

# 喂养巨龙：中国渴求拉美农田

## China's hunger for Latin American agriculture



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曾经一度停滞的中拉商贸关系因为中国对拉美丰富的自然资源以及农产品的大量进口而再度回复生机。中国对这一地区的关系也从一开始的一时之需转化为源源不断的汲取，甚至可能汲取更多。

2009年，中拉贸易额达到1,200亿美元。胡锦涛主席预言2010年实现1,000亿美元的交易额今年能够增至三倍。目前，中国和拉美一些国家之间签署的自由贸易协定就充分显现了中国与这些地区之间搭建起来的坚实桥梁。

作为中国在农产品、原材料以及能源上最为可靠的供应者，拉美正努力达到中国稳固增长的需求。在这些商品中，农产品出口不断扩大以满足中国人口的需求。尤值一提的是，拉美各国大力扩产大豆，以应对中国的需求。中拉关系之重要，由此可见一斑。因此，本文也将围绕农作物，这一对于中国人口生计最不可或缺的产品而展开讨论。

### 中国对大豆的需求

对中国人而言，大豆是人和动物必不可少的消费产品。大豆能够生产出大豆粉、豆奶、豆油、豆腐和大豆组织蛋白。大豆同时也是中国饭菜少不了的调味品——酱油的主要原料。

中国是全世界最大的大豆进口国，年均消费量高达4,000万吨。随着中国人口的增长、人均收入的提高以及农业的扩大，中国国内的供应已远远无法满足其对豆制品的需求。经济分析员预测中国将很快进口超过全球50%的大豆产品。这就使其愈发依赖阿根廷以及巴西，这两个全球最大

的大豆生产国。由于中国正逐渐转向对拉美产品的进口，对拉美之大豆贸易将很快取代美国，而跃居大豆出国之首。

### 拉美的回应

面对中国对大豆产品如此高涨的需求，以及从中获取的丰厚回报，拉美反应热烈而迅速。例如，巴西和阿根廷已经转移经济发展重心以进一步迎合中国对大豆的需求。阿根廷，一个曾以培植多种农作物以及高质牛肉输出而闻名的国家，如今将其50%以上的耕地用以种植大豆。

### 大豆和全球市场

目前，中国对大豆的进口已成为国际市场上的一项被密切关注的期货交易。大豆价格和供需成为全球金融健康的重要“气象标”。世界金融界怀疑，大豆价格的提升是最近全球金融海啸退潮的有力证明。经济学家紧密注视大豆供需，同时也对拉美大豆贸易的蓬勃发展保持高度的重视。

但是，也有经济学家指出，中拉之间飞速发展的贸易不能永久持续，因为中国在不远的将来会减少其对原材料的需求，而中拉自由贸易协定的增加至多不过是地区间的短暂的维系。虽然如此，中国对拉美农业的投资至少显示了拉美贸易将在未来十年内持续发展。拉美丰富的矿藏资源包括原油、铜以及锂，都将持续服务于中拉投资者的需求。比如说，2010年3月1日，中国与秘鲁的双边自由贸易协定正式生效。据秘鲁外贸旅游局称，协定之日起的十年内，至少一万个新公司将开始对中国出口他们的产品。

此外，2010年4月8日，哥斯达黎加与中国签署自由贸易协定，撤除贸易壁垒并促进双边纽带。更为重要的是，该协定取消了两国多达90%的贸易产品的关税。作为亚洲在拉美的第九大贸易伙伴，哥斯达黎加期望该协定能够对中国投资开放更多的产业，同时构建中拉在文化、体育以及技术上的交流与互动。

中国也十分清晰地表明其与拉美增加贸易往来的愿望。2010年4月，中国官员访问了南美数个国家和地区，开始勾画进一步推动中拉贸易往来以及鼓励对拉直接投资的战略蓝图。当然，中国领导人不是在促进中拉经济关系中“一个人战斗”；哥伦比亚主席阿尔瓦罗·乌里韦·贝莱斯意识到中国在创建对该地区的长期投资机会。阿尔瓦罗·乌里韦·贝莱斯积极促成与中国的自由贸易协定，并期望以此来推动哥伦比亚对中国市场的贸易。

### 未来走向

作为拥有13亿人口消费量的大国，中国正在而且将会继续成为全球经济强有力的参与者。为了维持其目前的经济扩展，中国毫无疑问将会成为主要商品和能源资源的头号购买者和消费者。拉美国家已做好准备迎接来自中国源源不断的需求。同时，大量对中国出口也使拉美各国获取了数目可观的直接投资。尽管大豆市场对于中拉贸易关系的重要性急速提升，其也仅是两个地区之间将要进行的大量贸易与投资的冰山一角。随着越来越多的拉美国家与中国签署自由贸易协定，两个地区的投资者将会在商贸中发掘新的潜能，并在新兴的市场中创造更多的企业。■

**A** once-stagnant Sino-Latin American business relationship has exploded with burgeoning Chinese imports of Latin America's rich natural resources and agricultural commodities. What started out as just a flirtation between the two regions has transformed into a relationship which promises to fulfill China's insatiable needs, with the potential for much more.

With Sino-Latin American trade reaching US\$120 billion in 2009, Chinese president Hu Jintao's earlier prediction of realizing US\$100 billion by 2010 could in fact be tripled by this year. The recent signing of free trade agreements between China and several countries throughout Latin America illustrates the strong links between the two regions.

As one of China's most reliable suppliers in agricultural products, raw materials and energy, Latin America is taking strides to fulfill China's mounting needs. Of these commodities, agricultural products are increasingly exported to fulfill the demands of China's population. In particular, Latin America has drastically increased its harvesting of soya beans in order to meet China's demand.

Understanding its importance to the Sino-Latin American relationship, we focus on this crop – which continues to make headlines – as the most significant commodity needed to sustain China's population.

### Chinese demand for soya beans

For the Chinese, soya is a versatile product for both human and animal consumption. Soya beans can produce soy flour, soy milk, soya bean oil, tofu and textured vegetable proteins. Soya beans are also a principal ingredient for soy sauce, a Chinese staple.

China is the largest soya bean importer in the world, consuming about 40 million tons annually. As China's population grows, its median income increases and its agricultural industry expands. In turn, China's demand for soya products has outpaced its domestic supply. Financial forecasters predict that China may soon import over 50% of global soya bean production. This will necessitate an even greater reliance on Argentina and Brazil, two of the largest soya producers in the world. Because of China's steady shift towards

Latin American imports, the Sino-Latin American soya trade will soon overtake export numbers from the United States, the current top soya bean exporter.

### Latin America's response

Recognizing China's high demand for soya bean products, and the benefits stemming from China's deep pockets, Latin American nations have responded aggressively. Brazil and Argentina, for example, have shifted their economies to further cater to China's soya bean needs. Argentina, once a country known for its cultivation of numerous types of crops and high beef output, now devotes over 50 % of its farmable land to soya bean production.

### Soya beans and global markets

Chinese importation of soya beans is currently one of the most heavily monitored futures transactions in the international market. Soya bean prices, demand and production are important indicators of global financial health. The worldwide financial community speculates that a rise in soya bean prices is a strong indicator that the recent global economic recession is passing. Economists closely monitoring soya bean supply and demand are also keeping a steady eye on the thriving Sino-Latin American soya bean trade.

If China's investment in Latin American agriculture is any indication, Sino-Latin American trade will continue to boom in the coming decade. Latin America's rich resources, including crude oil, copper, and lithium, will continue to serve the needs of the Sino-Latin American investor.

Some economists suggest that the thriving trade between China and Latin America cannot last for ever, and that China will soon reduce its need for raw materials. However, the steady increase in the number of Sino-Latin American free trade agreements evidences more than just a fleeting engagement between the regions. For example, on March 1, 2010, the bilateral free trade agreement between China and Peru took effect. According to Peru's Foreign Trade and Tourism Ministry (Mincetur), during the agreement's first decade alone, more than 10,000 new companies will begin exporting their products to China.

In addition, on 8 April, Costa Rica signed a free trade agreement with China, removing trade barriers and enhancing bilateral ties. Most importantly, the agreement removes tariffs from more than 90% of the products traded between these nations. As Asia's ninth largest trading partner in Latin America, Costa Rica hopes that the agreement will open more sectors for Chinese investment as well as create a Sino-Latin American synergy of culture, sports, and technology.

China has made its desire to increase trade with Latin America clear. In a visit to various South American nations in April, Chinese officials began mapping out a strategy designed to further promote Sino-Latin American trade and encourage foreign direct investment in Latin America. China's leaders are not the only ones promoting closer ties between the two regions. President Alvaro Uribe of Columbia recognizes that China is creating long-term opportunities for the region. In promoting a free trade agreement with China, Uribe hopes to promote greater Columbian trade to Chinese markets.

### Looking to the future

To sustain its current economic expansion, China will undoubtedly become a leading purchaser and consumer of major commodities and energy sources.

Latin American nations stand ready to meet China's seemingly unquenchable needs. In exchange for massive exports to China, Latin American nations continue to gain considerable foreign direct investment.

The soya bean market, although immensely important to Sino-Latin American trade relations, is just the tip of the iceberg of the potential for vast trade and investment flowing between these two emerging regions.

As more Latin American nations enter into free trade agreements with China, investors from both regions will discover new potential in commodity trade, as well as increased ventures into new markets. ■

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