

CHINA

From forlorn to fortune, poor land yields fish gold

Once held back by low-quality fields, village finds success by breeding loach

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Once, the low-lying land around Wangshiyang in Ningjin county, Shandong province, held back the village's development because of its low agricultural yields, but now that it is being used to raise fish — in this case loaches — it has helped the village emerge from poverty.

"Don't underestimate these loach fry, they have made us wealthy," Chen Xuyong, the village's Party secretary, said as he scooped a bowl of water out of a breeding pond.

Inside the ponds, thousands of tiny loaches, smaller than ants, were swarming. In the bigger ponds in front of the breeding ponds, loach released a week earlier had already grown to the size of tadpoles.

Loach flesh is rich in protein and has a low-fat content, and eating it helps reduce blood lipids and blood pressure. It is not only delicious but also has a medicinal effect, Chen said, explaining why the fish sells so well.

Last month, the village cooperative signed a contract with businessmen from South Korea to

build a loach processing plant to produce products for overseas markets.

The plant is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year and will have an annual output of up to 5,000 metric tons of loach products, Chen said.

"The processing plant is expected to provide around 50 jobs and double our village's collective income," he added.

The 54-year-old has been Party secretary of the village, which is home to fewer than 300 residents, for the last 31 years.

During that time, he has been looking for a way to help residents make money. He tried raising cattle and cows, but neither worked well.

"Our village is on low-lying terrain, which means we only harvest crops once a year. Most of the young people have left to work in the city, leaving the elderly and children behind," Chen said.

To change that situation, he traveled to villages in places such as Lianyungang in Jiangsu province and Tianjin to find an alternative that would be suitable for Wangshiyang.

He came across the right solu-



Chen Xuyong takes care of loaches in a breeding pond on his loach farm in Ningjin county, Shandong province. PROMOTED TO CHINA DAILY

520,000 yuan

the sum Wangshiyang village collectively earned from loach farming last year

earned 520,000 yuan (\$73,744) from loach farming, proof that aquaculture can work well in low-lying villages, he said.

Now an expert in loach farming, he has developed an automated feeding system that saves on feed and labor and reduces water pollution.

He has also set up a training school in the village and invited experts to give free lectures, and he has visited 50 neighboring villages to show farmers how to use idle ponds to farm loaches.

Currently, 16 of the 50 villages in the area are farming the fish.

Chen Haitao, who lives in Wangshiyang, said he earns a salary of about 5,000 yuan from working at the loach farms.

Two years ago, everyone in the village moved into two-story villas, and their new residential community also has parks, squares and a service center.

tion in 2016 when he decided to turn to loach farming.

But the fish were unable to adapt to the village's water and environment, and their first year was a failure. Chen invited experts to study the soil and water.

"We started over. I monitored the water quality many times a day to collect data and finally mastered the breeding techniques," he said.

Chen and the villagers transformed a former brick factory into an experimental loach farm in 2017. A year later, they expanded.

Last year, the village collectively

Comic opera reels in crowds in Guangzhou

GUANGZHOU — A theater bar in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, was packed with opera lovers during a recent staging of a comedy about two men fighting over a woman.

Rita, a comic opera in one act composed by 19th century Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti, tells the story of a bar owner named Rita who mistakenly believes that her first husband, Gasparo, has died in an accident and decides to embrace a new life with her second husband, Beppe. When Gasparo returns out of the blue, he enters into a battle with Beppe over his wife, resulting in a spectacular farce.

The version presented in Guangzhou was specially adapted for the city by director Peter Gordon and his partner, Italian composer Marco Iannelli.

Gordon began working in Hong Kong in 1985 and has become increasingly involved in cultural projects related to literature, theater and opera since 2000.

"Opera in Hong Kong has traditionally focused on 'grand opera' — large and quite expensive productions. These are very nice, but the number of productions that can be put on each year is quite limited," Gordon said.

"I felt that it should be possible to produce smaller operas in a cost-effective way, allowing for an entirely new set of productions, while not sacrificing the quality of singing or music."

To that end, he began producing operas on a chamber-music scale a few years ago with Iannelli, an award-winning composer who also lives in Hong Kong. *Rita* is one of their joint projects.

In 2022, with the introduction of Hong Kong tenor Chen Yong, Gordon and Iannelli produced a new version of *Rita* for a Guangzhou audience and recruited talent from the Guangdong-Hong

Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to perform and produce the opera.

"Guangzhou is of course a bit different from Hong Kong, and the Guangzhou Opera House wanted to localize the story within the opera house itself, to set it in its own bar — which we thought a very good idea," Gordon said. "In addition, they wanted to expand on an idea we had used in an earlier Hong Kong production of integrating the audience into the performance. What we also wanted to do was to integrate the orchestra into the performance in this staging, as if they were actually playing in the bar."

The Guangzhou cast is composed of college students, whose voices are young and fresh. Xing Xinyuan, who plays Rita, is a sophomore at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music's Vocal and Opera Department. She is the youngest actor in the show, and Rita is her first lead role in a staged performance.

The Italian dialogue, coordinating with the band, interacting closely with the audience, and the novel form of performance all posed her challenges. "We rehearsed the play for less than six months before staging it, which is unprecedentedly fast, and I've learned a lot."

Less than a year after its debut last July, the 70-minute opera is a hit, with tickets selling out as soon as they are released. Opera is generally regarded as an art form with a relatively high appreciation threshold, but *Rita* has brought more young people into the theater.

"We were all very happy to see so many young people in the audience — and having a good time, too," Gordon said.

Gordon has full confidence in the Chinese market. "What I do know is that China has both an increasing number of modern theaters, as well as ever-increasing numbers of good, young opera singers," he said.

XINHUA

Changsha: Highland for construction machinery on the rise

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The third Changsha International Construction Equipment Exhibition was held at the Changsha International Convention and Exhibition Center in Central China's Hunan province from May 12 to 15.

With the theme of "New Generation of High-end, Intelligent and New Energy Construction Machinery", the four-day exhibition strived to build an innovative and open platform for exchanges.

The event attracted more than 1,500 construction machinery enterprises from China and abroad, 35 of which were the world's top 50 construction machinery companies. The cumulative number of visitors exceeded 350,000, with a total transaction volume of 53.6 billion yuan (\$7.58 billion).

Nearly 100 companies from Changsha, known as the "capital of construction machinery", participated in the exhibition, including global construction machinery giants such as Sany Group, China Railway Construction Heavy Industry Corp and Sunward Intelligent Equipment, and small and medium-sized enterprises that have technological advantages in subsectors.

As a leading enterprise in the industry, Sany brought nearly 80 new products to the site. With an exhibition area of more than 10,000 square meters, the company was the largest exhibitor at the event. The new products it displayed fully demonstrated the company's recent research and development achievements.

"Against the backdrop of the country's dual carbon goals, electrification is an inevitable trend in the construction machinery industry. Sany exhibited more than 20 electrified products at this exhibition, and fully displayed its latest technologies in fields such as batteries, motors, electrical controls, and hydrogen fuel," said Zhao Hui, a Sany executive.

Known as a "little giant" enterprise in the tunnel and mining subsector, Hunan Wuxin Tunnel Intelligent Equipment brought mul-



Clockwise from top: The third Changsha International Construction Equipment Exhibition attracts visitors from China and abroad. Vehicles are displayed during the event. Fu Xuming (third left), Party secretary of Changsha county, Hunan province, visits Sunward. ZENG SHIYI / FOR CHINA DAILY Sany is a key construction machinery giant. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tiple products to the exhibition, including the world's first curved arm rock drilling car that attracted many customers.

CRCC Heavy Industry brought its entire portfolio of tunnel construction equipment to the exhibition site. Its fully computerized three-arm rock drilling trolley is particularly powerful, with three long arms rising into the air, and it features precise control technology, three-dimensional scanning and contour reconstruction technology, among other things. Not only did the complete machine companies exhibit many star products, but the parts companies also demonstrated their core technological achievements.

"Our aluminum alloy walking board is much lighter in weight than traditional iron walking boards and can reduce emissions, in line with the green transition," said Cao Zehua, deputy general manager of Xingsha Machine Tool Equipment Co.

As a high-tech enterprise in Hunan, Xingsha focuses on the production of engineering machinery parts and is a supplier of leading enterprises in the industry such as Sany and Zoomlion Heavy Industry. The company brought its main products such as structural parts and machined parts to the exhibition.

In the zone of innovative achievements in natural disaster prevention and control technology and equip-

ment, Changsha-based Wasom Emergency Equipment showcased its latest product, a high-flow portable emergency rescue submersible electric pump. "Our product is ultralightweight, weighing only 28 kilograms, yet the hourly drainage capacity can reach 600 cubic meters," said Liu Bojun, an executive of the company.

Seentone, which specializes in the manufacturing of special vehicles for emergency rescue, brought four new products. Among them, a breakdown truck is designed for new energy vehicles. When a new energy vehicle runs out of battery power, the vehicle can provide emergency charging rescue services. At

the exhibition, many people expressed great interest in this newly developed product.

In recent years, Changsha has been building itself into a global high-end equipment manufacturing base.

In March, CRCC Heavy Industry won the China Industry Award with its outstanding performance in independent innovation, transformation and upgrading, safety control and digitalization. Heavy equipment developed independently by CRCC Heavy Industry, such as the first domestically-manufactured open-type rock tunnel boring machine, the first 16-meter ultra-large-diameter shield machine, the world's deepest

underwater tunnel shield machine, and the world's largest diameter vertical wellbore drilling machine, has led China's underground engineering equipment to make great strides in development.

CRCC Heavy Industry continues to expand the overseas influence of its brands with a marketing network covering 184 countries and regions around the world. Last year, its overseas revenue increased by 512.04 percent year-on-year. The company's rail transit equipment has broken into the Ugandan and Egyptian markets. And CRCC Heavy Industry's tunneling machine products have shown outstanding performance in the Chile, India and Sri Lanka markets. Its special equipment products have also been exported to the Serbian and Saudi Arabian markets in large quantities.

The Changsha area of the China (Hunan) Pilot Free Trade Zone provides fertile ground for Changsha's construction machinery companies to explore international markets. As a core area of the FTZ, Changsha has formed an industry cluster for construction machinery and accelerated the pace for Chinese companies in the industry to go abroad by exploring a path for exporting secondhand Chinese construction machinery via the FTZ.

On March 10, 216 pieces of used construction machinery from Sunward were exported to dozens of countries and regions. The exported machinery covered 12 categories such as rotary drilling rigs, excavators and pump trucks, with a total value of 317 million yuan.

Nowadays, Changsha's construction machinery industry cluster has become the main force in creating a highland for the nation's advanced manufacturing. In the future, it will focus on such fields as technological innovation, product R&D, complete machine and parts manufacturing, and intelligent services and help construction machinery companies build a number of high-end equipment manufacturing and operation centers as well as service and maintenance centers to expand their markets overseas.