Phuntshothang Commercial Farm Inaugurated

24 February 2019: Hon’ble Agriculture and Forest Lyonpo Yeshey Penjor inaugurated the Phuntshothang commercial farm which was initially started as Phuntshothang Agriculture Rehabilitation Project (PARP) upon the receipt of Royal Command with the objective to enhance land utilization for agriculture production project. Later, the commercial farm was taken over by Farm Machinery Corporation Limited (FMCL) in line with the executive order No. DoA/ADM/01/139 dated 5th October 2016 of the Ministry of Agriculture and office order No. DoA/ADM/01/161 dated 21st October 2016 of Department of Agriculture.

As per the past record there are 52 households in Mindrupling and 2 households in Zomlingthang. The total cultivated land as per the available record, used to be 727 acres with only 65 acres under cultivation. The rest were under forest cover since 1990. On 11th November 2016, the PARP Project was officially handed over to FMCL. After the PARP Project, the Phuntshothang Commercial Farm has developed, re-developed the farming land and had also improved the farming activities. In total, Phuntshothang Commercial Farming has 662 acres of land, out of which 134 acres of land in Mindrupling, 385 acres of land in Zomlegthang and 143 acres of land in Tshochung. The following sketch shows the overall map of Phuntshothang Commercial Farm.

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Objective:

- To enhance land utilization for agriculture production,
- Farm mechanization,
- Creating employment opportunities within the locality and outside the farm,
- Contributions towards food security and creating food self-sufficient.

Receipt of Farm Machines & Heavy Machinery from PARP & CMU

- From PARP Project, FMCL have received 8 Tractor (LS & Kubota) (6 functioning, one repairable & one beyond repairable), 4 Combine harvesters (3 functioning & 1 Repairable), 7 Trans-planting machine (all functioning but need few repairing) and other equipment’s.
- From CMU Bumthang we have received 1-Payloader, 1-Bull dozer, 1- JCB Excavator, 1- Drum Truck and 1- CAT Excavator.

Handing Taking of Rice Mill, Paddy Store & All

- On 26th August 2017 we have taken over Rice Mill, Rice & Paddy Store from Food Corporation of Bhutan (FCBL).
- On 18th September ARDC, Wengkhar has handed over the newly constructed care taker house.

Staff Strength of Phuntshothang Commercial Farm

Currently, farm has a total staff of 43 which includes 13 female and 31 male. The farm is also supported by GPT operators from Pemagytshel, 3 GPT Operators from Samdrupjongkhar and 5 Farm Assistant from other regional offices which sum up to a grand total of 58 staffs.

Activities carry out within Two years by FMCL

1. Irrigation Channel along with Road Construction
   - After taking over from the PARP project, farm have completed constructing 12 Km of Irrigation
Channel with road constructed along the line from Daglai to Zomlegthang. The farm also constructed another 2km to Zomlegthang from Ngeraamachu which has immensely helped in paddy cultivation.

2. Land Development

The farm has carried out bush clearing of 202 acres and developed 105 acres into terraces within two years. We have more to developed with the availability of funds in supporting the goal of self-reliance specially in rice.

3. ESP & Office Construction

The farm has also constructed two ESP quarter and one office to enhance better service delivery.

4. Crop Production

i. Spring Paddy – initiated in 94.4 acres and produced 33,020 kg of paddy (first of its kind at the commercial level in the country).

ii. Maize – cultivated 83.61 acres of maize and produced 5,724kg (Majority of the produce was lost to wild elephant)

iii. Chilli – cultivated 7 acres of winter chilli and produced 134 kg (6.5 acres damaged by wild elephant)

iv. Pigeon pea – started with 17.66 acres and produced 2,878.87 kg.

v. Normal Paddy – cultivated 139.64 acres and produced with 65,069.79 kg (Khamti Paddy)

vi. Started with diary program to develop a concept of integrated farming amongst the youths. Currently, farm has 22 local jersey inclusive of 3 ox & 14 calves (10 female & 4 male).

vii. Hiring services

1. GPT 2018 – 181 acres of 200 HH

2. Hiring 2018 – 1125 acres 800 HH

viii. PoL/ Gewog Services

ix. Samranganf Lauri Gewog – 13600 litres/ 146 LPG.
Fifth RRBFE held in Samdrup Jongkhar

ICTD

21 February, Samdrup Jongkhar: His Majesty The King graced the inauguration of the fifth Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition (RBFE) at Tendrelthang. The Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and His Royal Highness The Gyalsey along with the Royal Family members also graced the event. The Prime Minister, the Ambassador of India to Bhutan and the invitees were also present.

The exhibition with a theme, ‘Building clean, safe, organised and beautiful living environments for general well-being and happiness’ is dedicated to the Birth Anniversary of His Majesty. It aims to promote floriculture and educate the public on the impact of creating clean, safe, organised and beautiful urban spaces.

According to a spokesperson, Samdrup Jongkhar was chosen as the 5th RBFE venue considering the historic and geographic importance of the border town which serve as one of the gateways to the country.

Six gardens using vibrant seasonal flowers and innovative displays by government, armed forces and private nurseries have been set up at Tendrelthang, the main venue covering an area of 1.6 acres. Besides the gardens, it also includes sale stalls for food, souvenirs, traditional medicine, pottery and bamboo products among others. The exhibition have also developed permanent features in and around to beautify the town. The local residents and shopkeepers were encouraged to beautify their own surroundings with the display of additional flowers/plants and innovative aesthetic efforts.

As a part of the exhibition, 1710 saplings of plants and flowers that thrive in the southern climates including the Queen of Bhutan Rose, begonia, poinsettia and bauhunia among others were also planted around the town. His Majesty granted the saplings as soelra to the Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde.

In addition, to celebrate His Majesty’s Birthday, about 40 taxis offered free taxi services yesterday between Dewathang and Samdrup Jongkhar for the exhibition visitors. They also provided their free services within the town areas.

Over 4400 visitors including Bhutanese and foreigners visited the exhibition yesterday which will remain open until February 27.

Sonam Zangmo, one of the visitors from Deothang shared that the exhibition is a beautiful opportunity for nature lovers like her. With the exhibition in full swing, business community are also hopeful for good business.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde jointly organised the exhibition with support from the relevant stakeholders.
Protected Areas in Bhutan

1. Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary
2. Jigme Dorji National Park
4. Jigme Singye Wangchuk National Park
5. Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary
6. Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary
7. Phrumsenngla National Park
8. Royal Manas National Park
9. Sakteng Wild Life Sanctuary
10. Wangchuck Centennial National Park

Jokes

The Jogger and the Farmer

Penjor, a jogger, is running down a country road and is startled when a horse yells at him, ‘Hey come over here buddy.’ Penjor is stunned but still runs over to the fence where the horse is standing and asks, ‘Were you talking to me?’ The horse replies, ‘Sure was, man I’ve got a problem. I won the Kentucky Derby a few years ago and this farmer bought me and now all I do is pull a plough and I’m sick of it.

Why don’t you run up to the house and offer him $10,000 to buy me. I’ll make you some money because I can still run.’ Farmer hillbilly jokes Penjor thought to himself, ‘Wow, a talking horse.’ Dollar signs started appearing in his head.

So he runs to the house and the old rancher is sitting on the porch. Penjor tells the farmer, ‘Hey man I’ll give you $10,000 for that old broken down nag you’ve got in the field. ‘The farmer replies, ‘Son you can’t believe anything that horse says. He’s never even been to Kentucky.’

Did you know?

The Single Largest Employer in the World

- United States: 17%
- Globally: 40%

Agriculture employs more than 24 million American workers (17% of the total U.S. workforce). Globally, 40% of the population works in agriculture. Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world.
Electric fencing proved successful in Khoma

Electric fencing of farmland is gaining popularity among many farmers across the country. They say that electric fence help in reducing crop damages. Therefore, it aids to increase crop cultivation with plethora of diversification. Farmers also spend less time guarding crops and it is helping in the downsizing the fallow land in the area.

A Babtong village in Khoma geog is located around 6km from the geog center and with the funding support from BTFEC through Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, a total area of 31 Acres belonging to 26 households mostly of paddy field were fenced with electricity in the year 2015. It was almost running three year under operation as of today and no problem been foreseen so far.

Bhutanese Journal of Agriculture Launched

The Department of Agriculture launched the second volume of the Bhutanese Journal of Agriculture. The opening was graced by Aum Kinlay Tshering, Hon’ble Director, Department of Agriculture at DoA conference hall.

The Director put on record her appreciation to the authors, reviewers and editorial board members for their contribution and for putting in extra effort to publish this edition successfully.

She emphasized the importance of continuously working towards improving the quality of the journal and to encourage young researchers to develop a habit of scientific writing.

National Training Workshop on Evolutionary Plant Breeding held

A week-long training workshop on Evolutionary Plant Breeding for the National Project Stakeholders is underway at Gelephu. The onfarm conservation Project on Evolutionary Plant Breeding “Use of genetic diversity and Evolutionary Plant Breeding for enhanced farmer resilience to climate change, sustainable crop productivity, and nutrition under rain-fed conditions” is supported by IFAD through Biodiversity International. It is an International project coordinated by Bioversity International, Rome and will be implemented in six countries (Bhutan, Nepal, Iran, Uganda, Ethiopia and Jordan). The project will focus on the conservation and sustainable use of rice and bean on-farm diversity in the proposed project sites exploiting the concept of evolutionary plant breeding.