



Agri-preneurship in Bhutan

Perspective from a public servant turned agri-preneur

After a fulfilling eighteen-year tenure in public service, I found myself yearning for change—one that would let me continue to impact my community positively while forging a more profound connection with nature. Driven by a vision of sustainable living, I was compelled to take up farming, a vocation that promised to let me care for the land and provide sustenance for my family and neighbours through dedicated labour of love!

My public service experience was richly rewarding, marked by complex policy-making and addressing a diverse population's conservation-related needs. However, I increasingly craved a tangible, nurturing way to contrib-

ute. I saw farming as a seamless continuation of my work, an arena where I could apply my expertise in management and community engagement to the stewardship of land and resources.

Driven by concerns for food security, environmental health, and a commitment to local produce, I turned to farming to embody my values of self-sufficiency, sustainability, and ecological integrity. The simplicity of rural life and the fulfillment of manual labour resonated deeply, making farming a conscious choice for a more grounded existence.

Building on principles from my public service years—community solidarity, hard work, and shared visions—I

founded Happiness Farms to promote sustainable farming in Bhutan. At Farm 1 in Paro, we focus on Japanese pears, apples, and walnuts, known for their market appeal and quality. Farm 2 in Punakha diversifies with avocados, premium oranges, lemons, pineapples, and dragon fruit, meeting market demands and strengthening agricultural resilience.

We continue to expand our fruit selection while offering unique experiences, such as traditional cottage-style accommodations, guided farm tours, fruit plucking, outdoor activities, and a farm-to-table restaurant featuring produce from our fields. Our innovative 'Tree Membership' program allows individuals to own and enjoy the harvest from fruit trees for a set period.

Encouraging Bhutanese youth to pursue farming requires addressing challenges and aligning with their aspirations. Key efforts include integrating modern technology, fostering entrepreneurship, improving education, promoting sustainability, increasing land access, and developing robust marketing strategies. Agriculture and rural communities are crucial for Bhutan's vision of becoming a developed economy by 2034, driving economic growth, ensuring food security, and preserving the environment.

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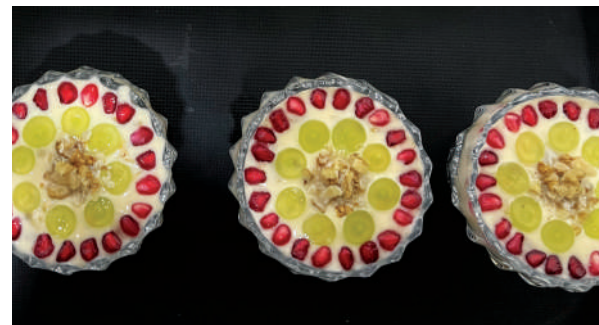
ing unique experiences, such as traditional cottage-style accommodations, guided farm tours, fruit plucking, outdoor activities, and a farm-to-table restaurant featuring produce from our fields. Our innovative 'Tree Membership' program allows individuals to own and enjoy the harvest from fruit trees for a set period.

Encouraging Bhutanese youth to embrace farming requires addressing challenges and aligning with their aspirations through modern technology, entrepreneurship, education, sustainability, land access, and marketing strategies. Agriculture and rural communities are pivotal to Bhutan's vision of becoming a developed economy by 2034, driving growth, food security, and environmental preservation.

As Bhutan enters an era of transformative change, agriculture faces new opportunities and challenges driven by technology, shifting consumer demands, and sustainability. The government's role is vital in supporting farmers, fostering innovation, and driving growth, ensuring the sector's long-term success and national economic benefits.

To this end, the government can implement several key strategies:

1. Providing monetary assistance with grants, low-interest loans and subsidies, especially to those with small-scale operations, to enable farmers to invest in modern



technology and eco-friendly farming methods.

2. Funding innovation and research to discover new farming techniques, crop varieties, and animal breeds that are more productive and climate resilient.

3. Developing infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems, and storage facilities to improve market access and reduce post-harvest losses.

4. Offering education and skills training to prepare farmers for modern, sustainable farming practices and marketing.

5. Improving market access by developing efficient supply chains, offering market information, and assisting with export opportunities to broaden farmers' customer base and income.

6. Promoting sustainable methods like organic farming and agroforestry to preserve the environment and ensure long-term food security.

Addressing policy challenges is also crucial for the advancement of Bhutanese agriculture. Farmers currently contend with issues such as land fragmentation, which impedes effective land management and investment; human-wildlife conflicts, limited access to finance, which restricts the ability to improve farming operations; poor infrastructure and market access, leading to high transportation costs and limited selling opportunities; and climate and environmental challenges that threaten crop yields and productivity.

Empowering farmers is pivotal to overcoming these challenges. Education, training, and access to information can equip them with the skills needed to adopt modern farming practices, enhance crop yields, and diversify their products. This empowerment is essential for

the sector's growth and the community's prosperity. The changing agricultural landscape in Bhutan is opening new avenues for agribusiness and entrepreneurship.

The rise of organic farming, agro-tourism, and value-added products presents new business opportunities in agriculture. Initiatives like farm-to-table and eco-friendly processing align with changing consumer preferences, while e-commerce connects farmers directly with fair markets and informed buyers.

Preserving Bhutan's traditional agricultural practices and heritage is vital alongside innovation. By blending entrepreneurship, technology, sustainability, and indigenous knowledge, Bhutan can build a resilient and thriving agricultural future.

All in all, the evolving Bhutanese agricultural sector offers abundant possibilities for growth, innovation, and sustainability. By welcoming change, nurturing entrepreneurial spirit, and harnessing technology, Bhutan's agriculture can flourish in the modern age, contributing to national prosperity and honouring its rich agricultural legacy. The time to initiate these transformative steps is now to ensure readiness for 21st-century transformation.

Dorji



The trailblazer from Eastern Bhutan affectionately known as "Digital Dorji" for his groundbreaking embrace of digital photography during his college days. A cultural ambassador, innovator, and a storyteller dedicated to sharing Bhutan's heritage with the world.



FRUIT TREE MEMBERSHIP

Introducing first of its kind!



Membership Options, Duration, and Pricing:

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new exciting initiative: the First-of-its-Kind Fruit Tree Membership Project at The Happiness Farm 1. This farm-orchard project aims to provide individuals with the unique opportunity to own and enjoy the fruits of Japanese Pears, and Apple trees for a specified duration.

We are offering three Membership options on a first-come, first-served basis, with limited trees available.

Happiness Farm Yearly Membership Package

For Residents: Nu 50,000/year

- 1 • Apple tree
- 1 • Pear tree
- 4 • free lunches
- 4 • free dinners
- 4 • breakfasts

- FREE • 2 rooms for two nights
- FREE • to visit your tree anytime and use the common areas.
- FREE • Able to book rooms and meals at members discount of 20%



Please note

Please note that by participating in this project, you will have full ownership of the Fruiting Trees and the right to enjoy its harvest throughout the chosen duration. However, please be informed that this ownership/membership does not extend to the land itself.

In the event that you are unable to personally nurture and harvest the fruits from your tree, we encourage you to consider donating them to a local institution, school, or charity. By doing so, you contribute to the local employment and economy of the community through your goodwill and participation.



The Happiness Farm will post the detailed information regarding the Project on our Facebook page - including tree availability, contract terms and conditions. Please visit our social media page regularly to access all the necessary information and make an informed decision about becoming a Proud Tree Owner.

Join the Initiatives

SUPPORT OUR FARMERS

- FREE • to visit your tree anytime and use the common areas.
- FREE • 10% discount on room bookings for staff members

Rules of Membership:

- Understand some years the trees will produce different numbers of produce.
- Donate the produce to any one of the following Institutions:
 - Hospital patients (Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital in Thimphu)
 - Bhutan Kidney Foundation
 - Monks at the Dobji Monastic School, Paro
 - Nunnery
 - The Happiness Farm
- or make a donation of your choice
- Harvest and enjoy fruits



For Non-Residents:

- 1 • Apple tree
- 1 • Pear tree
- 2 • free lunches
- 2 • free dinners
- 2 • breakfasts
- 2 • rooms for 2 nights

Fee Structure

5 years	10 years	20 years
@USD \$ 599	@USD \$ 999	@USD \$ 1799

- FREE • to visit your tree anytime and use the common areas.
- FREE • Able to book rooms and meals at members discount of 20% for family members



Corporate Package:

One Fruit Bearing Apple and Pear Trees

Fee Structure

5 years	10 years	20 years
@USD \$ 599	@USD \$ 999	@USD \$ 1799

As an environmentalist at heart, the proceeds from this initiative will be reinvested in the further development of The Happiness Farm 1 and citizen initiatives focused on environmental conservation in the locality. By participating in this project, you will not only enjoy the fruits of your tree but also contribute to the growth and sustainability of the farm and its valuable community and environmental initiatives.

We invite our valued participants to embark on this journey with us in this First-of-its-Kind Fruit Tree Membership Project. We look forward to your kind support in creating a flourishing and environmentally conscious community.

CONTACT US @

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Find Us

