

## **Brazil earmarks 10 bln USD for family farms**

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 6 (Xinhua) -- The Brazilian government said Thursday that it is earmarking 21 billion reais (10 billion U.S. dollars) this year to fund small family farms through credit and investment. This year's program will benefit more farms as the income threshold for qualified farms has been raised, according to the authorities. The maximum limit of loans for payments has increased from 80,000 reais to 100,000 reais (38,100 dollars to 47,600 dollars). Loans for investment in pig and poultry farming and fruit production now have an upper limit of 300,000 reais (142,800 dollars). The government plan also foresees 400 million reais (190 million dollars) for family farm insurance, and an expansion of the government food acquisition program, through which the state purchases food from family farms for public schools and social programs. "We have no doubt about the importance of family farming for our country's social and economic development. With this plan, we want farmers to have more capacity for investment, innovation and technology," said Agriculture Minister Pepe Vargas. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the program to strengthen family farms, which has helped boost family farm revenue by 52 percent and brought 3.7 million Brazilians into the middle class, according to official figures. Brazil's small family farms represent 84 percent of rural farming, a third of the agricultural sector's gross domestic product and three quarters of land labor.