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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## China approves two new GM crops from U.S. for import, renews 10 others

BEIJING (Reuters) - China approved two new genetically modified (GM) crops for import on Monday that could boost agricultural purchases from the United States, while renewing permits for 10 others, the Chinese agriculture ministry said.

Earlier this month, Beijing and Washington announced a Phase 1 trade deal, under which China has agreed to import more farm goods from the United States.

The United States has demanded that China change its GM crop import application process, saying they want it to be more transparent, timely and based on scientific methods. The two new GM crops approved were Corteva Agriscience's DAS-81419-2 soybean and 55-1 papaya, jointly developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Hawaii University.

Corteva said it was pleased Chinese authorities had authorized imports of the Conkesta soybean trait, which controls insects. Conkesta will be stacked with another GM soybean trait called Enlist E3, which resists weed killers. Corteva was the agricultural unit of DowDuPont, prior to being spun off as an independent company. It is still waiting for Chinese regulators to review a canola trait, which has been approved for years in the United States, Canada and other markets.

Monday's approvals were seen "as more evidence of progress as a result of the trade talks," said Arlan Suderman, chief commodities economist for U.S. broker INTL FCStone.

"Dealing with a quicker and more transparent process of approvals was certainly something the U.S. was pushing for," he said

The United States is the world's biggest producer of GM crops, while China is the top importer of GM soybeans and canola.

U.S. farmers and global seed companies have long complained about Beijing's slow and unpredictable process for approving GM crops for import.

"This further expands channels for imports of U.S. agricultural products, and helps pave the way for buying more U.S. soybeans," said Li Qiang, chief analyst with Shanghai JC Intelligence Co. Ltd.

"Approval of the papaya variety could help promote more fruit imports from the U.S.," Li added.

China also renewed permission for imports of 10 other GM products, including BASF developed T25 corn, A5547-127 soybean, T45 canola, Oxy-235 canola, and Ms8Rf3 canola.

Bayer-owned Monsanto Far East Ltd's MON89788 soybean, 15985 cotton and H7-1 beet were also reapproved, along with DuPont subsidiary Pioneer's 305423 soybean and 305423xGTS40-3-2 soybean.

All approvals took effect from Dec. 2 2019 and will last for three years, according to a statement on the agriculture ministry's website.

Bayer and BASF had no immediate comments.



## Microsoft says North Korea-linked hackers stole sensitive information

(Reuters) - Microsoft Corp said on Monday it has taken control of web domains which were used by a hacking group called "Thallium" to steal information.

Thallium is believed to be operating from North Korea, Microsoft said in a blog post, and the hackers targeted government employees, think tanks, university staff members and individuals working on nuclear proliferation issues, among others.

Most of the targets were based in the United States, as well as Japan and South Korea, the company said. (bit.ly/2QB6CFc)

Thallium tricked victims through a technique known as "spear phishing", using credible-looking emails that appear legitimate at first glance

Microsoft said it now has control of 50 web domains used by the group to conduct its operations, following a case filed against the hacking group in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, and a subsequent court order.

Thallium also used malware to compromise systems and steal data, and is the fourth nation-state group against which Microsoft has taken legal action, the company said.

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# Ousted Renault-Nissan boss Ghosn leaves Japan for Lebanon

PARIS (Reuters) - Carlos Ghosn, the ousted boss of the Renault-Nissan (RENA.PA) (7201.T) carmaking alliance who was awaiting trial in Japan on charges of financial misconduct, flew into Lebanon on Monday evening, several newspapers reported.

FILE PHOTO: Former Nissan Motor chairman Carlos Ghosn leaves the Tokyo Detention House in Tokyo, Japan, April 25, 2019. REUTERS/Issei Kato  
France's Les Echos newspaper cited an unidentified source and a report in Lebanese newspaper L'Orient-Le Jour, but there was no immediate confirmation from official sources. The Wall Street Journal and New York Times said Ghosn had fled Japan.

Ghosn's attorney did not have an immediate comment, but a person close to Ghosn who asked not to be identified confirmed he was in Beirut as of Monday.

Japanese public broadcaster NHK said it spoke to a member of Ghosn's defense team and that the lawyer was unaware the former Nissan executive may have left Japan and would confirm whether it is true. The broadcaster also said prosecutors were not aware Ghosn may be outside the country and are seeking confirmation.

**RELATED COVERAGE**

Factbox: Ghosn's bail conditions - Surveillance cameras, no internet access

Factbox: Financial wrongdoing allegations against Carlos Ghosn  
A spokesman for the Tokyo prosecutors office had no immediate comment to Reuters and officials at the Lebanese embassy in Tokyo could not be reached to comment. A Nissan spokesman in Tokyo declined to comment.

It was unclear how Ghosn, who holds both French and Lebanese citizenship, would have been able to leave Japan, where he has been under strict court-imposed restrictions on his movements.

The Financial Times said Ghosn was no longer under house arrest, but said it was not clear whether he had escaped or a deal had been reached. Ghosn landed at Beirut's Rafic al-Hariri international airport late on Sunday, the paper said, citing an



FILE PHOTO: Former Nissan Motor chairman Carlos Ghosn leaves the Tokyo Detention House in Tokyo, Japan, April 25, 2019. REUTERS/Issei Kato

associate of Ghosn.

The Journal cited people familiar with the matter saying Ghosn had fled Japan, arriving on Monday. One unidentified person told the newspaper Ghosn did not believe he would get a fair trial there and was "tired of being an industrial political hostage."

Ghosn is expected to hold a press conference in Lebanon in the coming days, the Journal said.

Ghosn's movements and communications had been closely monitored and restricted to prevent his fleeing the country and tampering with evidence, the Tokyo District court previously said.

Ghosn was arrested at a Tokyo airport shortly after his private jet touched down on Nov. 19, 2018. He faces four charges - which he denies - including hiding income and enriching himself through payments to dealerships in

the Middle East.

Nissan sacked the once-lauded Ghosn, saying its internal investigations revealed misconduct ranging from understating his salary while he was its chief executive, and transferring \$5 million of Nissan funds to an account in which he had an interest.

Brazilian-born, of Lebanese descent and a French citizen, Ghosn began his career in 1978 at tiremaker Mi-

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# Editor's Choice



FILE PHOTO: A Qualcomm sign is seen during the China International Import Expo (CIIE), at the National Exhibition and Convention Center in Shanghai



FILE PHOTO: Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell holds a news conference after a Federal Open Market Committee meeting in Washington



A couple walk between snowmen on Songhua River that displays snowmen as a part of annual ice festival, in the northern city of Harbin, Heilongjiang province



Visitors stand in front of ice sculptures illuminated by colored lights at annual ice festival, in the northern city of Harbin, Heilongjiang province



FILE PHOTO - Liquefied natural gas(LNG) storage tank and workers are reflected in a puddle at PetroChina's receiving terminal at Rudong port in Nantong



FILE PHOTO: The inner view of a terminal hall of the new Daxing International Airport under construction on the outskirts of Beijing



A screen displays the headlines that the U.S. Federal Reserve raised interest rates as a trader works at a post on the floor of the NYSE in New York



FILE PHOTO: A guard walks in front of a Federal Reserve image before press conference in Washington

Climate Change Rains Insurance Misery On Homeowners



(Illustration/Axios)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Climate change is making home insurance unavailable or unaffordable in the riskiest areas for hurricanes, wildfires and flooding.

Why it matters: As insurance companies pay record amounts to homeowners who have suffered partial or total losses, they retreat from or raise premiums in places where claims are owed.

What's going on: Company payouts for natural catastrophes in 2017 and 2018 stood at \$219 billion, the highest ever for a consecutive two-year period, according to Swiss Re, a company — known as a reinsurer — that underwrites risks for home insurance and other policies.

Insurers continue to write policies in areas prone to disaster, but tend to hike monthly premiums to offset the cost.

Every state saw annual premiums rise between 2007 and 2016 (the latest year which data is available from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners).

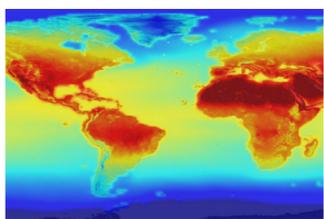
States in tornado alley saw the biggest jump: Oklahoma saw a \$654 increase over a decade, while Kansas saw premiums rise \$501 on average.

And now, the rise masks that insurers are

limiting coverage in areas deemed too risky.

The 2018 Camp Fire in northern California was the most destructive in property damage the state's history.

Insured losses topped \$13 billion last year, according to the California Department of Insurance.



Fearing bigger losses, insurers are pulling back from high-risk areas in California, leaving homeowners scrambling.

In the last three years, the counties at greatest risk for wildfires saw the number of new and renewed homeowners' insurance policies fall by 8,700, according to the California Department of Insurance.

In Florida, homeowners have seen insurance costs rise as areas are considered more at-risk by insurers.

For residents by the beach or coast:

Mortgage companies require flood insurance, a separate policy that's usually provided by the federal National Flood Insurance — typically \$700.

Private companies, which once considered the risk too heavy, are dipping their toes back in — for a price.

The number of private companies offering flood insurance rose to 120 in 2018, (vs. 90 in 2017 and 50 in 2016, according to the Insurance Information Institute).

These players took in \$541 million in premiums in 2018, an increase of 11.5% from the prior year.

Homeowners also need wind-related insurance, on top of regular homeowner's insurance, which are sometimes sold as a package.

A huge portion of homeowner policy is wind- or hurricane-related in South Florida, Shahid Hamid, a professor at Florida International University, tells Axios.

The bottom line: Writing these policies could eventually put the insurers out of business.

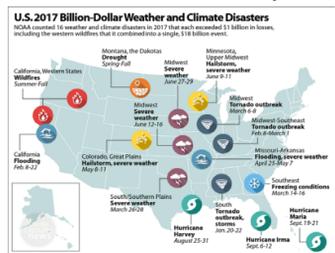
Last year, California-based insurer Merced Property & Casualty filed for bankruptcy after it was unable to pay out millions of dollars in claims to policyholders after California's Camp Fire, per CNN.

Regulators are becoming concerned about insurer solvency in the face of increasingly severe weather-related losses, according to a report by Deloitte. (Courtesy axios.com)

Related

Global warming could increase power costs by billions

The big new federal report on the effects of climate change released on Black Friday explores how global warming could eventually increase U.S. power costs by tens of billions of dollars annually.



Why it matters: The energy chapter of the 1,656-page report lays out a suite of ways that higher temperatures and extreme weather affect power and fuel infrastructure and availability — and the financial toll.

Threat level: On power bills specifically, even though buildings and appliances are getting more efficient, higher temperatures will generally come with higher electricity costs. Why?

There will be higher power demand (in part for more cooling in a hotter world), combined with higher temperatures reducing the efficiency of power generation and delivery.

And there's the need to build new generation capacity to meet higher demand, with billions in costs ultimately passed along to homes and businesses.

By the numbers: By 2040, nationwide

residential and commercial power expenditures are projected to rise by as much as 18% if carbon dioxide keeps piling up in the atmosphere unchecked (with lower projections if emissions are cut significantly).

By the end of the century, an increase in average annual energy expenditures from increased energy demand under the higher scenario is estimated at \$32-\$87 billion, the report states.

The big picture: Higher energy costs are one of many potential outcomes in a warming world. More broadly, the report warns of "hundreds of billions of dollars" in annual losses to some economic sectors without scaled up actions to adapt to current changes and slash emissions to avoid future warming. (Courtesy axios.com)

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Advertisement for the 2020 Texas Lunar Festival, featuring a red panda mascot and details about the 24th Annual Texas International Lunar Festival.

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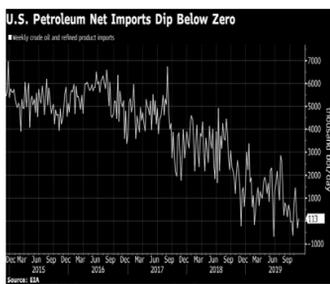
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**U.S. Posts First Month In 70 Years As A Net Petroleum Exporter**



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

(Bloomberg) -- The U.S. solidified its status as an energy producer by posting the first full month as a net exporter of crude and petroleum products since government records began in 1949. The nation exported 89,000 barrels a day more than it imported in September, according to data from the Energy Information Administration Friday. While the U.S. has previously reported net exports on a weekly basis, today's figures mark a key milestone that few would have predicted just a decade ago, before the onset of the shale boom. President Donald Trump has touted American energy independence, saying that the nation is moving away from relying on foreign oil. While the net exports show decreasing reliance on imports, the U.S. still continues to buy heavy crude oil from other nations to meet the needs of its refineries. It also buys refined products when they are available for a lower cost from foreign suppliers.



"The U.S. return to being a net exporter serves to remind how the oil industry can deliver surprises -- in this case, the shale oil revolution - that upend global oil prices, production, and trade flows," said Bob McNally, a former energy adviser to President George W. Bush and president of the consulting firm Rapidan Energy Group. Soaring output from shale deposits led by the Permian Basin of West Texas and New Mexico has been in main driver of the transition -- but America's status as a net exporter may be fragile. Many

Texas wildcatters are predicting a rapid decline in production growth next year, while some Democratic contenders for the White House have called for a ban on fracking -- the controversial drilling technique that unleashed the boom.

"In the days of Jimmy Carter and even Ronald Reagan, we would have longed for this day," said Jim Lucier, managing director of Washington, D.C.-based Capital Alpha Partners LLC. "Now we scarcely notice it at all."

In its Short-Term Energy Outlook earlier this month, the EIA flagged the turnaround and forecast total net exports of crude and products of 750,000 barrels a day in 2020, compared with average net imports of 520,000 barrels a day this year.



Analysts at Rystad Energy said this week the U.S. is only months away from achieving energy independence, citing surging oil and gas output as well as the growth of renewables.

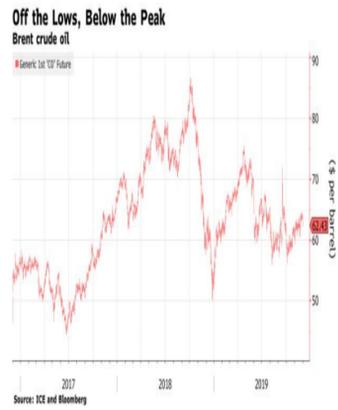
"Going forward, the United States will be energy independent on a monthly basis, and by 2030 total primary energy production will outpace primary energy demand by about 30%," said Sindre Knutsson, vice president of Rystad Energy's gas markets team.

To contact the reporter on this story: Stephen Cunningham in Washington at scunningh10@bloomberg.net

**Related**  
**OPEC+ Gambles That U.S. Shale's Golden Age Is Over**

For years, OPEC ignored the rise of the U.S. shale industry and came to regret its mistake. Now, the group is making another bold gamble on America's oil rev-

olution: that its golden age is over. When the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries meets this week, ministers will discuss whether to extend their current output target, rather than reduce it, according to people familiar with the internal debate. The reason? They believe relentless U.S. oil production growth will slow rapidly next year.



OPEC isn't alone. Across the industry, oil traders and executives believe U.S. production will grow less in 2020 than this year, and at a significantly slower rate than in 2018. On paper, the cartel has the oil market under control.

Brent crude has been trading around \$60 a barrel for most of 2019, about 14% higher than at the start of the year but well below the peak of \$75.60 a barrel set in late April.

"Saudi Arabia is doing a reasonable job to balance the market," said Marco Dunand, head of commodity trading house Mercuria Energy Group Ltd. He has some words of warning too: "OPEC will need to watch U.S. production very closely." But Saudi Arabia and its allies should be wary of discounting competition from U.S. shale and other non-OPEC suppliers.



Total U.S. oil production reached an all-time high of almost 17.5 million barrels a day in September, up 1.3 million barrels a day from a year earlier. That expansion is likely to continue at least into the beginning of 2020 before slowing down. (Courtesy Bloomberg.com)



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