

Farmer's Diary ~Hokkaido "Ezura Farm"~

He quit his job and moved to Hokkaido. I started farming as a field farmer.

List of articl

◆ Past and future of live-in volunteering ◆

2019/03/08 12:59

Hello , agricultural work in 2019 begins with volunteers

. My wife.

The long winter vacation (for our family, it's the busy season for guesthouses) is over, and starting in March, it's finally the farming season.

At Ezura Farm, we accept not only local people but also live-in volunteers, who live and work together and become a powerful force.

Well, finally, the volunteer members will be arriving tomorrow.

After that, there will always be someone staying as a volunteer until early November.

Before accepting volunteers in 2019, I would like to summarize the reasons why we accept volunteers. what has happened so far. and what we plan to do in the future.

profile

No Image

Author:Ezura Farm

[About us]

Just before the age of 30, I ended my life as an office worker in Tokyo and moved to Hokkaido. After three years of training, she realized her dream of working as a farmer in Hokkaido in April 2012. They are a newly hired farming couple who quit their jobs.

[Business details] Field farm management, direct sales of crops on the Internet, management of the farm guesthouse "E

Learn more. What is a live-in volunteer?

Live-in volunteers, as the name suggests, are members who live with us in Ezura Farm's housing and do regular farm work. In exchange for 8 hours a day of regular farm work, we provide accommodation, 3 meals, snacks, and various experiences for free. Meals are full of freshly harvested vegetables! You will be staying in a private room that is also used as a farmhouse. The length of stay is generally between one week and two months. During the same period, the number of people staying was 4 to 6 during the busy farming season. 2-3 people during non-busy times. Farm work is physically demanding, requires long breaks, and requires volunteer work, so most of the people who apply are university students or working adults in their 20s. There are also people in their 30s and above who are aiming to start farming.



xperience, live-in volunteers, and part-time workers, planning, production, and sales of wheat craft "Himmeli", company through agricultural work Training acceptance projects, etc.

[Location] Shirataki, Engaru-cho, Monbetsu-gun, Hokkaido

[Area] Approximately 42 hectares (approximately the size of 9 Tokyo Domes)

[Crops] Potatoes, wheat, sweet corn, sugar beets, broccoli, etc.

[Homepage] <http://www.ezurafarm.com/>

latest article

Winner of the 10th "My Village is Beautiful - Hokkaido" Excellence Award! (03/06)

- ◆ 15th Jagallympics! ◆ (02/24)
- ◆ Spring planting is complete! ! ◆ (05/28)
- ◆ Work, life and play in early spring ◆ (03/25)
- ◆ Past and future of live-in volunteers ◆ (03/08)



category

[Uncategorized \(10\)](#)
[About agriculture \(70\)](#)
[Farming \(112\)](#)
[Husband's articles \(37\)](#)
[Potato \(17\)](#)
[Wife articles \(59\)](#)
[Country life \(113\)](#)
[Wife's article \(1\)](#)
(17)
(0)
wheat (3)
Travelogue (1)
Farmhouse (1)

Photo gallery

The largest number of students are Japanese university students, but 30% are from overseas. The male:female ratio is about 1:9.

...Girl power! !!

I want to work in agriculture! Rather, I get the impression that many people come with the intention of getting work experience and studying abroad, such as ``I'm interested in rural life," ``I want to experience various things," and ``I want to see various jobs before job hunting." A total of 70 people were accepted in 2018. Fortunately, we received approximately 200 applications last year, so we accepted approximately 1/3 of them. **History of accepting volunteers** Nowadays, many people come to visit us, but of course, things did not start out the way they are now, and the labor shortage in agriculture has been a big burden on our family as well. It was a challenge. **2012 Year of independence 0 volunteers** Field farming does not require much manpower for management work, but about 5 people are needed only during the busy farming season for planting and harvesting. For us, who have just become farmers, it is really difficult to have about five people come to work. However, thanks to the previous owner's request to the local community to come and help Mr. Emen, several people from the neighborhood came to work during the busy farming season. When we still didn't have enough people, we went around to the homes of people with experience in farming in the area, asking them if they could come and work with us, bringing gifts with them. When it comes to farming, we sometimes get scolded by local people who are experienced farmers. I was also yelled at for my potato harvester operations, saying, "You're so bad!" (lol)



monthly archive

- [2022/03 \(1\)](#)
- [2020/02 \(1\)](#)
- [2019/05 \(1\)](#)
- [2019/03 \(2\)](#)
- [2019/02 \(1\)](#)
- [2019/01 \(2\)](#)
- [2017/04 \(1\)](#)
- [2017/02 \(1\)](#)
- [2016/09 \(1\)](#)
- [2016/06 \(1\)](#)
- [2016/05 \(1\)](#)
- [2015/03 \(2\)](#)



2016/02 (1)
2016/01 (3)
2015/12 (2)
2015/11 (1)
2015/10 (3)
2015/07 (1)
2015/06 (2)
2015/05 (2)
2015/04 (2)
2015/03 (6)
2015/02 (2)
2015/01 (4)
2014/12 (2)
2014/11 (2)
2014/10 (1)
2014/09 (3)
2014/08 (4)
2014/07 (2)
2014/06 (3)
2014/05 (4)
2014/04 (7)
2014/03 (4)
2014/02 (4)
2014/01 (4)
2013/12 (4)
2013/11 (3)
2013/10 (2)

When my husband's operation of the machine and mine didn't work together, and we dropped a lot of crops, everyone encouraged us and said, ``Let's work together as husband and wife!!'' (lol) I think the manager was being dangerous

. Masu. However , when she secretly overheard a local person say, ``You're a hard worker!'' (in Hokkaido dialect)

as she watched her husband's tractor move forward, even though it was twisting and turning, she felt like crying. I remember it becoming. Her daughter was born in May 2012, and she was struggling to raise her child due to a lack of manpower. Naturally, as the owner, I also had to go out into the field. My parents-in-law sometimes drive three hours to see my daughter, and sometimes I leave my baby daughter with a family in the neighborhood (lol).Even now, they say, ``You used to come to our house when she was a baby.' ' My daughter was shocked when she heard this. Sometimes I worked while riding on my back. My parents-in-law also worked together. Even though he has worked hard and is about to retire, his son and his wife unexpectedly become "farmers" and decide to help with the farm work! Unexpected debut after retiring from farming! It seems that there are "parents of new farmers". In this way, during my first year as a farmer, I was constantly pushing myself to the limit and managing my business in suspense. I cannot thank everyone enough for their help. I can truly understand the common phrase, "I am who I am because of you." At the same time, I realized how difficult it is to secure labor for agriculture.

2013/09 (3)
2013/08 (4)
2013/07 (6)
2013/06 (5)
2013/05 (4)
2013/04 (11)
2013/03 (14)
2013/02 (4)
2013/01 (6)
2012/12 (4)
2012/11 (4)
2012/10 (7)
2012/09 (1)
2012/08 (6)
2012/07 (7)
2012/06 (5)
2012/05 (6)
2012/04 (10)
2012/03 (7)
2012/02 (8)
2012/01 (3)
2011/12 (7)
2011/11 (3)
2011/10 (7)
2011/09 (5)
2011/08 (8)
2011/07 (12)



- [2011/06 \(4\)](#)
- [2011/05 \(8\)](#)
- [2011/04 \(12\)](#)
- [2011/03 \(7\)](#)
- [2011/02 \(9\)](#)
- [2011/01 \(10\)](#)
- [2010/12 \(9\)](#)
- [2010/11 \(8\)](#)
- [2010/10 \(10\)](#)
- [2010/09 \(8\)](#)
- [2010/08 \(10\)](#)
- [2010/07 \(9\)](#)
- [2010/06 \(8\)](#)
- [2010/05 \(7\)](#)
- [2010/04 \(6\)](#)
- [2010/03 \(4\)](#)
- [2010/02 \(3\)](#)
- [2010/01 \(3\)](#)
- [2009/12 \(4\)](#)
- [2009/11 \(2\)](#)
- [2009/10 \(3\)](#)
- [2009/09 \(3\)](#)
- [2009/08 \(3\)](#)
- [2009/07 \(2\)](#)
- [2009/06 \(8\)](#)
- [2009/05 \(10\)](#)
- [2009/04 \(11\)](#)



訪問者数

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If you want to continue farming for decades in this area, where depopulation is progressing rapidly, wouldn't there be no future if you depend on the local people and your parents-in-law?

Not only us, but the entire region will face a labor shortage, and it will be difficult to continue farming in this region.

I had a sense of crisis and felt that if there were no people, I would need to get someone else to come.

2013: First part-time student acceptance

When a Hokkaido University seminar came to visit our house as part of fieldwork, one of the students asked, ``Don't you accept internships?''

When I asked her, ``Would you come if I accepted?'' she said, ``Of course!''

Also, when I was asked to become a lecturer at Tokyo University of Agriculture, I said, ``We're looking for part-time workers!'' and one person applied.

There seem to be some students who are interested in live-in part-time jobs! I'm sure.

This year, we had Hokkaido University students, Tokyo University of Agriculture students, and several of their friends come to live and work. At that time, I did not expect that they would come as volunteers so I paid them a solid salary so due to pers



onnel costs, I was only able to accept a small number of people. Living with people I met for the first time...that was my biggest worry, but the students who came all the way to live in the farmhouse were all hardworking and nice people, and although I was a little confused, I was able to enjoy living and working there. It's done. My parents-in-law always came over to do housework and babysit during the busy farming season, so I was able to work as hard as I could. In addition, we no longer have to force people in the area to come, and only those who have said they will come can come.



Let's accept more students! We decided.

It's difficult to pay a regular salary to a large number of people, so the salary is half price, but the accommodation, meals, and snacks are free! We decided to change the name to ``Borabaito'' and invite many students to come.

I talked to a Hokkaido University student who had come the previous year, and he not only came to work with me whenever he could, but also introduced me to more than 10 students from Sapporo.

Yes, he was such a well-connected student that he served as the executive committee chairman for Hokkaido University's events.

He really tried his best. There have been reports of several people calling out to students inside and outside the school asking, ``Are you interested in a farm stay?'' (I ol) I've never really asked them why they went to such lengths to cooperate. However, he may have felt joy in developing the acceptance that had begun with his words. Then, we appealed to the person who came once and said, ``We don't have enough people! Is there anyone available?'' This year, we accepted a total of 15 part-time workers. The foundation he laid for us as a student at Hokkaido University, and the connections that developed from there with university students in Sapporo, continue to this day. In this way, the Borabaito collection was made possible with the great help of one student, and a large group of people gathered around the table, worked, and when they got tired, they went out to play together. For those of us who felt a little lonely living in a rural village where we rarely meet other people, it was pure fun to meet and interact with the bright-eyed students.





I was also surprised that the people who came to visit Ezura Farm stayed at Ezura Farm, not just for a part-time job, but as a place where they could gain valuable experience.

Seeing my 2-year-old daughter being loved and loved by so many students, calling out ``Hey!'' and ``Onee-tan!'' fueled my thoughts.

Accepting Borabytes is possible! !

Of course, it will help solve the labor shortage, but it is certainly of even greater value to both of us.

And we seem to have the personality to enjoy being accepted by others. Let's make this

a ``farm where people gather'' that attracts many people from other areas !

!!

It was a year that convinced me of that.

2015 Homepage opened

This year, the number of people we accepted increased significantly, and we were able to accept about 50 volunteer workers.

Hokkaido University students continued to introduce students, and there were also many introductions from people who had come once, but this year there was a big change that helped people apply for volunteer jobs.

This is the start of a farm guest house and the establishment of a farm [homepage](#)

We have completed a beautiful guest room, and Bora Baito can now stay there. Then, a recruitment for Bora part-time job was posted on the website. It became possible to see detailed information about daily work and room conditions, and the number of applicants who viewed the website increased significantly.

From around this time, not only students but also working adults began to apply. They do their own research and contact us, not because someone has recommended them. This year, I was able to strongly feel the weight of the experience that Bora Baito gained here.





After taking a leave of absence from a vocational university to stay for four months, some members decided to pursue a career in agriculture, so they dropped out of university and started working at a restaurant with deep ties to farmers.

There were three members who used their experiences here as the subject of their graduation theses.

Some members said that by experiencing a part-time job before job hunting, they no longer wanted to simply work for a major company, and instead chose a company where they could acquire skills that would enable them to work on their own in the future.

I had so much fun looking at the beautiful nature and chatting with other part-timers that I got over my smartphone addiction! There was also a member.

If you want to get paid, I think you should work at a convenience store in the city. I was able to understand that the people who come all the way to this place are not looking for a paycheck, but rather an experience that will help them in life and can

ot be replaced.

The following year, we decided to recruit people entirely on a ``volunteer'' basis.

2016 Changed to accepting people as

volunteers 's guest house has started to get on track, and we have created an English website to accept people from overseas.

As a result, volunteer applications from overseas increased rapidly. There are very few farms in Japan that accept volunteers and have English websites, so if you search for ``Farmstay" or ``Hokkaido," our homepage will come up at the top. Not because Ezura Farm is good, but because there are no other options, many foreign people have come to visit us.



Also, since we cannot pay salaries to people from overseas without working visas, we decided to accept volunteers, which I think was the right decision.

Furthermore, starting this year, we started having volunteers from our family work at other farms during the busy farming season.

Although it was only for a few days, the farmers I was dispatched to were very pleased with the help.

Originally, we started accepting them with the hope of resolving the labor shortage not only at Ezura Farm, but also in the region itself.

I hope that this movement will become even more popular in the future.

In 2017, the number of applicants exceeded the number of people accepted, which is a challenge for him, and

the number of views on his website has also increased, and when you search online for farm volunteers, Ezura Farm comes to the top.

Introducing people who come to the event will also help connect you with nature. This year, for the first time, the number of applicants exceeded the number accepted. We would like to accommodate everyone, but considering the number of rooms and the nature of the work, that is not possible, so we will accept applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. The day I went around asking people to come work for me was a lie. However, with the increase in applications directly from the website, new issues have arisen, although these are luxury concerns. Perhaps we have pushed the image too strongly on our website, such as ``It looks like fun'' and ``Agriculture is wonderful.'' Some people were confused by the difference in their expectations saying that they had volunteered to relax in the countryside but they had no id

ea that farm work would be so hard.



We sometimes receive requests that we have never had before, such as wanting to shorten our working hours or allowing us to do work that requires less physical effort.

And for the first time this year, we had one person retire mid-way. In addition, we accept requests such as ``I'm looking for housing with meals," ``I want to leave m

ere," ``I want my 2-year-old son to experience volunteer work," etc. We are now receiving a lot of different inquiries. We need to make more efforts to help people understand the differences between our facilities and other facilities in the world, but as we recruit widely over the Internet, I think mismatches like this are likely to occur. For the sake of other volunteers who will be staying at the same time, we need to have people who can live with us as friends and have the same mindset. Therefore, starting the following year, I started to think that it was necessary to carefully listen to applicants' motivations before making selections, rather than on a first-come, first-served basis. **In 2018, 200 people applied, and 2 people moved to Engaru town because of her volunteer work.** 2018 was a really happy year. A student who came to volunteer for the first time in 2013 told me that he would like to work as an employee at Ezura Farm after gaining experience as a working adult. She moved to Shirataki, Engaru Town, and is still working hard as an employee. A working woman who came twice to volunteer has now moved to Engaru Town as a member of the Engaru Town Community Revitalization Cooperation Team. At first, the acceptance was started to alleviate labor shortages on farms, but a movement began to move beyond that framework and lead to people moving to towns. This year, the number of applicants increased dramatically, reaching over 200 people in total.





We had a selection process, but we wanted as many people as possible to come, so we increased the number of people we could accept to 70 people.

There are two reasons why this happened.

One is that volunteer members renovated a room that used to be a storage room, and we now have one more room. I also assigned my son, who had immigrated to work as an employee, to provide volunteer farm work guidance, which lightened my burden. Having one of our employees come has given us mental and physical relaxation that would have been unimaginable when we were working on the farm and cooking meals on the front lines, which has encouraged us to volunteer more. can now be accepted. Also, since we started screening, the number of mismatches has decreased considerably, and the number of people who are spending quality time with us has increased. However, this year too, two people retired. Next year, I would like

to properly select students and provide care during my stay so that I don't have to retire, but this may be an issue that will inevitably continue... And above all, it is a shame that only 1/3 of the applicants were accepted. When I think about the many positive effects that meeting one person has had on Ezura Farm and the region, I think that if they had been more accepted, something even more might have happened. In 2019, I would like to somehow increase the number of people accepted, but I would like to close this topic. **What is important when accepting people :**

``Because they are volunteers, there is no need for labor costs ,'' and vice versa.



People sometimes say things like, `` It's difficult to get people to live in the house, so even if it costs more, wouldn't it be better to hire people from the local area?''

However, we do not accept volunteers to reduce labor costs.

In fact, considering costs, it may be better to have experienced farmers work only during the necessary farming seasons, rather than accepting volunteers for an entire season. The premise is, of course, `` to solve the labor shortage on farms with an eye toward the future," and I have high hopes for this project as a worker. Volunteer labor is now essential to farms. However, the reason we accept volunteers is to "share the value that cannot be replaced with money with as many people as possible." Therefore, we would like to do our best to fulfill each volunteer's wishes and experience here. My husband and I always ask, `` Is there anything you'd like to do during your stay?" `` I want to see the starry sky," `` I want to see fireworks," (I hear there aren't many places where I can do it freely these days), `` I want to eat outside," etc. I want you to experience such small hopes as much as possible. Some of them even say, "I want to make OO!" For example, this is a pizza oven. I had wanted to build one for a long time, but I didn't have the luxury of doing so, but one volunteer member said, `` I want to try it!" So I entrusted everything from the design to him, and he built such a wonderful pizza oven. The experience of making pizza in this pizza oven has now become a popular activity at guesthouses



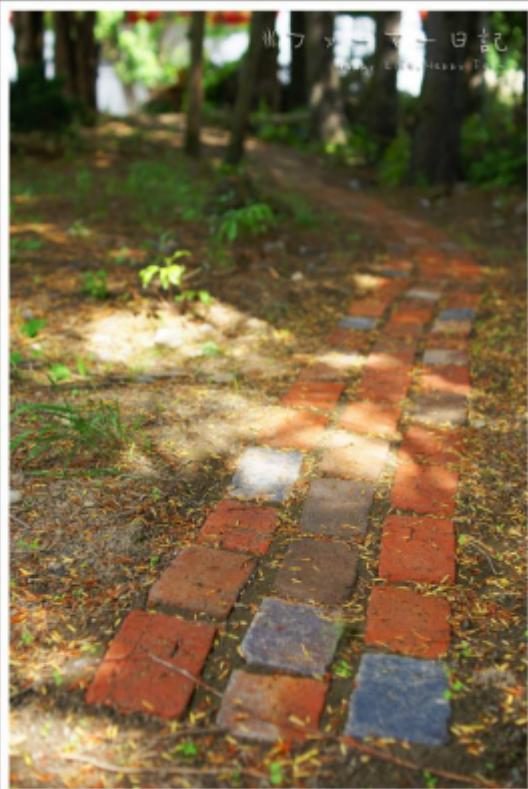






Many people were interested in gardening, and for example, one member created a ``brick path.'' In addition, volunteers have enjoyed working on things such as ``original T-shirts'' and ``illustrations of Ezura Farm'' as an experience that can only be had here, and I can't count the number of times they've become a part of Ezura Farm . . Each person has different values and experiences that cannot be replaced with money, but I think it is necessary to listen to these values and continue to be a farm that can make them come true in order to attract many volunteers. I feel that the results of the volunteer efforts are connecting and spreading like a patchwork, making Ezura Farm an attractive farm. Our farm has been built by volunteer members. And I think that for us too, it is a value that cannot be bought with money. Also, if you can seriously interact with the volunteer members and have a heart-to-heart connection with them, they will naturally tell their friends about their experiences here, rural life, agriculture, etc. The story spreads along with our thoughts. **Ayumu a**

Well, the 2019 volunteers will be arriving tomorrow. This year, we have already received more applications than in 2018, so we decided to take the plunge and accept 7 people for ``Beat Sowing", which previously only accepted 4 to 5 people. In addition to the main house, we plan to have guests stay in the cottage as well.



This is my second year as an employee, and it looks like I will be able to take on more on-site duties than last year, so I would like to focus on accepting volunteers. I think we will probably be able to accept more members than last year.

And I hope that each and every one of you will continue to bring back valuable experiences.

Even more greedy, I think it would be great if even just a handful of them could make friends who would move to Shirataki.

I'm even looking forward to seeing some people move here after volunteering and not only work at Ezura Farm, but also start farming or open a cafe or guest house.

So far, we have accepted close to 300 people, and only two have immigrated, so of course it is not an easy task.

d from the farm to the local community.

Just as many people came to visit Ezura Farm, which initially struggled to secure human resources, we would like to have many people come to the area next. I would like to make efforts and ingenuity to achieve this goal.

From farms where people gather to areas where people gather.
From a farm created by everyone to a community created by everyone.

As before, I believe that with the support and help of many people and facing new challenges, I will be able to achieve my goals.

2019. I will do my best this season as well.
Well, starting tomorrow.



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sponsor site

★ "I'm having trouble because I don't have a guarantor for my retirement..."
Sponsored/End of Life Council

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