



Calligraphers write the Chinese character *feng* — which means good harvest — in different styles during the Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival held in Wanrong county on Sept 22. LI KERONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Festival showcases farming history

North China's Shanxi province first to host major national agricultural event outside Beijing

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival, a national event for farmers, was held in North China's Shanxi for the first time on Sept 22, giving the province an opportunity to display its millennia-old farming culture and modern achievements in agriculture and rural development.

At the event's main venue in Wanrong county in Yuncheng city, Lou Yangsheng, Party secretary of Shanxi province, delivered a speech at the opening ceremony.

In his address, Lou said: "This is the first time that the harvest festival has been held outside the national capital of Beijing. We will use the opportunity to showcase the long history of Shanxi's farming culture."

Using the water of the Yellow River — the mother river of China — and its tributaries to irrigate its land, Shanxi has developed a farming culture of more than 3,000 years, making it one of the cradles of the Chinese civilization, Lou noted.

"It is also a chance to display the modern development of Shanxi's agriculture and the sense of happiness of local farmers in times of harvest," the provincial Party chief added.

He noted that Shanxi is currently mod-

ernizing its farming industry, making it a sector more environmentally friendly, more sustainable and more conducive for rural economic revitalization and poverty reduction.

The Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival was launched in 2018, under the proposal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council.

Held on the day of the autumn equinox, which falls roughly on Sept 22 or 23, this is the first national event for Chinese farmers.

In Yuncheng, the major host city of the festival, a number of events were held, including an exhibition of folk arts and intangible cultural heritage items from the rural areas of nine provinces and autonomous regions along the Yellow River; a farm produce fair for the nine regions; and shows with local rural cultural characteristics of Shanxi, including drum dance, stilt walking and folk songs and dances.

In the intangible cultural heritage exhibition area, 26 national-level and 153 provincial-level heritage items from Yuncheng were displayed, showing the rich culture of the city.

In addition to Yuncheng, cultural heritage items from the rest of Shanxi were



on show, including hand-polished lacquer ware from Pingyao, *chengni* ink slabs from Jiangxian, *fahua* cloisonné ware from Gaoping and wood carving from Reicheng.

Cultural assets from other regions and provinces were also displayed, including Tibetan incense and Qiang ethnic embroidery from Sichuan province, parade masks and clay figures from Shanxi, as well as gold-plated bronze ware from Qinghai.

Some inheritors of the displayed cultural heritage also showed the making process of the items with centuries-old techniques.

A highlight was the rural cultural shows, with a colored umbrella-holding parade and the Wanrong flowery drum dance attracting much attention from audience.

The public square dance, which is popular among Chinese in recent years, was the

event drawing the widest participation.

Leading the dance was Peng Xiaoying and her husband, farmers from Zhejiang province.

Peng has gained a following on the internet after she posted videos of her dances on the farm.

"Dancing is good for health. My husband used to have slight depression, so we danced regularly and he became better. We love public square dance very much," Peng said.

For shoppers and foodies, the farm produce fair was another attraction.

The exhibition venue in Wanrong county gathered farm produce from eight provinces and one autonomous region with a good variety of ready-made food and dishes made on the site for diners to choose.

"It was a rare opportunity to taste so many authentic dishes from so many regions in China," said Wang Fugao, a local resident in Wanrong who visited the fair.

During the past four years, grain output in Shanxi has been stable at more than 13.5 million metric tons. A good harvest looks set for this year, as the yield to date has already surpassed 11.8 million tons, according to agricultural officials of Shanxi.

"As its name suggested, harvest should

be the overwhelming theme of the festival," said Xing Wanli, a village official from Fenyang city of Shanxi province. Xing was recognized as one of the 10 "model farmers" during the event.

In addition to the main venue in Wanrong county of Yuncheng, the Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival was also held in other cities and counties in Shanxi.

In an event held in Linfen city, a committee of branding experts granted certificates for "Linfen's brand of choice" to 34 agricultural and agricultural-related tourism companies.

A variety of events were held in Datong city, including a drum dance contest, a food festival, a Mid-Autumn moon-worshipping ceremony, a lantern show and a farmers' sports meeting.

There was also an investment promotional fair held for the modern agricultural demonstration zone in the city's Pingcheng district.

In Shuocheding district of Shuozhou city, visitors were attracted to a courtyard built using 60,000 corn cobs, which became a hit on the internet after pictures were posted on social media.

Hu Zengchun and Zhao Dewei contributed to this story.



From left: A huge pumpkin is displayed at the festival's sub-venue in Datong. WANG ZHONGXUN / FOR CHINA DAILY Local artists stage a drum performance at the festival's main venue in Yuncheng. HU XUGUANG / FOR CHINA DAILY Farmers in Shanxi dry persimmons after they are harvested. JIA RONGNA / FOR CHINA DAILY



From left: Two farmers in Shanxi are excited with a good harvest of sorghum. HU ZENGCHUN / FOR CHINA DAILY A farmer in Wanrong county shows his harvest of millet. LI YONGJIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY