



Doubling Dairy Farmers' Income

In the meeting on “Doubling of Farmers’ Income by the year 2022” held in February 2017, IDA sought urgent governmental attention to issues plaguing the dairy industry for long. Dairying and Livestock form the backbone of Agriculture and deserve adequate focus in order to effect a turnaround in the economic condition of our farmers. For this, innovative measures to enhance productivity and quality need to be explored and implemented.

I have often mentioned that I belong to a family that has lived and worked on a farm for the past four generations. Having experienced at close quarters the challenges of my farming brethren I empathize with their struggles and have always strived to support their cause in whatever manner I could. It is a travesty indeed that India, hailed as a global icon for being the largest milk producer, is home to farmers whose plight continues to remain dismal. As President IDA, it shall be my endeavour to explore all possible fora to effectively address the issues plaguing the farming community.

In Budget 2016-17 the Finance Minister had stressed on the need to go beyond food security and provide to our farmers a sense of income security. This echoed the vision of the Prime Minister who had reiterated focus on doubling the farmers’ income by 2022, i.e. upon the completion of 75 years of Indian independence.

In pursuance of this vision the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare had constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee drawing members from related departments and other stakeholders to examine issues relating to doubling of farmers’ income by the year 2022. The period over which the farmers’ income had to be doubled was 2016-17 to 2022. It was agreed that the strategy had to be practical and aim at changing the basic nature of agriculture and allied activities from being merely production-based to an income and employment

generating enterprise.

It was with this intent that a meeting of stakeholders on “Doubling of Farmers’ Income by the year 2022” was held on 20th and 21st February 2017 at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi. On behalf of Indian Dairy Association, I presented the dairy sector’s perspective on the issue, the salient features of which I would like to share here.

The farm sector forms the backbone of our economy. An extremely important component of that sector is Animal Husbandry and Dairying which provides a major source of livelihood to rural communities. The dairy sector, moreover, plays a crucial role in ensuring nutritional security in the country.

Certain issues, unfortunately, have been plaguing the dairy industry and IDA sought urgent governmental attention to them during the meet. Concerted efforts are required for improving the genetic material of Indian cows and buffaloes through cross breeding and upgrading respectively. In this context the use of sexed semen is crucial as it would ensure the production of female cows and buffaloes of high pedigree. However, only if the government bears the cost of technology for the same can its benefits be accrued to our farmers. To improve productivity we also support the creation of a National Livestock Germplasm Authority of India (NLGAI) under the Central Government with jurisdiction across all states as suggested by the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Today the nation faces a 40% deficit in fodder production. This has impacted animal health and production

adversely and necessitates the establishment of not only more fodder banks but also genetically modified fodder seeds. Against a total requirement of over 120 million tonnes of feed every year, the manufacturing facility is limited to just 8 million tonnes. The need to increase capacity of cattle feed and mineral mixture plants and also strengthen quality control laboratories is urgent.

Increasing animal productivity is an important step towards ensuring farmers' economic security, and productivity can increase only if animals are in optimal health. One of the most cost-effective ways of achieving this is by providing Total Mixed Ration (TMR) to the cattle. The use of TMR blocks will help reduce gap between demand and supply of fodder and would scale up the ongoing ration balancing activities like the one implemented by NDDB. Innovative approaches to attain feed and fodder sufficiency such as the use of silage, azola and technologies including hydroponics need to be explored and implemented.

At present the AI coverage in India is a mere 40% — another cause of poor animal productivity and a prime concern for the dairy sector. All efforts should be undertaken to expand AI services as well as mobile veterinary services to ensure healthy, disease-free bovines.

Governmental support by way of subsidies is also required for calf rearing programmes. Implementation of sustainable upgraded female calf rearing programme at farmers' doorstep will enhance milk productivity and reduce mortality by approximately 5% in cow calves and 15% in buffalo calves. This will reduce the initial (3 months) calf rearing costs and the animals would serve as a huge asset to the farmers.

Another factor impacting productivity is inadequate and faulty management practices by our milk producers. The value of clean milk production throughout the dairy chain needs to be inculcated. Managing cattle in a scientific manner with hygienic and clean housing conditions, deworming of cattle etc are measures that need to be expeditiously adopted. Moreover, progressive farmers should lead the way in imparting best dairy practices to other farmers in Micro Training Centres and also through practical hands-on training.

Commerce in today's world is ruled by effective marketing. This is the age of creating lasting brand values and consumer loyalties. Needless to say effective processing and marketing of dairy, i.e. milk and milk products is the need of the hour. If we are to succeed we must realize that marketing of milk and milk products would majorly impact and boost production in the years

to come. For this purpose we seek governmental support for generic advertisement for milk and milk products. Consumer awareness programmes through schools' mid-day meal schemes should also be scaled up.

The above measures would go a long way in increasing productivity and its benefits would automatically accrue to the farmers positively impacting their economic conditions. Apart from these there are certain other measures which ought to be adopted on a priority basis:

- ✦ Evolving cold chain from cow to consumer
- ✦ Supplying milk throughout the country's milk grid by using railway tankers.
- ✦ Overall development of infrastructure by establishing modern processing facilities throughout the country. Funding through NDDB should be increased.
- ✦ Cashless payments
- ✦ Insurance should be paid to farmer in case of animal's death.
- ✦ Farmers should get minimum support price and in case of fall in prices, the government should arrange for purchase of milk and milk products.
- ✦ An agency should be identified in each district to co-ordinate the implementation of the above programme.

Shri Ram Chandra Chaudhry, the dynamic Chairman of Ajmer Zila Dugdha Utpadak Sahkari Sangh Ltd also represented IDA at the meet and enumerated governmental measures that need to be fast tracked for doubling dairy farmer's income. He sought governmental support for certain fundamental issues related to the sector:

- ✦ Exemption of Excise Duty, Cess and VAT on molasses, an ingredient for manufacturing of cattle feed. At present there is an excise duty of ₹ 750/- per MT+3% Cess and 4% VAT on molasses.
- ✦ The Government should maintain a buffer stock of Skimmed Milk Powder as is done for grains in order to ensure year round availability of milk and milk products. This would help the farmers in providing remunerative prices for their surplus milk.
- ✦ For several years now a minimum support price has been ensured to agricultural farmers for production of food grains and cereals. Unfortunately this has been denied to the dairy sector. It is requested that an additional support price of ₹ 4/- per kg of milk (in addition to the procurement price paid by the unions) may also be given to milk producing farmers through cooperative milk federations.

FROM THE President's DESK

✦ Dairying and Animal Husbandry should be allocated a minimum of 40% of the total budgeted amount of RKVY.

✦ Government of India should give a grant of 50% to the farmers on purchase of feed and fodder in the drought affected areas.

✦ An incentive of up to 40% should be given for export of milk and milk products. This would give an impetus to exports and help farmers in getting more remunerative prices for their produce.

Industrial representations were also held at the meet and **Dr. R.S. Khanna**, Chairman, Kwality Limited and **Shri Vishvas Chitale** of Chitale Dairy outlined the measures to be adopted for increasing productivity of dairy industries.

Dr. Khanna underlined various policy issues that the government should focus on for augmenting farmers' incomes. He stressed on increasing investment in dairy-poor states where prices paid to milk producers were less than two-thirds of that paid in milk-rich states. Further, there was need for higher investment in infrastructure for production and processing in those states where milk production was medium or low. More than 90% of the government allocation for dairy sector was spent through government departments and cooperatives. There was a need to restructure the PPP model and include the private sector to provide technical inputs for milk production.

✦ **Shri Vishvas Chitale** pointed out some of the lacunae in milk production that the country faces. He said that for increasing productivity the government should focus 20% of its resources on developing quality forage, 20% on housing and management and a major 60% on genetics. It was important to enhance productivity of indigenous breeds, and India should emulate Brazil which successfully improved Zebu cattle and made it more heat and disease resistant. Also, efforts are on all over the world to develop stable synthetic breeds, an excellent example of which is Girlonda (Gir x Holstein). To improve our breeds the Government should evolve a policy to encourage selective breeding. It should allow import of high progeny Gir semen from Brazil and also embryos from Zebu superior genetic animals for developing a stock of breeding animals.

Data recording and technology investment were important strategies for successful dairying. Countries which had started animal data recording in 1950s could enhance productivity to nearly two-folds in 25 years.

These issues if adopted and implemented by the government will go a long way in augmenting farmers' incomes over the stipulated period. It would improve the quality of livestock and contribute to the overall development and growth of dairying in the country.


Arun Narke

Inviting Articles on Outstanding Success Stories/Case Studies

Indian Dairyman is a magazine that prides itself on the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and information related to the dairy world. Often this has proved a source of inspiration to many. We call upon our readers to contribute whole-heartedly to this magazine and welcome accounts of outstanding success stories in the world of dairying. Case studies from various parts of the country are also welcome. Such stories serve to educate and inform the entire dairy community and will be much appreciated.

Further, well researched articles and features which are of interest to the layman and the general reader by providing him/her knowledge related to dairying are also welcome.

You may send your contributions to:

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