

China's soybean growth hits record high

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China's soybean production has increased by 1.82 million hectares to 10.26 million hectares in 2022, the largest amount since 1958, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Soybean output rose to 20.28 million metric tons, 3.89 million higher than in 2021. It is the first time the soybean output on the mainland has surpassed 20 million tons, this helped raise the soybean self-sufficiency rate by 3 per cent in a single year.

Oil crop output edged up 1.1 per cent to 36.53 million tons last year, The improved supply, coupled with a national campaign to encourage frugality in the catering sector, has led to a 1.6 per cent rise in self-sufficiency in overall cooking oil production.

In Northeast China, a traditional soybean growing area, farmers have rotated the crop with corn.

In places such as Northwest China and the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, growers were encouraged to intercrop soybeans and corn if conditions allowed. More than 1,000 counties scattered across 16 provincial regions were involved.

Other oil crops such as peanuts, flax, sesame, and sunflower have been promoted across northern regions.

This year, the ministry aims to expand growing areas for soybean and oil crops by at least 660,000 hectares, and raise the self-sufficiency rate for cooking oil production by 1 per cent.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the area planted with soybeans peaked at 12.73 million hectares in 1957. Cultivation of the crop started contracting in the 1990s after it was edged out by more lucrative cash crops such as

corn.