China and Global Food Security

Elements in Global China

DOI: 10.1017/9781108914680
First published online: September 2022

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Abstract: In less than half a century (1978–2020), China has transformed itself from a country that barely fed itself to a powerful player in the global food system, characterized by massive food imports, active overseas agricultural engagement, and the global expansion of Chinese agribusiness. This Element offers a nuanced analysis of China’s global food strategy and its impacts on food security and the international agri-food order. To feed a population of 1.4 billion, China actively seeks overseas agri-food resources whilst maintaining a high level of domestic food production. The strategy gives China an advantageous position in the global food system, but it also creates contradictions and problems within and beyond the country. This could potentially worsen global food insecurity in the long term.

Keywords: China, food security, food system, agri-food order, national–global food duality

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ISBNs: 9781108823814 (PB), 9781108914680 (OC)
ISSNs: 2632-7341 (online), 2632-7333 (print)
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