

A good harvest means stable prices

By ZHOU HUIYING

Heilongjiang is known as 'Great northern granary', and that record 50-billion-kilogram harvest in 2010, has analysts predicting another boom.

This year it is looking for a bumper crop, estimated at 57.5 billion kg, or 7.5 billion kg more than in 2010, and eight consecutive years of record harvests.

In the autumn, the great fields of grain can present an amazing sight, when viewed against the black land. And Zhang Jinghui, a prominent Heilongjiang Agricultural Reclamation Zone (HARZ) agronomist, standing out there on the edge of a large rice field, smiles at the very thought of the harvest.

"It's another good year. The yield-per-mu could reach 700 kg. I'm confident that this year's output will surpass last year's."

Over the past three years, Heilongjiang's grain production has increased 5 billion kg each year. In 2011, the province increased the amount of land under cultivation to

almost 137,600 sq km, or almost 2,100 sq km more than in 2010.

The amount of land planted in high-quality rice amounted to 34,475 sq km, or 4,724 sq km more than in 2010. The area planted in high-yield crops has reached its highest level ever.

Farmers are fond of saying, "With grain in the hand, we're not frustrated" and a good harvest means stable grain prices. And the price of grain is related to commodity prices, so stable grain prices can give the government a good way to control inflation.

This year's harvest can give confidence to the people of Heilongjiang in their ability to stabilize grain output.

Half a century ago, this land was known as Beidahuang, or the Great northern wilderness.

Today it is one of China's largest grain producers and a far cry from the wilderness of before. The black soil is helping large-scale agriculture and is playing a key role in the nation's grain security efforts.



A bumper, golden harvest in a Heilongjiang agricultural reclamation area.

ZHAO TIANHUA / FOR CHINA DAILY

Revolution based on agricultural mechanization

By ZHOU HUIYING

The broad swath of rice paddies and farmland stretching out towards the horizon has become quite a common sight on the vast plains of Heilongjiang province in China's Northeast.

It doesn't matter whether you're walking around in Mudanjiang or on a farm on the Sanjiang or Songnen plains, there are harvest scenes to be found everywhere.

And the large area and high yields of the Heilongjiang Agricultural Reclamation Zones (HARZ) areas over the past several years have put them out in front.

It took only two years to raise the annual grain production of HARZ from 15 billion kilograms to 20 billion kg, or enough to feed 100 million people.

And the thing that has made this farming revolution possible is the big agricultural machinery.

They can be seen, for example, sitting out there in the parking area of Farm 857, where Liu Qinghua's model 3316 combine is just waiting to get started.

Liu is the head of one part of the farm and owns 15 farm machines in all, including one for planting and another for spreading fertilizer.

"This zone has seen the com-

plete mechanization of everything, from planting to reaping," said Li Jun, director of the zone.

The head of the Heilongjiang Agricultural Machinery Bureau, Li Jun, explained that the modern machinery has changed the agricultural situation completely, improving farmers' lives and allowing them to deal with natural disasters.

The powerful machines can help protect farmland for rice and wheat growing by loosening the soil deeper and turning the straw under. In that way, the soil can be protected from droughts and floods.

The machines also have an advantage in the race against time, while saving labor, making work more efficient, and keeping costs down.

Wheat planting now takes no more than five days, shaving 10 days off the traditional method.

Soybean and corn planting takes no more 15 days, or 10 days less than it used to. Modern agricultural machinery has become the main symbol of agricultural technology advances.

In 2011, the province spent 1.8 billion yuan on new agricultural equipment, adding more than 50,000 machines. Now, nearly 97 percent of the farm zones are mechanized.

Technology gives industrialization a boost

In speaking about this year's especially impressive harvest, Liu Aiguo, the head of another area of Farm 857, gets emotional: "There are no shortages, and there shouldn't be any, not even a little bit."

Since last autumn's harvest, the level of standardization has remained high — from the sprouting of seedlings and rice planting by machine to the homework and management of the fields — and the farm zones adhere strictly to the "three standardizations."

This year, the farms did a bit of innovating, with the focus on 10 cultivation methods and 10 new technologies. These include water-saving irrigation methods, intelligent seedling production, and accelerated corn germination.

The application of new farm machinery was improved through 10 new technologies which included soil conservation and GPS navigation.

More rice, corn and soybean fields were added and higher production was given a key role, with new plant varieties.

The use of more integrated cultivation and technological methods has allowed the zones to go from traditional methods to agricultural industrialization.

Leading the way to healthy food

The Beidahuang Rice Industry Group and Beijing Grain Bureau signed a contract on Sept 20, for 30,000 tons of rice, and a food production and marketing project that connects Heilongjiang and Beijing.

By the end of the 12th Five-year Plan (2011-2015), the Beidahuang group is expected to build as many as eight grain production bases and a supply channel for one million tons of rice.

"By cooperating with Beidahuang, there will be no problem with food security in Beijing," explained Cheng Hong, the city's deputy mayor.

Beidahuang's rice has become a preferred commodity among China's exports, prized for its quality and competitive price.

"Every rice processor will provide an invoice with the farmer's name, ID number, and address. If there's a problem, we can trace it back to the source and can facilitate a recall without delay," said Liu Jun, the general manager's assistant at Beidahuang.

The group's rice has become popular with consumers and has been given the "China Renowned Brand" award and "Most Competitive brand" award, and the "Beidahuang" brand has been given the "Chinese Famous Brand" award.



XIAO BO / FOR CHINA DAILY

The Beidahuang Rice Industry Group and Beijing Grain Bureau sign a contract, on Sept 20, for 30,000 tons of rice, and a food production and marketing project that connects Heilongjiang and Beijing.



SUN CHENGYU / FOR CHINA DAILY

Low-flying aircraft applies aerial spraying techniques to crops.

'You can feel its unique charm' in a fairytale, autumnal landscape

By ZHOU HUIYING

Heilongjiang's autumn is golden tinged with bright colors and, when combined with its culture, it can attract tourists from all over the world. Walking across the land, they can enjoy the colorful scenery of Wuhua Mountain or the happiness of the harvest season in the countryside.

Autumn here is like a colorful painting, with the golden harvest poised against the black earth. The breeze

moves the tops of the mature grain rice or wheat plants or the rows of corn. At the same time, the mountains, representing the passage of time, beckon with their colors.

Wuhua is by far the best destination for anyone looking for a fabulous autumn in the Northeast. The scenery begins changing in late August and lasts for about a month. At first, it is dark yellow, then, after only a few days, the maple leaves gradually turn bright red, demand-

ing respect and admiration. The bright red mixes with the green of the pines, consisting of different species, transporting visitors to a fairytale world.

Tourists can repeat the fairytale landscape of Wuhua in many cities, such as Harbin, Mudanjiang, Jiagedaqi, Mohe, Yichun and Jiamusi.

The Mudanjiang Jingpo Lake area not only has a great watery expanse, but also a forest of birch trees and a virgin forest dating back thousands

of years. The mountain areas with their odd rock shapes and old forests provide natural scenery that is rarely seen elsewhere, only around the mountain. Tourists can see more than 200 types of trees and, in late autumn, the area is full of wonderful scenes.

"The northern scenery, the most beautiful in Heilongjiang, has to be enjoyed personally, and you can feel its unique charm," commented a member of the Heilongjiang Tourism Bureau.



Autumn scenery along Heilongjiang's Jingpo gorge.

TIE PING / FOR CHINA DAILY



DA YONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

China's first Airbus A380 of China Southern Airlines was officially started.

Chinese airline modernizes its fleet with a super-jumbo jet

By ZHOU HUIYING

China Southern Airlines has plans to put China's first Airbus A380 aloft, on Oct 15. And, to give more passengers a chance to be a part of the introductory tour, China Southern has scheduled the maiden flight to cover routes between Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. After that, it will go into international service.

China Southern is the

only Chinese airline to get the "super-jumbo" A380 jet and has ordered five of them. It is the seventh global airline with the jet.

The A380 has eight first-class seats, 70 in business class, and 428 in economy. The double-decker plane will support the company's move to double the capacity on overseas routes to 35 percent, by 2015.

The company has reported that 21 sections working to ensure the success-

ful operation of the A380 — from flight operations to passenger safety and services, to ground services and maintenance — every detail in the process.

In recent years, China Southern has increased the modernization of its fleet of aircraft with more advanced facilities and approaches. With the new A380, it has nearly 450 aircraft, from Boeing and Airbus to helicopters, putting it in first place in Asia.