



QU XING

President of the China Institute for International Studies (CIIS)

Mostafa TERRAB, Chairman & CEO of OCP Group

Thank you very much. I have a question on this balance between the small farming that you have in the south of Brazil and large farming, and we think of Africa and see many stories of one developing at the expense of the other, when we mention land grabbing and things like this. Allow me now to turn to Dr. Qu Xing and ask him to enlighten us with the Chinese perspective on all this.

QU Xing, President of the China Institute for International Studies (CIIS)

It is my honour and pleasure to be here among the distinguished participants of this round table. Food security is a serious problem for China, firstly because of a huge population and secondly because of the social and economic development level. Regarding population, the mentality of Chinese people is to have as many children as possible because, during the century before 1949, China was several times invaded by foreign countries, and there were several civil wars; out of 10 children born, only two or three might be expected arrive at maturity.

Following the founding of the People's Republic there was no longer a civil war or invasion, so the statutory conditions and food security conditions improved, but the mentality of the people remained. Therefore, managing this problem is a very tough challenge for the Chinese government.

Regarding economic development, China is a developing country, and the differences between the rural and urban areas, and between the eastern and the western part of China, are huge. 9% of food production is provided by little food processing workshops with fewer than ten employees. This is a huge number, because the number of these kinds of workshops account for 72 of food production and processing enterprises. Therefore, 72% of these small enterprises produce 9% of total food production in the market, so this component poses the most serious problem in terms of food security.

The population of China accounts for 22% of the world population, but the cultivated land of China accounts for 7% of the world's cultivated land, so providing for 22% of the population with only 7% of the cultivated land remains a very tough challenge for every Chinese government. Chinese governments have been making large efforts in terms of quantity for decades in order to protect the cultivated land resources. Certain laws and regulations have been worked out, including an agriculture law, a land management law, and a water and soil conservation law. The government has been taking serious measures to guarantee that the surface of the cultivated land will never be lower than 120 million hectares, and the annual production of grain will not be lower than 550 million tonnes. Grain production in 2011 has been 570 million tonnes.

Regarding quality, to ensure food security, the Chinese government adheres to the principle of giving priority to prevention and control at its root by monitoring and controlling the whole process, and has formed a regulatory format in which the local governments take the responsibility, and related covenants provide guidance and coordination, and different sectors make coordinated efforts under unified national leadership. Responding to the circumstances in China, the Chinese government issues a decision on food security supervision in 2004, according to which one monetary link is supervised by one department. Sectional supervision is adopted as a main means, while supervision of different varieties is a supplementary means, making clear the functions and responsibilities of the food strategy supervisory departments.



The decision divided food security supervision into four links, managed respectively by the four departments of agriculture, of quality, supervision and inspection, of industry and commerce, and of health. The production of primary agricultural products is supervised by the agricultural departments. The quality and daily hygiene supervision of food processing is overseen by the quality supervision and inspection department. Supervision of food circulation and distribution is done by the department of industry and commerce, and that of the catering industry and canteens is taken care of by the health department.

Integrated food safety supervision and coordination and investigation of penalties imposed for major incidents in this regard are the responsibility of the department of food and drug administration, while imported and exported products and other foodstuff are supervised by quality supervision and inspection department.

Therefore, I summarise the measures taken by Chinese governments in this regard into 11 fields: first, intensifying supervision on the quality and safety of agricultural products, second, establishing and strictly implementing market access systems for food quality and safety, third, intensifying state supervision by sample surveys for food quality, fourth intensifying rectification of food workshops, fifth, promoting the responsibility system for regional food safety control, and sixth, stepping up supervision of the food circulation sector. The seventh is intensifying supervision of food safety in the catering industry, the eighth is carrying out rectification of overall food quality and safety, the ninth, speeding up the construction of a risk warning and emergency response system, the tenth is establishing and improving a food recall system, and the 11th is improving the food safety credit system.

Therefore, those are some general ideas concerning the measures taken by Chinese governments to ensure food safety and quality.