

Farmers can be your neighbors



A farmers market, called "Farm to Neighbors" on the Lantern Festival, Feb. 11, 2017. [Photo/Wang Zhe]

Besides shopping in supermarkets, people in Beijing can buy fresh vegetables from farmers' markets, which are located in shopping malls. The initiative is called "Farm to neighbors".

Lantern Festival Market

The [Lantern Festival](#) Market was held from February 11 to 12 for the traditional Chinese festival when people eat Yuanxiao, or rice dumplings, and other dishes to celebrate the first full moon after the Chinese New Year with their families.

Many locals came to this farmers' market to purchase food or enjoy interesting activities.

An elderly couple made Yuanxiao with two different fillings on-site, attracting many customers. Many families also painted lanterns under the guidance of a Chinese folk maestro.

Vegetables, meat, noodles, bread and sauces are sold by their producers, who own their own farms or factories. Most of them just produce organic food.

"Because our Yuanxiao are made of organic glutinous rice flour, they are more expensive than those in supermarkets. In fact, the numbers of Yuanxiao I rolled can't meet the demand, and many locals, especially foreigners prefer this healthy food," said the Yuanxiao roller.

Located in the embassy area, the farmers' market is popular with foreigners who live in Beijing. James, an American, always takes his Chinese wife to shop here.

"We come here twice a month, it has a lot of stuff that can be guaranteed and every time you can find new things," said James.

Beijing bans higher emission vehicles from road



Starting from Feb. 15, light-duty gasoline-powered cars that fail to meet the National Emission Standard III will be banned from entering Beijing's fifth ring on weekdays. [Photo: CRI]

Beijing will ban high-emission vehicles from its urban areas starting Wednesday, authorities said Monday.

Starting from Feb. 15, light-duty gasoline-powered cars that fail to meet the National Emission Standard III will be banned from entering Beijing's fifth ring on weekdays.

Violators will be fined 100 yuan (US\$14.50) for every four hours that they drive on the road. Substandard cars will also be taken off the road through annual inspections or spot checks.

The Chinese capital currently requires new cars to comply with the “Beijing VI” emission standard, which is higher than the widely-used National Emission Standard V and equivalent to the Euro VI standard, the strictest in China.

The National Emission Standard I was introduced in 1999 and the National Emission Standard II followed in 2004.

“After weeding out yellow-labeled cars [outdated and heavy-polluting vehicles], vehicles consistent with the National Emission Standards II and III release most of the pollutants on the roads,” said Yu Jianhua, chief engineer of the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau.

Higher-polluting gasoline vehicles account for less than 10 percent of vehicles on the road, but discharge over 30 percent of nitrogen oxide and 25 percent of volatile organic compounds, according to Yu.

Beijing’s 5.7 million vehicles produce 500,000 tonnes of various pollutants annually and account for 31 percent of locally-generated PM 2.5, a particulate matter associated with hazardous smog, making it the prime source of PM2.5, according to the environmental authority.

Plagued by smog over the past decade, the capital city has initiated a series of regulations to improve its air quality.

It has moved out high-polluting industries, pulled outdated cars off the road, continued to improve the public transportation system and rolled out policies to support new energy vehicles.

Average density of PM 2.5 in the capital was 73 micrograms per cubic meter in 2016, down 9.9 percent from the previous year, according to the Beijing Municipal Reform and Development Commission.

[CCDI inspections reveal weakening of Party leadership](#)

China’s top disciplinary body has discovered the weakening of Party leadership and promotion of corrupt officials during inspections of four provincial-level regions, according to a statement released Monday.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) of the Communist Party of China (CPC) kicked off a new round of inspections last November, which covered Beijing and Chongqing municipalities, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Gansu Province. All the four regions had been inspected previously.

This round of inspections found weak CPC leadership, inappropriate

promotions, violations of frugality rules and alarming space for corruption at state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and other sectors, among other problems, according to the findings released by the CCDI.

In Beijing, inspectors found that issues identified in the previous inspection – related to Lyu Xiwen, the former Beijing deputy Party chief who has been charged with corruption – had not been dealt with in a timely manner.

Some problems uncovered during the previous inspection, including lowly officials involved in huge corruption, improper selection and appointment of officials, and violations of the eight-point frugality rules, were found to have recurred, according to the CCDI.

In Chongqing, the pernicious influence of Bo Xilai, former Party chief of Chongqing, and Wang Lijun, former police chief and vice mayor, “have not been wiped out completely,” and corruption at SOEs “remains severe,” the statement said.

Inspectors also found in Guangxi that some sectors, including land, transportation, forestry and SOEs, were more prone to be corrupt, and in Gansu, risks of corruption were high in sectors like transportation, civil aviation, land and culture.

[China orders medical security campaign after HIV infections](#)

China’s health authority has ordered a nationwide medical security campaign following five incidents of HIV transmission due to staff negligence at a hospital in the eastern province of Zhejiang.

Agencies and individuals involved in the incident will be held accountable, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) said in statement Monday.

At least five people have been infected with HIV after a technician at the Zhejiang Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital reused pipettes on separate patients, according to a statement released by Zhejiang provincial health and family planning commission.

The incident was reported to the provincial commission on Jan. 26.

The NHFPC and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine will despatch a team to Zhejiang to oversee the investigation into the incident.

There's a real lack of ambition and clarity in the government's digital transformation strategy – Trickett

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's

Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to warnings from the Institute for Government about deficiencies in the Government Transformation Strategy, said:

"Ministers need to pay attention to these warnings. There's a real lack of ambition and clarity in the government's digital transformation strategy.

"While the Government tried to avoid criticism by sneaking it out after the Brexit debate, they cannot ignore the details which they'll be judged on in the long term.

"Theresa May and her Government should throw their weight behind this strategy to make sure a digital transformation actually takes place – and this isn't just another flashy strategy that falls by the wayside when Ministers realise they haven't thought through the details."

Ends