

70 YEARS ON GUIZHOU

Editor's Note: As the People's Republic of China prepares to celebrate its 70th anniversary on Oct 1, China Daily is featuring a series of stories on the role regions have played in the country's development and where they are today.



Left: Workers pack blueberries in an air-conditioned workshop in Majiang county, Guizhou province. YANG YING / XINHUA



Right: A woman of the Gelao ethnic group picks blueberries in Majiang. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Financial thrills from the blueberry hills

Majiang county aims to establish an agricultural park for the fruit after making millions from the berry and helping farmers

By **ZHU WENQIAN** in Beijing and **YANG JUN** in Guiyang

By leveraging Guizhou's advantages of a subtropical climate and fertile soil, Majiang county in the middle of the mountainous province hopes to become a national production and commercial center for blueberries.

The county is located in a well-established fruit-growing area with a food production chain in place. It has already developed a wide range of products made from blueberries, such as juice, jam, wine, brandy, medicines and dried fruits.

Now, it wants to become home to the country's first modern agricultural park that focuses solely on blueberry planting.

Private company Guizhou Everyday Ecological Agriculture Development is a key player that produces more than 1,000 metric tons of blueberries annually.

Last year, it achieved sales revenue of more than 6 million yuan (\$872,000) by selling blueberries and associated products to Beijing and Shanghai, as well as Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces.

This year, the company will export its "green and organic" blueberries to Thailand and the United Arab Emirates. The company has received large-scale orders and certification to become an exporter.

"Our company purchases blueberries from farmers and packs them before providing them to retailers or blueberry-processing enterprises," said Liu Minghao, president of the company. "This helps local small farmers to have access to wider sales channels."

The company hires more than 200 farmers, 15 of whom are from impoverished backgrounds, on a part-time basis. It teaches them how to plant, fertilize and prune the fruit and also how to pack it correctly for transportation.

During the busy summer picking season, they can make 7,000-8,000 yuan for three months' work.

Health benefits

Liu said the company hopes to increase its product range by promoting the health benefits of blueberries. Anthocyanin flavonoids give blueberries their rich, deep colors and are known as antioxidants with multiple health benefits.

"In my opinion, the future growth of blueberries should be in the extraction, development and commercial application of anthocyanins, such as for anti-aging and eye protection," he said. "Some scientific research teams have already purchased our blueberries for anthocyanin experiments."

Liu said while their blueberries have a natural slightly sour flavor, discerning customers appreciate that they are organic and free of additives.

"We have eight freezers, which are able to store 500 tons of blueberries, and the cold storage trucks can guarantee their freshness for more than 10 days," he added.

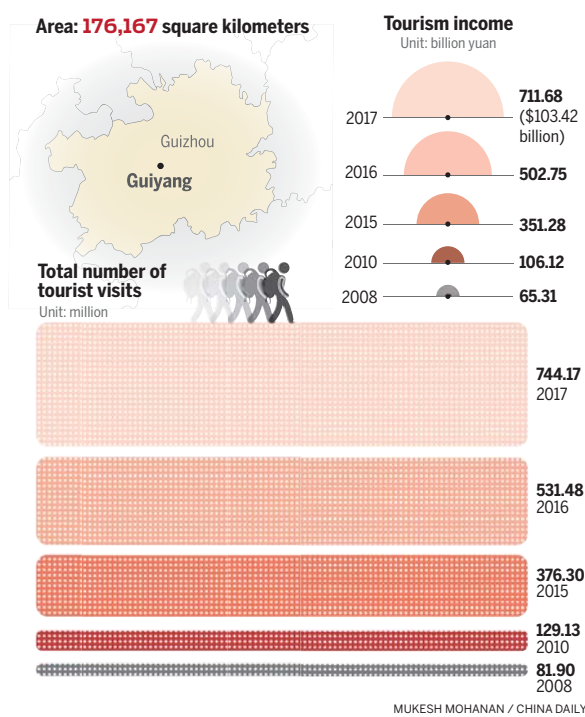
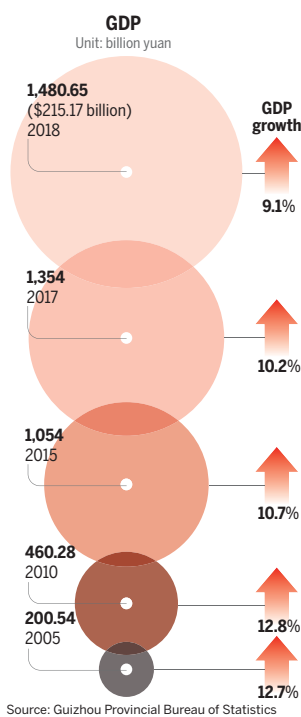
The company is experimenting with natural methods to prevent agricultural pests and diseases attacking the fruit. The experiments are being conducted in conjunction with the College of Agriculture at Guizhou University.

Blueberry planting started in Majiang county in 1999.

Now, the county is home to 4,200 hectares of 20 varieties of the fruit, accounting for 28 percent of blueberry plantations in Guizhou and 7.5 percent nationally.

Supermarket chains like Yonghui Superstores order their blueberries directly from the county.

This year, Majiang is forecast to produce 5,000 tons of blueberries, generating net sales revenue of 200 million yuan. By 2021, it aims to achieve sales revenue of more than 600 million yuan from an output of 20,000 tons.



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Liu Minghao, president of Guizhou Everyday Ecological Agriculture Development

The county has so far received 150 million yuan in poverty alleviation funds allocated for Guizhou province.

Hailing berries

So far, blueberry planting has helped 6,710 families out of poverty, with each family on average earning an additional 16,100 yuan per year, the local government said.

"In the past decade, the planting areas of blueberry in Guizhou have been continuously growing," said Wang Zhenyi, secretary of Majiang county committee. "Agricultural reform has driven the increase of cash crop cultivation."

Wang said the region is hoping to benefit from tourism related to blueberries via planting demon-

strations and fruit picking, scenic tours, ecotourism and bed-and-breakfast stays.

Guizhou has a large concentration of impoverished families. As of last year, it had 2.8 million farmers in urgent need of poverty alleviation and another 20 million who would like to be better off.

The rural revitalization plan

issued by the government last year aims to improve villages, ecology, the environment and the lives of farmers.

Besides blueberries, Guizhou has achieved remarkable growth in several other agricultural sectors, including tea, mushrooms and bamboo production.

The province plans to set up a poverty alleviation fund of 120 billion for green sectors. So far, nearly 28 billion yuan has been spent supporting related enterprises and farmers.

Click for fruit

In a digital age that features social media and online shopping, Everyday Ecological Agriculture Development won't fall behind in its e-commerce efforts.

Last year, the company cooperated with e-commerce retail giant JD and STO Express. On one occasion, it sold blueberries worth more than 300,000 yuan on JD in 30 minutes.

"A problem with online shopping for and delivery of blueberries is that it is easy for them to go bad. The transportation costs are also high," Liu said.

Two years ago, the company started selling blueberries directly to residential quarters of neighboring cities by using social media platforms.

"We posted on WeChat and Douyin and tried to attract group-buying consumers from different communities," Liu said.

Recently, a community in Guiyang bought more than 800 kilograms of blueberries for 20 yuan per kilogram, far below the market price of 30 to 40 yuan per kg. The company delivered the blueberries to Guiyang directly via cold-chain transportation.

Li Hanyi contributed to this story.

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From top: Visitors in an exhibition center of the National Big Data Comprehensive Experimental Zone in Guiyang, Guizhou province. OUYANG SHIJIA / XINHUA A visitor experiences digital art at an exhibition during the China International Big Data Industry Expo held in Guiyang in May. YANG WENBIN / XINHUA

Growth of big data helps transform province

By **OUYANG SHIJIA**
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Guizhou — a remote province known for its lush green mountains and many ethnic groups — is now shaping up to become a high-tech hub with cutting-edge technologies.

"The blossoming big data industry has become a key growth driver for high-quality development," said Han Shaobo, deputy director of the Big Data Development Administration of Guizhou province.

"After years of development, Guizhou has become a new big data center, attracting a group of leading tech firms from home and abroad," Han said, adding they would beef up efforts to attract more talent and big data companies. Han made the remarks in June at a news conference held in the capital Guiyang to detail Guizhou's economic and social progress over the past 70 years.

Last year, the added value of the digital economy rose by 24.6 percent, making it the fastest growing sector for four consecutive years, government data showed. Big data

contributed more than 20 percent of Guizhou's economic growth.

The added value of electronic information manufacturing industries has surged 35.31 percent, and software industry revenue by 30.56 percent since 2014.

The electronic information sector has expanded its share in all industries to 1.9 percent from 0.3 percent in 2013, according to the data.

Buoyed by supportive policies, the rapidly developing province has now attracted thousands of leading tech and internet companies including Apple, Microsoft, Dell, Intel, Huawei, Tencent and Alibaba.

Han said the government will also push for the integration of big data with the real economy — which mainly consists of goods and services — for governmental, commercial and civilian use.

He said the integration was a key driver of industrial transformation to improve quality and efficiency. "Last year, the development index of big data and real economy integration reached 36.9, up from 33.8 in 2017. The integration of big data and

the real economy in Guizhou is now striding from the initial stage to an intermediate stage."

According to Han, the government aims to integrate big data with more than 10,000 enterprises in the real economy by 2022.

The drive to transform Guizhou from one of the nation's poorest and less-developed provinces into a leading tech hub covers a wide area.

The government said 33.9 percent of industrial companies had fully integrated big data into their research and development, production, sales and management. Just over half the services companies used for cost and profit analysis took advantage of big data.

Digital technologies apply not only in the business sector, but also in e-governance and civil services. With the establishment of a mobile e-government platform, Guiyang residents are now able to use their electronic IDs to book plane tickets.

Currently, 83.1 percent of provincial government services can be processed online, with the number to hit 100 percent by the end of this year.

Several leading high-tech companies have also taken root in the province. Headquartered in Guiyang, the truck-hailing company Manbang Group is one of the top unicorn companies — a startup valued at more than \$1 billion — in the Chinese logistics industry. Using big data, Manbang helps drivers find commodities waiting to be shipped without worrying about a potential empty return trip.

Manbang came into being in 2017 with the merger of China's top two Uber-like apps, Truck Alliance and Yunmanman. In April, it announced a new round of \$1.9 billion in financing, taking its total valuation to more than \$6.5 billion.

Xu Qiang, vice-president of Manbang, said the company will use big data to open its platform to foreign freight users and expand its services for drivers and logistics companies. Manbang serves around 6.5 million truck drivers and 1.6 million consignors, covering 339 cities nationwide.

Zhao Yandi contributed to this story.