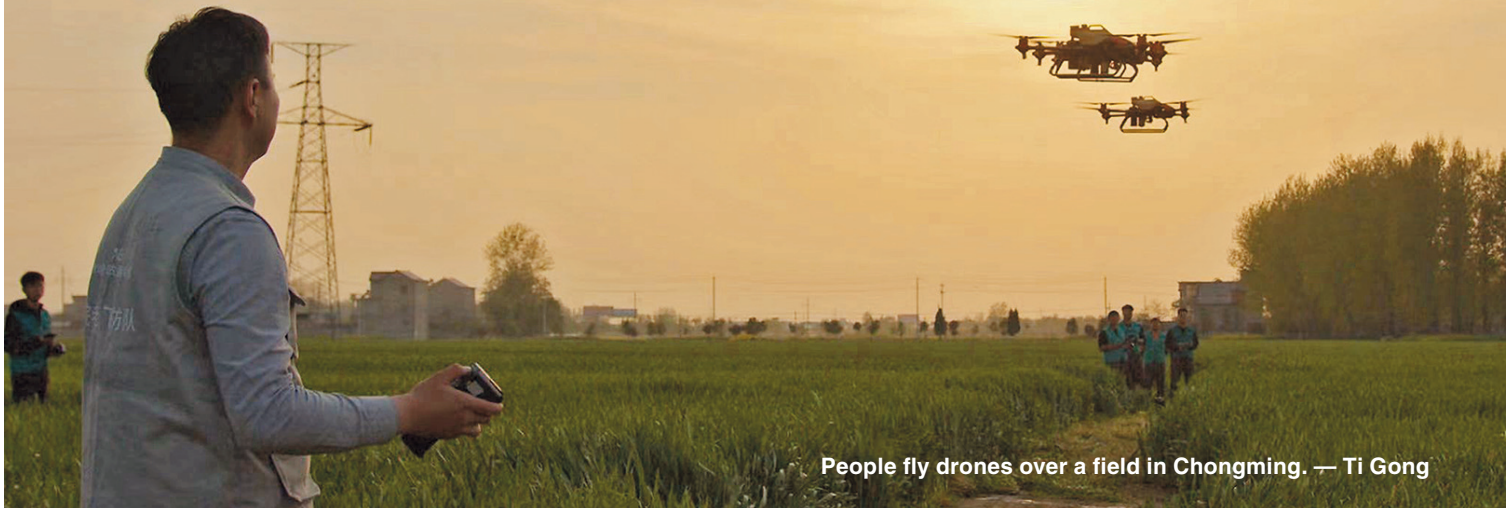


## Drones help ensure food supply during pandemic



People fly drones over a field in Chongming. — Ti Gong

### Zhu Shenshen

MORE than 50 youths from the city and neighboring provinces have been staying on Chongming Island since March to fight the pandemic in their own special way — flying 60 drones that spray fungicides and insecticides to nurture crops.

They reside in a company dormitory, inspect wheat fields, check mobile screens and fly drones several hours a day.

But it makes sense in locked-down Shanghai, where there is a huge demand for agricultural products, said Qian Liangxu, the group's team leader.

"It's a task that has to be completed on time. Otherwise the (harvest) volume will be significantly lower," Qian said.

Qian is a 58-year-old native of Chongming, a major agricultural area.

Compared with traditional farming methods, using drones is more efficient

and safe.

In April, Shanghai's agricultural production capacity was 93 percent of its normal level, providing sufficient rice, fruit and vegetable supplies, local officials said yesterday.

The government has vowed to ensure adequate, reasonably priced food supplies by consolidating production and distribution channels, Ye Junping, deputy director of the city's agricultural commission, said at a press conference yesterday.

Qian's team is supported by the commission and Bright Food Group, which provides work and transport certificates and permits.

The team's drones cover about 120,000 *mu* (8,000 hectares) to prevent and control wheat scab, a destructive fungal disease. The Chongming operating area primarily consists of Changjiang, Yuejin,

Chongming and Qingnian (youth) farm fields.

The agricultural drones, coded XAG P100, can hold as much as 40 kilograms of fungicides and insecticides, according to XAG, a Guangzhou-based drone manufacturer.

They're built with separate flying and task systems, so users can easily switch between crop spraying, granule spreading and field surveying functions.

In the past, agricultural drones were unable to operate without network signals, because they relied on 4G networks.

The latest generation of drones, however, is capable of maintaining steady, highly accurate operations even where there is weak Internet infrastructure, bringing farmers new possibilities to operate in "networkless" environments, XAG officials said.

## Young volunteers at the forefront of virus battle

### Bob Yang

MORE than 800 young volunteers in Shanghai have been organized to pick up and dispense medicines for residents under lockdown amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 872 volunteers recruited from the city's youth federation have been divided into three volunteer teams to pick up medicines at local hospitals, deliver them to the gates of local communities and gather information on residents' requirements.

They've delivered 8,573 medicines for locals, including some 2,700 formulas for special and emergency use, such as tumors, diabetes and mental disease, said Wu Bin, vice chairman of the Shanghai Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League.

More people born between 1995 and 2000 are serving as community group-buying leaders or building chiefs as well as arranging mutual help WeChat groups to assist their neighbors.

Some 19,000 university students are offering online homework consultation or related services for children of local medics who are too busy to take care of their kids as well as those being quarantined at makeshift hospitals or quarantine sites.