**As Lunar New Year Holiday Nears, Less Pork in China**

**春节渐近，中国的猪肉却越来越少**

Many Asian countries are making final preparations for Lunar New Year celebrations. In China, the Lunar New Year holiday will begin this Friday, January 24. Under the country’s traditional zodiac system, the next 12 months will be known as the Year of the Rat.

许多亚洲国家正在为农历新年做最后的准备。中国的农历新年是1月24日本周五。按照中国传统的十二生肖体系，接下来的12个月将被称为鼠年。

Food is an important part of the yearly celebration, and pork -- the meat from pigs -- is central to many Lunar New Year meals.

食物是每年庆祝活动的重要组成部分，而猪肉——即猪的肉——是许多农历新年大餐的核心。

But this year could be different in China because of African swine fever virus, also known as African swine flu. The disease, which affects farm animals, has led to the loss of huge numbers of pigs on Chinese farms.

受非洲猪瘟病毒（也被称为非洲猪流感）的影响，今年中国的新年或许会有所不同。这种会影响家畜的疾病已经导致中国农场大量生猪死亡。

Swine flu has affected the country’s meat industry in a big way. Official records released last week showed that pork production fell by 21 percent over the past year. In addition, the agriculture ministry reported that the number of pigs kept at Chinese farms had fallen by 40 percent by October.

猪流感在很大程度上影响了这个国家的肉类工业。据上周公布的官方记录显示，去年猪肉产量下降了21%。此外，农业部报告称，截至10月份，中国养猪场的生猪数量下降了40%。

As a result, pork prices all over the country have increased by about 200 percent because of a shortage. The high price of pork has added to inflation, which has now reached an eight-year high.

也正因如此，猪肉短缺导致全国各地的猪肉价格上涨了大约200%。猪肉价格高企加剧了通胀，目前通胀率已达到8年高点。

A Reuters news agency reporter spoke to Xu, a woman from central China. Her family lost their herd of pigs to swine flu. Now, she is sharply cutting back on her use of pork for the holiday.

一名路透社记者采访了来自中国中部地区的徐女士。她们家因为猪流感失去了自家养的猪群。现在，她正在大幅减少节日期间猪肉的使用量。

“Pork just costs too much. People can’t bear the price.”

“猪肉太贵了，贵到人们无法承受。”

China’s government has provided more the 200,000 tons of frozen pork since December to increase supplies for the Lunar New Year holiday. The country also imported 375,000 tons in December – a record amount.

自去年12月以来，为增加春节假期的供应量，中国政府已经供应了20万吨冷冻猪肉。去年12月，中国还进口了37.5万吨猪肉——创下历史新高。

Less pork more chicken and duck?

少吃猪肉，多吃鸡肉和鸭肉?

During the winter months, traditional cured pork products such as la rou are very popular. But this season, la rou sellers are reporting slow sales and fewer people looking to buy.

在冬季，腊肉等传统的猪肉制品非常受欢迎。但是这个冬季，腊肉卖家们报告称销售缓慢，而且想买的人越来越少。

Zhang Sheng has sold cured pork in a market in the city of Guiyang for the past five years.

张盛（音译）过去五年一直在贵阳市的一个市场卖腊肉猪肉。

 “This year, pork is very expensive so individual customers are buying less (la rou),” Zhang said.

张说:“由于今年猪肉很贵，所以个体消费者减少了腊肉的购买量。”

In Shanghai, four cured pork makers told Reuters that their businesses are suffering because of price increases between 20 and 30 percent.

上海四家腊肉生产商告诉路透社，由于价格上涨20%到30%导致他们的生意受到了影响。

“I imagine many people will be having more chicken and duck this New Year,” one seller said.

“我想很多人今年会选择购买更多的鸡鸭肉，”一位卖家说。

I’m Mario Ritter Jr.

小马里奥·里特报道。

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