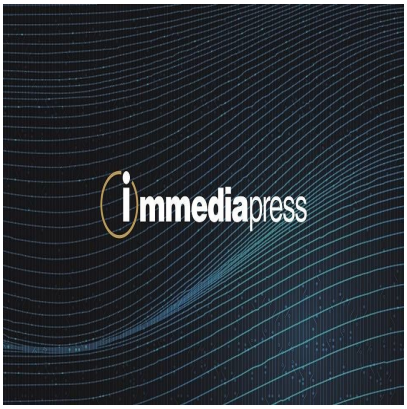


Fifth Yanâ??an Forum on Rural Development Explores AIâ??s Role in Agriculture and Rural Industries

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SHENZHEN, China, Nov. 27, 2026 /PRNewswire/ â?? From growing apples to selling them through QR codes, digital technology is transforming Yanâ??anâ??s apple industry. How AI might take that further was the central question at the Fifth Yanâ??an Forum on Rural Development, held on November 14 at Northwest University. The forum drew nearly 500 participants, including scholars, entrepreneurs, and a generation of rural practitioners known in China as â??new farmersâ?•.

The Yanâ??an University Rural Development Institute, Peking University HSBC Business School (PHBS), and Northwest Universityâ??s School of Economics and Management co-hosted the forum with support from the Xiâ??an Rural Development Charity Foundation.

Hai Wen, vice chairman of the Peking University Council, founding dean of PHBS, and dean of Yanâ??an Universityâ??s Rural Development Institute, chaired the forum. Over five years, the forum has connected scholars, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and rural practitioners around practical challenges, he noted.

Sun Qingwei, president of Northwest University, said the forum would help advance agricultural and rural modernization by sharing research findings and lessons from successful practices. Wang Yanfeng, vice president of Yanâ??an University, said technology research must move beyond academic papers to improve practices in fields, barns, and processing lines and help raise local incomes.

In the keynote session, Wang Zhongmin, former vice chairman of the National Council for Social Security Fund, discussed the digital transformation of Yanâ??anâ??s apple industry, and said AI agents could cut production and transaction costs, improve digital agricultural data and credit systems, and help farmers reach global markets and financing. Fan Gang, professor of economics at Peking University, examined how urbanization, land and social security reform, and technology can mobilize rural resources, raise incomes, and narrow the urban-rural gap.

Wei Wei, professor of management and vice chairman of the PHBS Council, outlined four stages of AI transformation for agribusiness â?? upgrading, transforming, restructuring, and reinventing. The dividing line, he said, is whether data and processes close the loop, and whether farmers share the gains.

Two roundtables â?? â??Technology for Good, Connecting the Worldâ?• and â??Technology Revitalizing Villages, Philanthropy Pooling Strengthâ?• â?? drew participants from business, academia, international organizations including UNDP China, and charitable organizations. They discussed market links and cross-sector partnerships.

Launched in 2019, the forum has moved from Yanâ??an to Shenzhen, Beijing, and Xiâ??an. PHBS will continue to support the institute and work with universities, businesses, and foundations on technology-enabled agriculture and rural revitalization.

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