

Member experience on
**Addressing illegal movement of animals and animal product across the
international border**
[Bhutan]

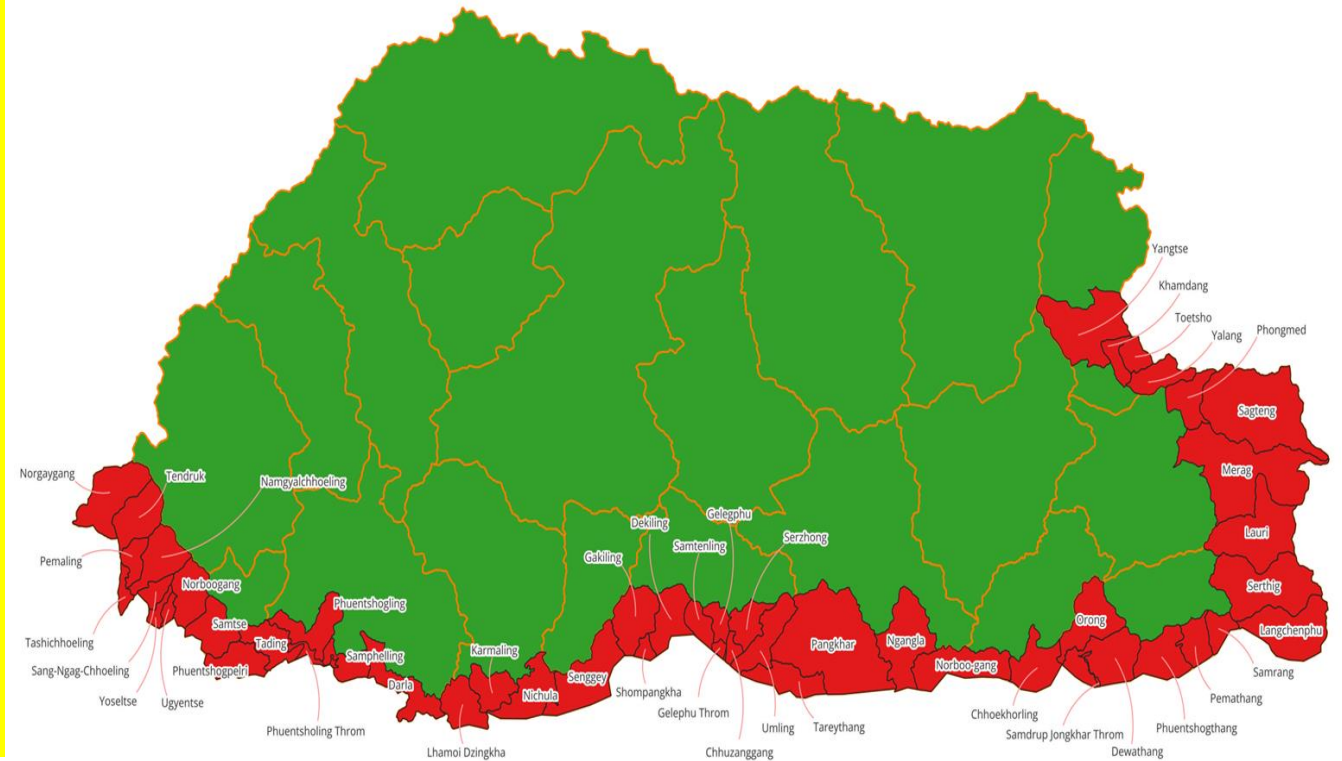
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1 – 3 July 2025

Chiba, Japan

Background

- More than 600 KM of porous border in the South with India
- Nine District shares border with 4 Indian states
- No physical boundary walls, only at strategic points
- Progressive livestock farmers along the border areas
- Bhutan's major import and export of goods, movement of vehicles and people happens in South
- While official entry points and trade routes are manned by Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army, many illegal entry and exit points exist



Designated Point of Entry

➤ Bhutan has six officially designated PoEs :

1. Paro International Airport: Bhutan's only international airport, serves as the primary gateway for air travelers
2. Ground crossing : (Samtse, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Nanglam & Samdrupjongkhar) Officially designated entry and exit point by road- for animal biosecurity purposes
3. For trade of general goods, there are numerous trade routes



Bhutan Food & Drug Authority, Ministry of Health

Our Mission:

To protect the health of human, animals, plants and environment by ensuring:

- safety and quality of the food and agriculture products (Food safety & quality division)
- effective plant and animal biosecurity systems (Plant & animal biosecurity division)
- quality, safety and effectiveness of medical products (Medical product division)
- reduce supply and demand of the controlled substances (Controlled substance & medical device division)

Plant & Animal Biosecurity Division:

- Protect agricultural system including animal health, plant health, environment & biodiversity from pest and diseases, invasive species and genetically modified organisms
- Plant and Animal Quarantine Station at five point of entry (land) and one (international airport)
- Import and export of plant and animal (live and products): Regulation & enforcement
- **Disease outbreak containment:** Movement control & quarantine, Regulation & monitor of disposal and decontamination ,
- Safety of foods of animal origin



Plant and Animal Quarantine Station, Samtse



Animal and Plant Quarantine facility, Land crossing PoE, Phuentsholing



PAQS, Phuentsholing

4:05 PM



Challenges and concern: Illegal cross-border movements of animals or animal products in Bhutan

1. Movement of animals (cattle, goat, pig, dog) through open porous border: Common & free grazing areas resulting intermixing of animals



Movement of cattle and dogs from border

2. Illegal movement of animal products (pork, chicken, beef, fish, egg, etc)



Illegal movement of animal products



Illegal animal products in oil tanker



Illegal animal products in two wheelers



Illegal animal products in car seat and car bonnet



3. Livestock farms in border district:
Non-compliance issues of farm
biosecurity measures
Majority are subsistence or backyard
farms where biosecurity implementation
and enforcement is challenging



4. Feeding of kitchen waste to animals
(Swill feeding): Low cost subsistence
farming using kitchen waste to feed
animals is one of major cause of disease
outbreaks (African Swine Fever)

Swill feeding



5. Live bird markets across border: Challenges to regulate movement of animal products



Live bird market across border

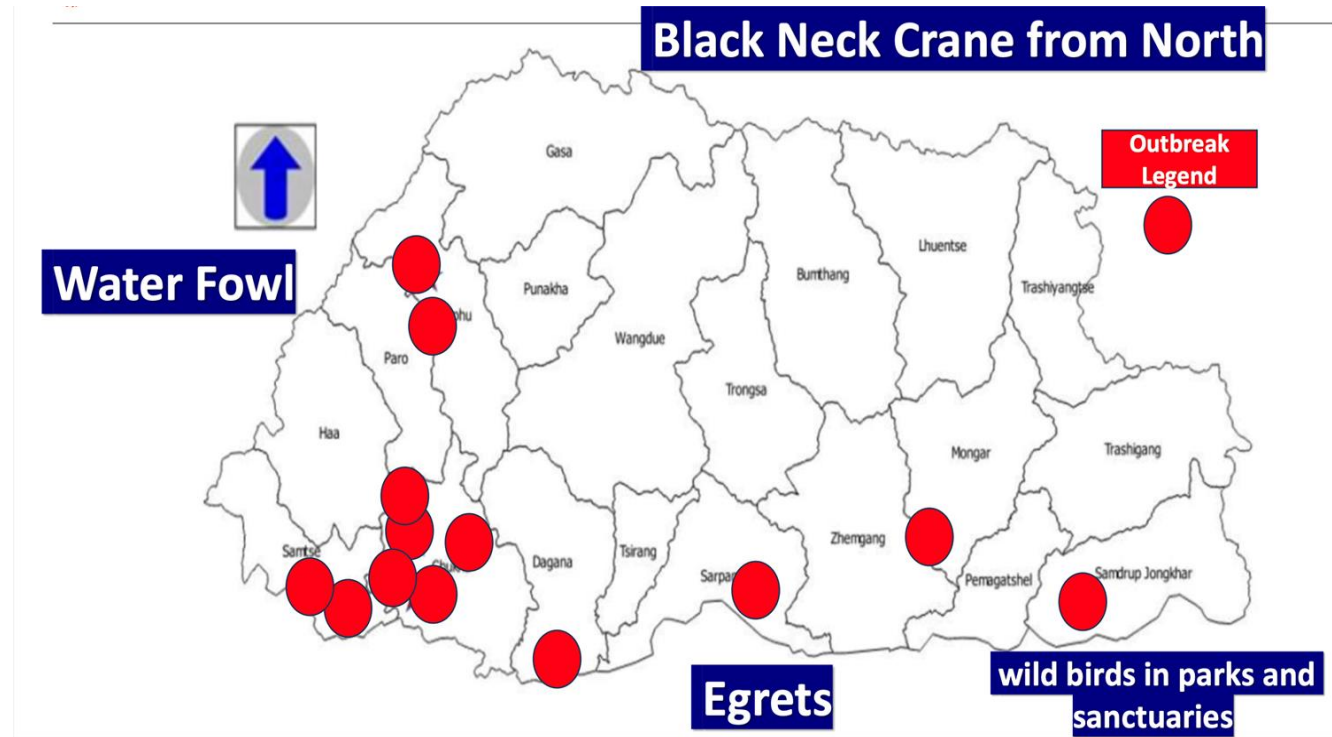
6. Illegal movement/release of animals (Tshethar animals)



7. Illegal release of Cat-fish in rivers (from border)



8. Flying birds (migratory and water fowl) : Spread of diseases



9. Movement of truckers in borders (industrial and boulder business: risk of movement of animal products)



10. Lack of cargo scanner at point of entry resulting in failure to detect illegal movement of animal products



Cross-border Collaboration

- No formalized/established cross border collaboration mechanism
- Bilateral cross border disease harmonization meeting with Indian counterparts in 2017 & 2019 : Coordinated through district administration : rabies vaccination and dog sterilization
- Informal WhatsApp group created in 2019 but no contact after COVID-19
- No cross-border surveillance (no information sharing) nor joint training



Other Measures to Address Illegal Movement

- Regulation & enforcement of animal & animal products as per the Livestock Act 2001 and Livestock Rules and Regulation 2017 and amended 2022
- Collaboration with national media houses for sensitization and awareness programs to curb illegal imports
- Continuous efforts made to coordinate among border control agencies (RBP/Customs /Immigration/forestry) to strengthen surveillance along the borders to curb illegal importers and share information.
- MOU between Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) and BFDA signed on 20 Oct 2021 to manage the operational aspect of the BFDA's role and functions at the border/entry points of the country
- Informers' recognition- letter of appreciation
- MoU between BFDA, RGOB and EIC, GOI (27th September, 2013) and FSSAI (March 21, 2024) on the agreement of the recognition of export inspection and certification system
- Both official and trade routes are manned by security authorities: however, many illegal routes that evades the oversight of security authorities

Way Forward

- ❖ Establish formal cross border mechanism platform through international organization support : WOAHA, WHO, FAO (technical Level)
- ❖ Capacity building support on Animal Biosecurity
- ❖ Support for infrastructure and facilities for animal quarantine stations at POE: Installation of modern facilities
- ❖ Enhance the disease information sharing platform (WAHIS) – Accessibility and Performance.

Thank you
