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FARMERS' INCOME - FROM VISION 2 PRACTICE

(The article is discussing Global Problems while using Africa as a Case Study)

Similar to any area of business, whether you are a farmer, a stakeholder in the agri-industry, an adviser, a scientist or even the Minister of Agriculture himself; at any level of involvement, you should be very clear about your mission, target, and goals you want to achieve.

Too often, you see projects that are running well, but with little, or even no connection to the reason, targets and goals for which they started.

The result is an incredible waste of resources and a colossal disappointment of yourself and everybody else by the inevitable coming failure.

HARD IS NOT BAD

Allow me to share with you my personal story of how I found my mission, defined the targets and set my professional and life goals.

Let me tell you straight and clear, I might have kept a distance from all of this if I only knew, 26 years ago, how big the challenge is. But, I didn't know, and so this is my story.



THE STARTING POINT

It was 1989; I was a farmer in a kibbutz not far from Jerusalem. There, in the cool air of the Judean Hills, I grew peaches, nectarines, pears, cherries, vineyard, nuts, and a vineyard. However, we used most of the land for growing apples, which is also, where most of the income came from.

Quantitatively, I was satisfied with the apple yield, which ranged from 40 to 80 tons per hectare. In terms of quality, our apples had a very nice color, good taste, and no defects. In other words, 90% of the yield was 'perfect' for marketing in Israel's top markets; everything looked good, still, there was a small 'but'.

THE 90'S AND THE 'GREEN' PARTIES

At about the same time the public awareness towards the harmful effect on health and the environment from the extensive use of pesticide sprays and the chemical residues in fresh produce started to rise.

As a result, I entered a governmental program, called **Integrated Pest Control (IPM)**, which was set to help farmers to reduce the use of sprays (and harmful chemicals).

The program was very successful and already in its first year, we managed to reduce well over 50% of the number of sprays for the control of **nearly** all pests (nearly, but **not all** the pests!).

Once the harvest season arrived, we tried to reduce the use of sprays for fruit fly control.

The result was catastrophic damage, expressed in losing 5% to 50% of the yield due to fruit fly damage. There was NO other way but to continue to spray.

IPM DOES NOT INCREASE MY INCOME

That was a terrible and disastrous experience. Now it was clear that as long as we need to continue with the weekly fruit fly sprays, it would be **impossible** to achieve effective biological control of most of the pests by their natural enemies.

The IPM goals remain far from reaching and in practice not achievable under the current conditions.

At about the same time, I noticed that although production costs rise - the price we receive per kg of fruit remained unchanged for several years. In some cases, the price has even dropped compared to previous years. The economy said its word!

MY AGRI-BUSINESS (ECONOMY) FACTS

This is what I was facing when I looked at the economy of my apple orchard:

- 1. Land** - the land reserve is limited with no significant potential for expanding.
- 2. Yield** – high, well over 40 tons per hectare.
- 3. Quality** – the varieties, sizes of fruits, color, taste, and smell are very good.
- 4. Pest control** – under extremely intensive pest control regime over 90% of fruits are free of any harm or damage. The cost of control is considerably high, and continuously increasing.
- 5. Price** – the price per kg is stable. Practically fixed by the market, with no real ability to increase. In practice, the price was going down.
- 6. Market and Demand** – the farm is near two of Israel's largest metropolises; Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, and there is plenty of demand to fulfill.

I note to myself - the intensive control is unhealthy to me, to consumers and the environment, ineffective for fruit fly control (and other pests), and contribute nothing to increase my income.

MY GOAL – “I MUST INCREASE MY INCOME”

I understood that I have no way of increasing my income, and I am in a deadlock when it comes to reducing the use of insecticide sprays.

Yes, I have many advantages when it comes to yield, quality, pest-control, market, and demand. Yet, my total income has not improved for years.

It was frustrating! Yet, I am not ready to see the current reality as the only alternative.

As a result, I start the following conversation with myself:

Q. How can I raise my annual income?

A. The best way will be by getting more money per kg of produce.

Q. How will I ride the price per kilogram, as I already produce the highest quality (or so I thought)!?

A. I need to give **added value** to the public. Buyers are ready to pay more when they get more value (in their view) for what they pay.

Q. What **added value** can I provide to the consumers?

[To answer that question I had to connect to **my own values** as well as to the values of my potential **consumers**.]

A. Well, what **if** I manage to sell produce that represents the **Values** of Health, Environment, and Sustainability? Under such a scenario, I will be able to charge **more** per kg.

FINALLY, I HAVE A WAY IN WHICH I CAN CHARGE MORE FOR MY PRODUCE, AND HENCE MAKE MORE MONEY!

TARGETING

I realized that by growing my fruits according to higher standards I would be able to sell them for a higher price per kilogram versus selling them in a typical way, as a commodity; food to satisfy hunger.

My target market was, therefore; middle and upper class who are concern about their health, the environmental issues, and are ready to pay more for products that signal that.

THE PROBLEM

I like the idea of selling added value fruits, for a premium price, but I see a big problem ahead.

We have no effective way of controlling **fruit flies** without sprays, and currently, I spray before harvest 35 to 45 times a year! Unbelievable, 40 sprays a year just to control fruit flies.

Obviously, under such an intense pest control regime, I will not be able to market those fruits as Healthy or Eco-friendly or anything like it.

It was clear to me that there is an immediate (and urgent) need to have an answer to the fruit fly problem that will allow their effective control with no chemical sprays.

REALIZATION

Yes, finally I realized three obvious truth:

A. By providing a meaningful **added value** I can increase my income, and so can other farmers.

B. Health and Environmental issues are **THE** desired values (by the public), but are very hard to provide (by the farmers).

C. Fruit flies are the greatest obstacle to reduce insecticide sprays in order to market premium fruits for a premium price.

PROVIDE ADDED VALUE OR DIE TRYING

The above realizations lead me to focus on providing suitable solutions for the main problems I identified along the value chain.

PROBLEM NO. 1 – There is a need for an effective fruit fly control method – free of sprays and chemicals.

TROUBLESHOOTING ROADMAP – it took me to a long 15 years 'visit' to the academy to jump-start the solution. When I left the academy, it was after intensive studies of agronomy, entomology, and a Ph.D. in the field of fruit fly ecology.

Now, as a fruit fly expert, and armed with my vision and goals, I established Biofeed.



From its first day, Biofeed had a clear challenge of bringing an effective solution, free of sprays, to the main problem - fruit fly control.

To help Biofeed in its quest, I later established The Fruit Fly Research Institute.



THE SOLUTION – Better than any dream, sixteen years later, Biofeed is the first and only company in the world with an effective solution for the most distractive fruit flies in the world.

To achieve that goal Biofeed's team had to develop the GCFR novel technology, which powers its fruit fly solution, the [FreeDome \(link\)](#).

PROBLEM NO. 2 – Soon I found out that even after the problem of fruit flies is solved, farmers and nations struggle to reach the high standards and stand up to the challenging regulations that are required for exporting fresh fruits to premium markets.

I understand that without export they will not get the full benefit of an effective fruit fly control, and farmers and nations alike will be limited by the level they can increase the income and foreign currency influx.

TROUBLESHOOTING ROAD MAP – founding *Green Valley* and a concept to develop an *Agricultural Export Package* for farmers and nations wishing to reach export premium markets as a way of increasing farmers' income.

THE SOLUTION – development of an agri-economic model called the *Green Valley National Export Project* (GVNEP).

The model is based on a few tested concepts, and taking as an example the Israeli successful agri-export model. Its scale and outline are the first and only that is providing a full *Agricultural Export Package* for building an advanced National export-oriented agri-industry.



CLOSING A CIRCLE!

Nearly 30 years after I set on my way to help farmers increase their income, I am finally closing a circle, as I know that my goals and targets are fulfilled, and I stood up to my highest expectations.

Finally, farmers, wherever they are, can increase their income by exporting high added value fruits at a premium price. To start with *Green Valley* focuses on the export of Mangoes.

This incredible journey started with a small wish – "*I want to improve my income from selling my own fruits*".

Thanks to *Green Valley* initiation, today thousands of farmers can increase their income.

At this point, I feel that we will do more good by focusing on the less developed countries. Therefore, *Green Valley* prioritized projects in African and Asian countries.

For more information about *the Green Valley National Export Project* [read this article](#) or contact me at nisraely@biofeed.co.il or send me a text message by WhatsApp + 972-5423425.

*For a greener world
Free of sprays
Full of joy*

See you soon,
Nimrod



Biofeed
Better produce...
Better income...
Better future...

P.S.

I invite you to Follow me on [LinkedIn](#) to see many more posts and the most recent updates.

P.P.S.

On YouTube, you can find the historical series [The Agricultural Gap](#). In short videos, usually 3-4 minutes, I tell the 11,000 years history of agriculture and the reasons for the gap that we see today between different peoples. The series is still in progress with more chapters to come.

Remember to SUBSCRIBE to be notified of the future video release, and of course to share it with a friend who needs to see it

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***Change Begins With A Decision
That The Existing Reality Is A Choice
And Not A Decree Of Fate***