

New wheat variety deal strengthens China's drive for seed innovation and food security

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Agreement with Northwest A&F University aims to fast-track the commercialization of Xinong 1155, strengthening China's seed industry through closer industry-research collaboration



China is intensifying efforts to translate agricultural research into commercial farming solutions, with Shaanxi Agricultural Development Group signing a variety rights transfer agreement with Northwest A&F University (NWAUFU) for the newly developed wheat variety Xinong 1155. The agreement marks another step in China's broader strategy of accelerating seed innovation by strengthening partnerships between research institutions and commercial agricultural enterprises.

The transfer gives Shaanxi Agricultural Development Group the rights to commercialize Xinong 1155, enabling the company to scale seed production, expand market adoption and bring the new wheat variety to growers more rapidly. For NWAUFU, one of China's leading agricultural research universities, the agreement represents the successful commercialization of years of breeding research while reinforcing its role in supporting national food security through scientific innovation.

It is believed that intellectual property transfers such as this are critical to improving the pace at which agricultural breakthroughs reach farmers. Rather than allowing promising varieties to remain within research institutions, China is encouraging universities and state-backed agricultural enterprises to work together to shorten the commercialization cycle and strengthen domestic seed competitiveness.

Xinong 1155 was developed to meet the evolving needs of China's wheat sector, where improving productivity, resilience and grain quality has become increasingly important amid climate variability, changing production conditions and rising demand for high-quality food grains. Although wheat breeding has traditionally focused on yield improvements, newer varieties are increasingly expected to combine stable performance with stronger disease tolerance, environmental adaptability and improved processing quality.

The agreement also reflects China's broader push to modernize its seed industry through greater protection and commercialization of plant variety rights. Policymakers have placed seed technology at the centre of national agricultural strategy, encouraging stronger collaboration between research institutions, breeding programmes and commercial seed companies to accelerate innovation and reduce reliance on imported germplasm.

For Shaanxi Agricultural Development Group, the acquisition expands its portfolio of proprietary crop genetics while strengthening its position across the seed value chain. By integrating breeding achievements from leading academic institutions into commercial production, the company aims to improve the availability of high-performing wheat varieties for farmers and contribute to long-term grain productivity.

For NWAUFU, the partnership underscores the growing emphasis on converting scientific research into practical agricultural solutions. The university has established itself as one of China's leading agricultural research institutions, with internationally recognised programmes in crop breeding, plant science and agricultural innovation that increasingly support technology transfer and industry collaboration.

As governments worldwide place greater emphasis on food security and climate resilience, the commercialization of improved crop varieties is becoming a strategic priority. The Xinong 1155 agreement illustrates how closer cooperation between research institutions and agribusinesses is emerging as an important mechanism for accelerating agricultural innovation and strengthening the competitiveness of domestic seed industries.