

Bhutanese Farmers

This season we are working with a few 'farms' of newer refugees. Our newest farm group is new refugees from Bhutan, resettling in Minnesota after years of living in refugee camps in Nepal. With great support from Chhimi Wangchuck, a refugee employment counselor, we have 4 Bhutanese farmer families in the training program this season. Their farming skills are obvious; our mutual challenge is to adapt that to our Minnesota climate and marketing opportunities. Chhimi realized that many of the Bhutanese refugees had difficulty finding employment, especially fulfilling employment, so he contacted MFA to see if he could set up an opportunity for some members of his community to begin setting up their own farming enterprise. We are extremely pleased to have this wonderful community join our community. While they are excellent farmers, they are having a tough go of it in meeting the minimal financial needs of the program and farming. They need assistance in covering their transplant and seed costs, training fee and land costs, tool expenses and gas costs. Already we have received \$100 from a kind donor for this group. We are looking to raise an additional \$500 to help them pay off seeds and fees and some gas money. If you can help this group of farmers cover basic costs through a financial donation, please email me (Glen Hill glenhill@mnfoodassociation.org) or make a contribution through the MFA website http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/mnfa_donate.aspx

The majority of refugees from Bhutan, which borders India and China in central Asia, have lived in refugee camps in Nepal for 15 - 20 years. Roughly 700 Bhutanese refugees currently have resettled in Minnesota. For more detailed information about Bhutanese refugees, please click here <http://www.bhutanese-refugees.com/> For a summary fact sheet, please click here http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/backgrounder_bhutanese.pdf