

Greenhouse vegetables harvested on S. China Sea islets

Chinese staying on a group of islets in the South China Sea have lately harvested tomatoes and leafy vegetables they grew from a new greenhouse.

The authorities of Sansha City, Hainan Province, announced over the weekend the first harvest of Yongle islets greenhouse farm. Yongle, composed of 13 islets, lie some 40 sea miles southwest to the Sansha municipal government seat on the island of Yongxing.

Yongxing built its own greenhouse farm last year.

The Yongle harvest ended the area's shortage of vegetables, which used to be supplied by ferries. In time of tropical storms or rough waves, ships were halted and the people on the islets might go days without eating vegetables, an important part of the healthy Chinese diet.

The greenhouse, covering 567 square meters, was built with materials that can withstand heat, storms, gales, and erosive seawater. The ceiling is equipped with solar panels absorbing excessive sunlight to produce electricity.

Inside the greenhouse, a cooling and moisturizing system runs by the hour during the day to make the environment favorable for vegetables to grow.

The first few harvested vegetables include tomatoes, red spinach and water spinach. The farm's managers expect output to reach 200 kilograms a week after they expand the farming scale.