

Yantai’s apples at the core of rural development

Inaugural festival held to attract businesses from across the globe

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The coastal city of Yantai in East China’s Shandong province is expanding into global markets with one of its specialty agricultural products — apples.

The first China Shandong International Apple Festival was held in Yantai from Oct 27-29, showcasing more than 300 agricultural enterprises to the world.

“As the birthplace and largest production area of apples in China, Yantai is using the China Shandong International Apple Festival as an opportunity to invite industry players worldwide to share their insights and conduct negotiations and cooperation, especially in terms of apple planting, seedling cultivation, intensive processing, warehousing and logistics, leisure tourism and market promotion,” said Zhang Shuping, Party secretary of Yantai.

Founded in 2016, Haolin Fruit Cooperative, located in Yantai’s Penglai district, has 66.67 hectares of apple orchards.

After four years of cultivating the land, Haolin had its first harvest season in October, with a yield reaching two metric tons per mu (0.07 hectares). The output is expected to grow substantially next year, achieving three to four tons per mu, according to the cooperative.

Joining hands with Shenzhen Pagoda Industrial Group, a company focusing on fruit procurement, planting support, fruit logistics and storage and marketing, Haolin has developed a new variety of Fuji apple, which has been well received by the market, said Zheng Wenbin, a sales manager with Haolin Fruit Cooperative.

The cooperative secured an order of 100-150 tons of apples from Pagoda even before their first harvest, thanks to its apple planting standards and apple quality, Zheng added.

Haolin’s apples are not only available in supermarkets in first and second-tier cities nationwide, but also exported to some Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia.

Yantai is home to rafts of apple growers like Haolin. By the end of 2019, the city had 188,400 hectares of apple orchards producing 5.59 million tons of apple annually, ranking first among all prefecture-level cities in China, according to the local government.

Yantai has 46 apple processing enterprises with an annual processing capacity exceeding 4 million tons, another national leading position.

Yantai Kanglea Food, a supplier of dried and canned fruit, showcased its products at the China Shandong International Apple Festival.



The coastal city of Yantai in East China’s Shandong province is expanding into global markets with one of its specialty agricultural products — apples. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Clockwise from top left: An exhibitor at the first China Shandong International Apple Festival shows his fruit to a foreign visitor. A visitor from Russia picks apples at an orchard in Yantai. ZHANG DANDAN / CHINA DAILY Giardino Estate is a sparkling wine producer in Yantai, which uses locally grown fruit such as grapes, cranberries, peaches and apples. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“Our apple products are mainly exported to countries including Russia, Kazakhstan, Japan and India,” said Kong Weijing, a salesperson at the company.

Apple products account for one-third of the company’s annual total export, Kong added.

Kong attributes the favorable market results to Yantai, the birthplace of high-quality apples. “Yantai apples are rich in sugar and very

crisp, and so conducive for processing into other apple products.”

Based in Yantai, the company benefits from the city’s convenient transportation and logistics.

“For us, a processing company, logistics is really important. If the transportation takes too long, that affects apple preservation,” Kong said.

Giardino Estate is a sparkling wine producer in Yantai, which uses

locally grown fruit such as grapes, cranberries, peaches and apples.

With production starting in 2018, Giardino Estate now has an annual production capacity of 6,000 tons of wine, according to Wu Yeshao, owner of the company.

“As we are in Yantai, a core apple producing area in China, we enjoy stable supply of the raw material,” Wu said. “Also, Yantai is a tourist destination because of its charming

coastal scenery. With more tourists coming here, our products are becoming more popular.”

The integrated development of industries is commonplace in China, so Giardino Estate, as well as producing wine, hopes to become a local tourist attraction, with a visitor experience center at its production base.

With its wines well received in both domestic and overseas mar-



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kets, Giardino Estate achieved a sales volume of 50 million yuan (\$7.49 million) in 2019, according to Wu.

Apples in Yantai not only have a rich history, but they are also playing an important role in rural revitalization.

On the opening day of the China Shandong International Apple Festival, four sisters from Yantai’s Penglai demonstrated the latest craze in business models across China — livestreaming.

The sisters had previously left their home village of Tianjia to pursue education and careers in big cities, but have since returned to explore local business opportunities.

Tian Chunying, the eldest sister among the four, said they use livestreaming to promote the local produce of the village and sell it via e-commerce platforms to expand the scope of the previously remote market.

“Our village has 90 households in total, and everyone grows apples,” Tian said. “Before, our village had poor transport links and weakness in connectivity to technology.”

That has since improved, and so the four sisters, who majored in internet, advertising, marketing and tourism at university, returned to Tianjia to set up a business.

“Our original intention was just to help more villagers sell apples and agricultural products. And gradually, our business grew to cover the town, the city and even Shandong province,” said Tian.

The sisters have forged marketing channels with domestic e-commerce platform JD and Alibaba’s high-end supermarket Hema Fresh, and set up their own online stores on Tmall and JD.

Through these channels, the sisters sold more than 1,500 tons of apples in 2019. They achieved a sales volume of nearly 60 million yuan last year, 40 percent of which was generated by apples, according to Tian Chunying.

Looking ahead, she said she hopes more farmers can utilize the internet and mobile phones as helpful tools.

“I think farmers will be the spokespeople for their products in the future, as mobile phones can film their planting process and help promote their products,” she added.

Coastal city integrates tourism to generate more income

By ZHANG DANDAN

Located just off the coast of the city of Yantai in East China’s Shandong province, a giant oil-rig-like structure looms out of the ocean. It’s Genghai No 1 — China’s very first ecological marine ranch platform.

Genghai No 1 was built by Yantai’s own CIMC Raffles Shipyard and has a total investment of 67 million yuan (\$10.13 million).

Essentially, a large-scale fish farm, Genghai No 1 makes use of artificial intelligence, 5G and big data to perform fish breeding, marine biology and research. The platform even has two wind turbines to generate its own energy.

But most interestingly, the platform, which was put into operation in July, is being integrated with tourism.

Visitors can take a ferry from the mainland to the platform where they can see how the fish farm operates, learn about the technologies being deployed to boost efficiency, and carry out research, and even have a bite to eat at the platform’s own floating cafe.

A second phase of the Genghai No 1 project is underway and is expected to complete by the end of 2021. A six-story complex is being built with



From left: Genghai No 1, off the coast of Yantai, is a large-scale fish farm that makes use of artificial intelligence, 5G and big data to achieve fish breeding, marine biology and research. A visitor poses for a photo at the Changyu Wine Culture Museum in Yantai, which is China’s first wine museum. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

accommodation, shopping and entertainment facilities as well as 8,000-square-meter leisure deck.

The platform ties into Yantai’s strategy of integrating the development of its industries, and especially integrating tourism, to take advantage of the city’s wealth in coastline and lush natural landscapes.

This city is notable for its picturesque coastal scenery, boasting

26,000 square kilometers of sea area, a coastline stretching 1,038 km, 230 offshore islands and seven natural bays.

Another example of this is in Yantai’s flourishing wine industry.

Yantai is located at 37 degrees north in latitude that is believed to have the optimal natural conditions to produce wine, which the city has been doing for over 100 years. The



city’s wine region is China’s largest and produces 40 percent of the country’s wine.

Such a name has Yantai earned for itself with regards to its wine production, people visit the city every year specifically for wine tours.

Changyu Group, founded in 1892, is one of China’s largest and oldest wine producer. The company’s

“wine town” is the size of 800 football fields and can produce 25,000 bottles of wine per hour.

Established in 1992, the Changyu Wine Culture Museum in Yantai is China’s first wine museum, and receives 300,000 visitors from home and abroad each year.

The museum is well-known for its 100-year-old underground wine cellar, which was set up in 1905, has a

depth of seven meters and covers an area of 1,976 sq m.

Chateau Changyu Castel, built in 2002 in the Yantai Economic and Technological Development Zone, is one of the first specialized wineries in China to fully integrate tourism.

With its European-style castle architecture and recreational activities such as sightseeing, grape picking and catering, the chateau has become a sought-after tourist destination.

It also has a wine culture experience center which allows visitors to learn all about the winemaking process. The visitors are even allowed to have a go at the winemaking process themselves and create their own customized barrel of wine.

In 2019, Yantai received more than 86 million visits from both home and abroad, and achieved a total tourism income exceeding 120 billion yuan, accounting for 15.8 percent of the city’s GDP and 30.9 percent of the added value of the service industry, according to local government.

During the recent National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holiday from Oct 1 to 8, Yantai had 6.55 million visits to the attractions in city, generating revenue of 7.6 billion yuan.