubts about the quality of food produced by Russia.<sup>9</sup>

## CONDITIONS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

First, the geopolitical environment remains complex. First of all, western countries are still inevitable factors affecting Russia's national security. In June 2019, the European Union announced the extension of sanctions on some Russian economic sectors. It included a

restriction on the access of five state-controlled Russian financial institutions and their holding subsidiaries established outside the European Union to the primary and secondary capital markets of the European Union; restriction on three sizeable Russian energy companies; restriction on three national defence companies; banning the export of dual-use goods for military purposes or the Russian army; restricting Russia's access to certain strategic technologies and services that could be used for oil development and production. Correspondingly, Russia also issued anti-sanctions laws and decrees, confirming

<sup>\*</sup> URL: https://www.gks.ru/compendium/document/13278.

<sup>9</sup> URL: http://government.ru/news/37430/.

that the Russian President and the government had the right to carry out anti-sanctions against "unfriendly acts" of other countries.

Although there were considerable contradictions in Russia and Europe's bilateral relations, both sides were gradually aware of the long-standing economic and trade links. It can be said that Russia and Europe's demands of each other were by no means "zero-sum relations". Simultaneously, the practice of "unilateralism" of the United States had also disappointed European countries, which had brought opportunities for cooperation between Russia and Europe. Due to its superior geographical location and many other reasons, Russia had become an indispensable economic partner of the EU countries. On the other hand, comprehensive economic cooperation between the EU and Asia would not replace Russia and the EU's economic cooperation. Therefore, cross-border cooperation between Russia and EU countries had not stopped for a long time. For the EU, which has the longest land border with Russia, the termination of cross-border cooperation would violate the good-neighbour policy. It would turn relations from friendly to hostile. In 2014, the European Commission decided to continue the cross-border cooperation plan. Dozens of small joint projects continued to be implemented, which was conducive to reducing political conflicts, promoting regular meetings between officials of both sides, and maintaining contact with local authorities and law enforcement agencies.

Second, as an important strategic space for Russia, the CIS countries have always been the top priority for Russia to maintain its special status and Russian diplomatic work, which is the bottom line for Russia to maintain its "great power status". Based on the "Eurasian partnership", a multilevel and multi-field cooperation mechanism has been established in the region. The main idea Russia needs to convey to its partners is that the goal of the integration process of the post-Soviet space development is to establish not only a customs union and a common economic space but also a broad Eurasian cooperation zone. The most important condition for achieving this goal is the economic integration of the post-Soviet area. At the same time, this integration is Russia's strategic goal in CIS countries. For Russia, the demand for integrated Soviet space is mainly related to geopolitical goals and the long-term prospects of its economic development. Russia hopes to keep its products competitive in the

Eurasian sales market and establish friendly cooperation belts with its neighbouring countries. Cooperation between Russia and the CIS countries can be developed through payment and customs unions, the establishment of interstate industrial associations, international financial centres and industrial companies.

Relations between Russia and the United States are sharp and risk deteriorating. This deterioration is a long-term trend, which is determined by the ideology of the American political elite. It is characterised by the increasing strength of neoconservatism, making American foreign policy full of idealism and realism. Formulating a new US strategy in a continually changing world pattern reflects the US realistic understanding of the power boundary. It determines the factors of turbulence, instability and deterrence in the US-Russian relations. The relationship between Russia and the United States has always been at the lowest level. The "imbalance" in the pivot of international security may lead to direct military conflicts between the United States and Russia. The most sensitive and fundamental strategic stability and security issues in bilateral relations have greatly affected Russia's national development.

The complex and tense geopolitical environment has put forward urgent demands for Russia's economic development and provided an opportunity to transform the agricultural sector and strengthen agricultural cooperation. Cereals, as a kind of food crop, have an important strategic position. Russia's access to the world market as an exporter is of great political significance for boosting its development momentum. In September 2019, the Russian delegation led by the Deputy Minister of agriculture of the Russian Federation participated in the ninth meeting of BRICs ministers of agriculture. During the meeting, the priority was emphasised on implementing the goals of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The meeting stressed the sharing of experience among member states and the strengthening of international cooperation among professionals. In its report to the meeting, Russia spoke of the domestic agricultural sector's digital transformation and national plans for developing rural areas. The joint declaration, signed at the subsequent BRICs Ministerial Conference, covered topics relating to the use of new technologies in the communications sector, the development of agricultural innovation companies, trade and

regionalisation, and the sustainable development of agriculture in BRICs countries.<sup>10</sup>

Second, the macroeconomic development of the country is unstable. In 2018, in its Russian economic report, the World Bank predicted that Russia's economic growth prospects would be moderate in 2018–2020, which was expected to be 1.5–1.8%.<sup>11</sup> In early 2019, the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, the Central Bank and the National Bureau of Statistics successively announced the economic growth results for 2018. The National Bureau of Statistics estimated the Russian Federation's GDP growth at 2.3%, higher than the Ministry of Economic Development forecasts and the Central Bank. The Ministry of Economic Development estimated economic growth at 1.8% (and then increased to 2%), while the central bank forecasted growth of between 1.5% and 2%.<sup>12</sup> However, the annual growth rate was only due to short-term reasons such as rising oil prices and did not reflect the effective use of basic labour and capital elements.

Raising the economic growth rate above the global average is a crucial task for the further development of national economy, which will ensure the living standards of Russian citizens, ensure the food security of the country, and improve the competitiveness of Russian agricultural products and food in the domestic and foreign markets. The country is considering the development of export products to achieve this goal. The development of the further processing and export of the cereal, flour, oil and fat products, sugar, starch, and confectionery has received further attention from the country. Exports in poultry, pork and beef also represent positive trends. The main export areas of Russian products are located in the Azov-Black Sea, the Caspian coastal area and the Asia-Pacific region. The report prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development specifically pointed out that "world trade is highly unlikely to achieve broad-based growth in the face of low global demand. Besides, to a large extent, the hope of a rapid breakthrough in the largely development-oriented multilateral trade negotiations is fading." This situation in the global economy poses certain risks to development. "In the case of low global demand, world trade is unlikely

to provide broad-based growth except in individual countries and certain special circumstances." Russia's agricultural export is a priority development project for the implementation of long-term goals. Therefore, the country needs to adopt a reasonable trade protectionism policy, which should implement the necessary institutional and infrastructure support to promote agricultural products to foreign markets.

### THE ROLE OF RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF SANCTIONS

First, it is conducive to implementing economic diplomacy and attracting foreign investment from the international point of view. After setbacks in its relations with the West, Russia has attached greater importance to the "Orient" in its strategic goals. The Asia-Pacific region bears on Russia's major strategic interests in the economy, geopolitics, national relations and many other aspects. It should become one of the most important regions for Russia's comprehensive development. The cooperation in the agricultural field has become an important fulcrum for implementing the Eastward Strategy. Firstly, under the trend of globalisation, developing countries play an increasingly stronger role in the world agricultural products market: economic growth, poverty reduction, increased consumption and imports have promoted Western partners to gradually position themselves to the East in world trade, which is obviously conducive to Russia's agricultural development. Compared with the energy sector or the entire industry, the global agricultural market is less sensitive to investment policies changes and has limited dependence on political fluctuations. Population growth and climate change in certain parts of the world have been favourable factors for Russia's agricultural exports. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the largest importers of agricultural products in the world are the European Union, the United States, China, Japan, Canada and Mexico. In contrast, the largest exporters are the European Union, the United States, Brazil, China, Canada and Argentina. 13 The most promising markets for Russia's agricultural exports are the Asia-Pacific countries with sustained consumption growth, including China, Japan, South Korea, etc.

One of the representative manifestations is Russia-Japan economic cooperation in the Far East, mainly in agriculture and energy. Taking the opportunity of Russia's orientation to the East,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> URL: http://mcx.ru/press-service/news/na-vstreche-minis-trov-selskogo-khozyaystva-stran-briks-obsudili-transformat-siyu-rossiyskogo-apk/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> URL: http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/i/jyjl/e/201812/20 181202817419.

<sup>12</sup> URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3873845.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> URL: http://www.fao.org/3/I9542EN/i9542en.pdf.

Japan has actively engaged in contact with Russia to negotiate on territorial disputes, with its bottom line of conducting dialogue and cooperation with Russia through economic cooperation. In May 2016, Japan officially announced the introduction of the "new approach" to its relations with Russia. It included the extension of life expectancy, the development of urban modernisation, the provision of convenient and tidy life and convenience, the interaction of small and medium-sized enterprises, the expansion of cooperation, energy, the improvement of diversification level of Russian industry, the improvement of productivity, the development of far east industry, the establishment of export bases; cooperation in the field of advanced technology; and the strengthening of non-governmental exchanges between Russia and Japan. During the fifth Oriental Economic Forum held on September 4, 2019, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Russia held working meetings with the Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Vietnam and Japan, which focused on the implementation of the joint project between Russia and Japan, aiming at improving agricultural and fishery productivity in the Russian Far East, and establishing greenhouses and pig farms adapted to the Far Eastern climate.

In addition to the Asia-Pacific region, Russia has also been actively developing trade relations with the Middle East, Africa, and other regions. At the group meeting of Russia-Africa Economic Forum on "Sustainable Partnership in Agriculture: Institutions, Tools and Guarantees" held in October 2019, according to Russian Deputy Minister of Agriculture Sergei Levin, Russia believed that Africa was a reliable partner for constructive cooperation in agriculture. Since 2016, Russia's exports to countries in the region had increased by 73%, reaching the US \$ 4.6 billion by the end of 2018, with considerable trade potential. In the next few years, Russia planned to double the supply of agricultural products on the African continent, with an expected growth of more than US \$ 5 billion.14 It was stated that most of Russia's agricultural exports flew to North Africa, and Russia was planning to expand cooperation with other regions. Russia was ready to meet Africa's growing food demands. Deputy Minister Levine emphasised that wheat and barley and sunflower oil, poultry, confectionery, and fish products, had great potential for export growth to countries on the

African continent. Participants also discussed the establishment of logistics infrastructure to develop partnerships with African countries, the issue of mutually beneficial partnerships in agricultural products and food trade, and Russia's investment prospects in agricultural infrastructure in the region. In November 2019, the Russian Minister of Agriculture visited Jordan, expanding the level of bilateral agricultural cooperation. Jordan had long needed to import Russian barley, beans, and vegetables. The two countries had agreed on quarantine standards and procedures for the supply of Russian meat and finished meat, milk and dairy products, and were ready to increase food exports, especially cereal, livestock and fish products.<sup>15</sup>

Second, it is conducive to solving the national economy's structural contradictions from the national perspective. Agriculture, as one of the most important sectors of Russia's national economy, provides food for the people, is the source of raw materials for the processing industry and meets various other social needs. The standard of living and well-being of the population, trophic structure, per capita income, consumption of goods and services and social living conditions all depend in many ways on the development of agriculture. Russia is currently pursuing "breakthrough development" in its national economic and social development, which urgently needs to improve its economic structure. Agriculture is one of the pillar sectors of the national economy of all countries. Regardless of soil and climatic conditions, even the most developed countries are vigorously developing the agricultural economy. Any powerful country in the world requires to be supported by strong agriculture. Therefore, Russia must develop its independent agricultural industry, not to mention its inherent advantages in developing agriculture, such as the broad and fertile agricultural

Meanwhile, the development of agriculture is conducive to rural stability and national security. The gap between urban and rural areas in Russia is enormous because most of the rural areas are located in remote areas, and many villages and towns lack necessary living facilities such as tap water, electricity, communication and so on, resulting in a large number of rural labour force transferred to cities. According to the regional quality-of-life ranking released in early 2019, the highest per capita GDP in Moscow and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> URL: http://mcx.ru/press-service/news/rossiya-udvoit-postav-ki-prodovolstviya-v-afriku-/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> URL: http://mcx.ru/press-service/news/rossiya-i-iordaniya-ukreplyayut-torgovo-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnic hestvo/.

Table 3
Monthly living expenses of Russian families (rouble)\*

Item	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Average monthly household consumption	11715.1	13066.3	14153.8	15 094.3	15 295.4	16632.5
Average monthly food consumption	4078.1	4375.1	4694.9	5111.0	5707.8	6220.7
Monthly consumption by rural households	8156.8	9305.4	9739.5	10611.9	11 271.3	12 070.4
Monthly food consumption by rural households	3579.3	3842.8	4073.8	4457.0	5100.5	5486.2

Source: Report of "Social status and living standards of the Russian people" issued by the Statistical Office of the Russian Federation.

\* URL: https://gks.ru/bgd/regl/b15\_ 44/Main.htm.

lowest Tuva region differ by 25 times. Promoting the development of agriculture can effectively attract the relocation of labour, and its spillover effect can also drive the construction of related infrastructure.

However, as an economic strategy implemented by the country, "import substitution" is contradictory in nature. On the one hand, it is one of the economic policies implemented to protect the economy; on the other hand, it is also a way to integrate economic growth goals into the global economy. The strategy of import substitution is currently of great significance to Russia. It can be understood as a national policy aimed at increasing domestic demands for its products, taking positive measures to reduce dependence on the consumption of similar foreign products, thereby creating globally competitive domestic producers and products, reflecting the necessity of implementing innovative import substitution strategies. The policy of import substitution, aimed at stimulating domestic economic development, should be held in a dual attitude. From the trend of implementing sanctions and retaliatory measures, it is likely to be an incentive to stimulate the development of domestic industries. However, it should also be noted that it aims not only to replace domestic goods with imported ones on the domestic market but also to improve those goods and the quality of services so that they can compete with foreign goods on the world market. From this

perspective, a more cautious attitude is of great importance (*Table 3*).

### PROSPECTS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

First, from a positive perspective, organic agriculture is the "new label" for exports. Organic agriculture is one of the Russian agriculture characteristics, which meets Russia's demand for "clean and quality improvement" of its agricultural products and is also the most significant difference from other large agricultural countries in promoting agricultural development with developed industry and technological capabilities and establishing largescale intensive farms. The development of organic agriculture in Russia has raised import standards and used this factor in diplomatic practice to impose sanctions on some countries. The Russian Ministry of Agriculture has obtained the exclusive right to trademark organic products, which will be issued to enterprises by the Patent and Trademark Commission. The law on organic products has come into force in 2020. Currently, the Russian Ministry of agriculture is working with other authorities to formulate laws and regulations, including maintaining the registration of organic producers and several national standards. The introduction of the single-label model will help improve the quality of products on the domestic market and generally contribute to developing

the country's agricultural-industrial complex. Based on other measures provided by the Russian Government and the Ministry of Agriculture, the creation of Russia's protected brands of organic and environmental agricultural products will address the President of the Russian Federation's task to increase agricultural exports and improve food quality.

The 31st Regional Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was held in Voronezh from May 16 to 18, 2018, with the theme of e-agriculture, agroecology, and organic agriculture. At the meeting, Acting Governor Alexander Gusev offered support for the development of organic agriculture in Voronezh and pointed out that the challenge ahead was to make it a near-term priority for agricultural development in the region. On the eve of the meeting, the Organic Agriculture Alliance released Russian research results in the field from March 2017 to April 2018.

Organic agriculture refers to an agricultural method that does not use pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilisers, growth regulators and genetically modified seeds in agricultural production. There are a total of 70 certified organic agricultural enterprises in Russia, 53 of which meet international certification standards, and 16 certified domestic manufacturers have so far exported their products, mainly cereals, oilseeds and essential oils, to EU countries. When the State Duma passed the Organic Agriculture Act on first reading in January 2018, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev once stated that Russia could take a 10-25% share of the global organic agriculture market in the future.16 It will bring irreplaceability to Russian agricultural products, stabilise the export market of Russian agriculture, and stimulate agriculturalrelated science and technology development. At the same time, the only risk is the deterioration of the political situation. The development of organic agriculture is one of the highlights of Russian agriculture. Its political significance lies in that it has improved the disadvantages in Russian-European trade and increased Russia's initiative under the conditions of sanctions.

Second, from a negative perspective, the domestic agricultural comprehensive production chain has not yet formed. One of the main trends in agricultural development is the technological modernisation of the industry. Another crucial area

is to guarantee subsidies for agricultural producers. The state supports greenhouse vegetable cultivation, pig raising, seed production, etc. High levels of agricultural subsidies have attracted a large number of investors into the agricultural market. However, some problems have not been solved, such as the unreasonable distribution of subsidies, a large part of which are used to support livestock production. In contrast, issues in areas such as feed production have not been solved.

"We are indeed lagging behind other countries in many industries. Except for cereal crops, almost all crops have a high dependence on the import of seeds," said Ogonka, executive director of the Russian Federation of Phytochemical Manufacturers. Almost half of the domestic market seeds come from abroad, and the dependence on imports is more than 50%, even accounting for 90% in the beet varieties. Under the background that agriculture in developed countries has become a high-tech industry, Russian agricultural science funding is scarce. However, the Ministry of Agriculture has formulated corresponding strategies and plans; thus, it has not produced effective results. Given the situation of underdeveloped agricultural raw materials and agricultural science and technology, Russia has reached cooperation intention with Bayer that Bayer will provide Russian researchers with seed materials and teach production techniques to accelerate agricultural development. "The value of the seed market in Russia is 50 billion roubles, of which 24.14 billion roubles are imported." According to data from the Science and Technology Policy and Education Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, vegetable seeds' import dependency has reached 47%. That of feed crops reaches 90%, and breeding and nursery of fruit, berry and nut crops get 70%. 17 The head of the Bayer Technology Transfer Project said that Russian scientists would receive foreign seed materials for essential crops such as corn, soybeans, rape and wheat, and acquire relevant technologies to accelerate the three vegetable crop of tomato, cucumber and cabbage. Researchers at the National Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology can carry out localised improvements and use them for domestic research to obtain localised hybrids and sell varieties of commodities. As part of the technology transfer, Bayer will also provide expert support, including educational activities and Russian representatives'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> URL: https://news.rambler.ru/other/39520317-gd-v-per-vom-chtenii-prinyala-zakonoproekt-ob-organicheskom-selskom-hozyaystve/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> URL: https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3888725?query=bayer.

training to the company's European Research Centre. Bayer will also participate in creating a plant biotechnology education and research centre, which will focus on the four crops of corn, rape, soybeans and wheat.

In the first 20 years of the 21st century, the Russian agricultural policy has been continuously adjusted with the country's development. However, Russia has certain geographical advantages in developing agriculture; such conditions still restrict it as the low starting point of development, insufficient labour force, poor climate conditions, and dependence on machinery and technology imports. To truly realise the self-sufficiency of agricultural products also requires a large amount of national capital and technology investment. Firm agricultural productivity depends on long-term investment and attention, and the process of industrial modernisation is long. Due to the average payback period of 4–5 years in the agricultural sector, it isn't easy to attract external funds. Independent agricultural production industry chain needs the support of workforce, science and technology, industrial modernisation, and other factors. The current agricultural development in Russia only stays at the level of improving agricultural productivity. The prospect of independent and sustainable development of the agricultural sector in the future is still unclear.

## THE INFLUENCE AND PROSPECT OF THE EASTWARD STRATEGY ON SINO-RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION

At present, Russia's foreign economic and trade relations have changed, and Russia is gradually developing economic and trade cooperation with oriental countries. Given that the active Asia-Pacific region has become one of the world's economic centres, economic and trade cooperation with oriental countries is increasingly attractive to Russia. China is not only Russia's largest trading partner in the Asia-Pacific region, but Sino-Russian relations are also one of Russia's most important bilateral ties. The development course of Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation in the past 30 years indicates similar stage characteristics with political relations. Since the 1990s, with China's continuous improvement and Russia's political relations, economic and trade cooperation has gradually expanded. At the present stage, both Russia and China solve the problems of economic restructuring and transformation, and both sides are interested in seeking new forms of interaction and cooperation. As the two countries' political relations enter a "new era", Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation will be further developed. As an important area of Sino-Russian economic and trade cooperation, agriculture will also usher in new cooperation opportunities. In 2018, Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of Russia, and Han Changfu, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China, reached consensus on agro-industrial joint development complex in the Far East, Baikal Lake region of Russia and Northeast China.<sup>18</sup>

As the bilateral economic and trade cooperation level is restricted by the industrial structure and economic model of the two countries, economic and trade cooperation is obviously lagging behind the political mutual trust between the two countries. In 2018, for example, bilateral economic and trade volume exceeded the US \$ 100 billion, reaching the highest level in history. Still, it accounted for a small proportion of China's total foreign trade volume of the US \$ 4 trillion. At present, Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation's focus still lies in trade, and its low level is mainly due to the excessive gap in economic volume between the two sides. The structure of agricultural trade between China and Russia is complementary to each other. In the agricultural field, Russia can cooperate with China in terms of its weaknesses in seed cultivation, agricultural machinery production and labour force. Russia's efforts to strengthen its agricultural productivity have already shown noticeable results, which is conducive to further promoting Sino-Russian trade in agricultural products. On this basis, to expand Sino-Russian cooperation in the field of agriculture, it is more important to innovate cooperation models at the national level. China and Russia do not have a long history of agricultural cooperation, and a large number of agricultural products trade is an emerging trade field. Nowadays, through the establishment of cooperation zones, the operating costs of agricultural product production have been reduced, and customs clearance efficiency has been improved. The establishment of a free trade area for agricultural products can remove the long-term obstacles hindering the development of agricultural cooperation between China and Russia, strengthen the basis of interaction between the two countries, and significantly improve the efficiency

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Joint Communique of the 23rd Regular Meeting of Chinese and Russian Prime Ministers. URL: http://www.gov.cn/guowuyuan/2018–11/07/content\_5338172.htm.

and level of cooperation. Meanwhile, to strengthen customs cooperation and coordination, it is urgent to establish systematic and effective specific rules to simplify the process and procedures of agricultural product quarantine.

### CONCLUSION

Under the influence of sanctions, the Russian agricultural sector has risen against the trend. The government's long-term protection policy has provided conditions for the development of Russian agriculture, which has shown a good development trend. After basically meeting the needs of national food security, the new agricultural strategy is undergoing a transition to "export-oriented". The purpose of the new strategy is to improve the national economic structure and reduce the dependence of the economy on fuel exports; the other is to actively carry out diplomatic activities with countries in the Asia-Pacific region by taking advantage of agricultural trade advantages in combination with the Eastward Strategy. Under the complicated geopolitical situation and the prominent contradictions in national economic structure, attaching importance to agricultural development is an important way for a country to cope with its challenges.

However, Russia's agricultural development is also faced with deficiencies and disadvantages. The key factors affecting agricultural development, including uncertain macroeconomic prospects, insufficient labour force, continued high import rate of agricultural machinery and seeds, cultivation of agricultural talents and research on science and technology, will take a decade or even two for improvement. It needs to be recognised that many foods are not adapted to Russia's geographical conditions, excessive adherence to nationalism and the implementation of comprehensive alternatives will face high costs, and only extensive participation in international cooperation is in the national economic interest. China faces the real threat of food security and the demand for enriching its import structure, while Russia also needs to upgrade and update its industry. Therefore, China-Russia agricultural cooperation has excellent development potential. As an important part of bilateral economic and trade cooperation, it is necessary to strengthen the top-level design of the two countries, promote and deepen cooperation solidly, so that the fruits of agricultural cooperation can benefit the two countries' people.

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