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China specifies farmland use tax standards

Editor: Sharon Lee

Source: 新华网

Updated: 2008/1/17 16:54:31

BEIJING, Jan. 17 (Xinhua) -- With a view to guiding local tax offices, China has specified regional farmland use tax standards after quintupling the tax range on the use of arable land for non-farming purposes.

The average tax was set at 45 yuan (6.2 U.S. dollars) per square meter in the eastern metropolis Shanghai, the highest in the nation.

Beijing and Tianjin came second and third with 40 yuan and 35 yuan, respectively. The northern Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was offered the most lenient tax of 12.5 yuan, said a circular jointly issued by the Ministry of Commerce and State Administration of Taxation (SAT).

Yang Suizhou, deputy director of SAT's local taxation department, said earlier this month that aside from the existing tax, local governments would raise the average tax on farmland use by up to 75 percent in special economic zones where farmland is scarce.

In Dec, the government issued an ordinance that stipulated in places where per capita arable land was below one mu (0.067 hectare), investors must pay a land-use tax of 10 yuan to 50 yuan per square meter compared with the previous two yuan to 10 yuan.

Investors will only need to pay six yuan to 30 yuan for each square meter they use if local per capita arable land ranges from two to three mu.

The lowest tax rates of five yuan to 25 yuan will apply to where per capita arable land stands above three mu.

The ordinance also scrapped the previous zero-tax treatment for the construction of railways, airport runways and parking aprons and imposed a rate of two yuan per square meter for such usage.

China's land for cultivation has shrunk 4.6 million mu from the end of 2006 to 1.827 billion mu, slightly higher than the danger mark of 1.8 billion mu (120 million hectares) set by the government to feed its people.

The country's alert on inefficient land use and shrinking farmland was marked by a central government order to adopt the strictest management of land resources in 2004.

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