



PAN KANJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

People hired by Tao Zhengrong harvest rice on the 133-square-meter rooftop of Tao's six-floor factory in Wenling, Zhejiang province, on Tuesday.

## Rooftop rice a sky-high solution

By WANG ZHENGHUA  
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Facing a shortage of arable land, Tao Zhengrong decided to look to the skies for an answer. And he found one: on his roof.

The 49-year-old farmer used the flat roof of his factory in Zhejiang province to grow 115 kilograms of rice, roughly the same amount he could have expected from a piece of land the same size.

Now he is trying to get his neighbors to do the same.

"Some families have already followed suit," said Tao, who is head of Chengbei village.

"What most people want to know is what the output is like from an unconventional field."

China is under tremendous pressure to protect its arable land, with 22 percent of the world's population relying on just 10 percent of the world's arable land.

In Chengbei, where the population stands at a few thousand, the demand for better land management is pressing.

The village's economy has taken off in recent years due to a flourishing car upholstery industry, with more than 100 businesses specializing in the production of car seat cushions. However, the development has been faced with the obstacle

of land shortages, which has forced companies to operate out of small workshops and in residential houses, instead of a sophisticated industrial park.

Only a dozen companies have formed a fair-sized operation while the others remain weak and scattered, Tao said.

To resolve the problem, Tao came up with the bold idea of creating a joint development of agriculture and industry by erecting factories on farmland and planting crops on their rooftops.

He began to place rice seedlings on a 133-square-meter rooftop of his six-floor factory in May. The rooftop was covered with 25-cm-deep soil

taken from the ground, and a water pipeline was used for irrigation.

"There's no special treatment of the rooftop prior to the cultivation," Tao said. Compared with the cultivation on traditional land, it requires less energy to attend the crop and used less pesticide, he added.

"There's no problem of water leaking into the building or any obstruction of the factory's operation. As a side effect, the cultivation helps cool the building down and saves the factory's air-conditioning expenses in the sweltering summer," he said.

Calling the attempt a success, Tao started preparing a second round of planting on Wednes-

day and shared his know-how with other interested families in the village.

"It is a completely new notion that I can grow crops on rooftops while using the land for industrial development. It might take one or two years to prove I am correct and gain approval."

However, rural affairs experts remain cool on the idea of promoting the exploitation of unconventional fields, due to concerns that it might prompt farmers to use their arable land for industrial or urban development.

Rural affairs authorities responsible for Chengbei could not be reached for comment on Thursday.

## City vows action to stop dumping of human waste

By ZHENG CAIXIONG  
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The administrative committee of Luhu Lake and urban management authority have promised to take effective measures to stop the illegal dumping of human waste into the lake, a scenic area in downtown Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province.

In addition to boosting patrols, authorities have installed more than 70 cameras along the lake, an official from the Luhu Lake administrative committee said.

"The cameras, which cover the entire lake area, will soon be put into operation," said the official surnamed Liu.

Anyone caught red-handed dumping animal or human waste in the lake will be punished to the fullest extent of the law, including heavy fines, he said.

An official from the urban management bureau of Guangzhou's Yuexiu district said the bureau will work with authorities at local scenic spots to prevent the behavior in the coming months.

Substantial amounts of feces were found to have been poured into the lake since mid-July.

According to Liu, workers from his committee were still busy cleaning the waste from

the lake on Wednesday. He said the cleanup will be completed before Monday.

Liu urged government departments to better regulate the operation of local cleaning and sanitation companies to prevent them from pouring waste into the lake.

Guangzhou has a population of more than 16 million and the city generates more than 3,000 metric tons of human waste daily, but can handle only 100 tons. Illegal disposing of feces has become a common practice in the city's sanitation industry, and tons of waste have been poured into the Pearl River and local lakes.

The city has more than 10,000 sanitation companies, but less than 2 percent have business licenses. Unlicensed companies pour the waste into lakes and rivers in the middle of the night, environmental protection officials said.

Residents who live near Luhu Lake said they welcome the installment of the cameras along the lake.

"I really have had enough with the terrible stench after all the waste that has been poured into the lake these days," said An Guoying, a white-collar worker who used to take a walk along the lake every evening.

Shu Meng contributed to this story.

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