

China's farmland slightly shrinks in 2016

China's total farmland area dropped slightly in 2016, while the amount of construction land went up, official data showed.

At the end of 2016, China had a total of 2.024 billion mu (about 1.349 million hectares) of farmland, down 1.153 million mu from the 2015 level, according to a survey by the Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR).

Meanwhile, an extra 8.09 million mu of land was used for construction land in 2016, up 4.4 percent year on year, a large part of which has been set aside for infrastructure construction, said the ministry.

In 2016, the amount of new land opened up for highway and railway construction rose 30.7 percent and 102.8 percent from a year ago, respectively, the MLR said.

China must retain at least 1.865 billion mu of farmland in 2020, under a new target set by the MLR in 2016, which is above a government red line of 1.8 billion mu.