

Report on Signing of Contractual Agreement between Schools and Farmer Groups to supply RNR products for the academic year 2017

1. Brief back ground on school linking programme

In order to find a reliable market for the agriculture products and help farmers to earn income, a school linking program was started in June 2012 with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Agriculture and Forests, and Education by piloting two schools of Gyelpoishing Higher Secondary School, Mongar and Jakar Higher Secondary School, Bumthang.

Following the positive feedbacks from schools and farmer groups (FGs), RAMCO in consultation with Dzongkhag, Geog Agriculture Extension Officer and Geog Administration of respective geogs facilitated agreements between 47 schools/institutions with 99 farmer groups in the east to supply vegetables for the 2016 academic session.

Likewise, the most recent agreement was signed between 10 schools with 21 FGs. The contract will run for a period of 10 months (1 Academic Year) which will be reviewed and renewed annually in the interest of both the parties. *(The detail list of linked school is attached in the annexure).*

2. Aims and Objectives of linking

The meeting between farmer groups and schools was facilitated by RAMCO. Before signing of the agreement the members present in the meeting were briefed on the purpose of linking school with farmers groups and the benefits of linking.

The following objectives of linking were explained to the participants:

- To supply fresh and different varieties of vegetables which are locally available
- To promote cooperation between members
- To provide reliable and sustainable market
- To enhance group income

3. Issue and challenges

The participants were briefed on the following issues, challenges and lesson learned from the linking programme in 2016.

a. Challenges faced by farmer groups

- **Supply vegetables during offseason:** FGs are facing problem in supplying vegetables especially in February and March month, as most of the production sites are located in higher altitude whereby producing vegetables is difficult.
- **Storage problem:** Due to the storage problem in the household level most of the farmers prefer to take potato directly to Samdrupjongkhar auction yard immediately after the harvest. If they store potato, tuber moth is a big problem for them. On the other hand potato is the main vegetable required by institutions, due to this FGs are facing problem in supplying potato on regular basis to the schools.
- **Difficult in meeting the demand:** Some farmers cannot grow and supply vegetables according to the individual share that they are required to (when school has huge demand and farmers group consist of few members). Reasons such as limited land holdings, lack of technical skills, damage by wildlife, damage by pest and disease or lack of irrigation are considered the hindering factor. The FGs living in the low altitude said that the vegetable production during summer season is challenging since vegetables were frequently attracted by pest and diseases.

b. Challenges faced by institutions

- **Not supplying quality vegetables:** In some of the school FGs are not supplying the quality vegetables. Some school mess in-charge complained that FGs are selling quality vegetables to the local market and supplying vegetables that are not able to sell in the market.
- **Storage problem:** Lack of storage or inadequate space for storage of food commodities was another major hurdle for the schools. Even if the schools have one, perishable RNR produce like vegetables easily get spoiled due to lack of well fitted storage facilities. Schools those located in lower altitude (i.e. Gyelposhing HSS) face this problem of vegetable damage more than other.
- **Lean season:** During lean season FGs are not able to supply vegetables. School are facing difficulty in finding the local vendor to get the imported vegetables. School said that it's the duty of FGs to supply required vegetables all the time.
- **FGs forcing them to buy all the produce:** Some of the school also said that FGs are forcing them to buy all the vegetables produced by the groups. The school has limited budget to buy vegetables whereby they cannot buy all the vegetables produced by FGs.

4. Terms and condition

The farmer groups were briefed on terms and conditions set in the agreement. The responsibilities and obligations for each party were clearly spelled verse by verse in the meeting. Among other important conditions in the agreement, the farmer groups and schools were particularly briefed on the legality of the agreement and extent to which it can sue depending upon the severity of the cases.

5. Price fixation:

The participants in the house thoroughly discussed on prices of RNR products. The group members and school were reminded to agree on realistic prices as the price will be used for the academic year 2017. Based on the negotiation and consensus from of both the parties, the prices were also set and reflected on the contractual agreement. The farmers have agreed to supply assorted vegetables at the prices agreed by both the parties during the meeting.

6. Agreement signing

The farmer groups and schools after understanding all terms and conditions in the contractual agreement fully agreed to comply with the agreement.

The contractual agreement between two parties i.e. Schools and Farmer Groups was signed in the presence of Geog Administration, Agriculture Extension Agent and RAMCO staff.

With just three years into the program, RAMCO is continuously trying to cover maximum schools and institutes to help more farmers in the achievement of country's greater goal of self-sufficiency.



Signing of contractual agreement between Dremetse Central School and Framers Groups in 2016

Regional Agricultural Marketing and Cooperative Office, Mongar			
Profile of FGs linked with Schools/institutions to the supply RNR products for the academic year 2017			
Dzongkhag	Geog	Name of Group	Name of school
Lhuntse	Kurtoe	Dungkhar Vegetable group	Dungkhar Primary School
		Serphu Vegetable group	
Mongar	Dremetsi	Wengkhartshing Vegetable Group	Dremetsi Central School
		Bazor Vegetable Group	
	Chaskhar	Yabung Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	Chaskhar Central School
		Zorgonpa Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	
Trashigang	Teotsho	KhoblakharVeg Prodn & Marketing Group	Khine Lower Secondary School
		SepVeg Prodn. & Marketing Group	
	Ramjar	Gochang Tshesey Gongphel Detshen	Ramjar Middle Secondary School
		Pangthang Chilli Marketing Group	
		Gonpa Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	
		Tsangrong Potato and Vegetable Group	
	Tongzhang	Changmadung Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	Tongzhang Central School
		Pang Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	
		Brongkashing Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	
		Goshing Vegetable Production and Marketing Group	
Trashigang	Udzorong	Bepam Vegetable group	Udzorong Central School
		Drokphu Potato Group	
Pemagatshel	Chimung	ChimungGongphelDetshen	Chimung Primary School
	Yurung	Yurung Sonam Dang Gonor Gongphel Detshen	Yurung Central School
Samdrup Jongkhar	Martshala	Martshala Vegetable Group	Martshala Middle Secondary School
			Martshala Primary School
	Serthi	Deptshang Vegetable group	Menjiwong Central School
		Denphu Vegetable group	