

guidance and technical support, the Sundarban Cooperative Milk & Livestock Producers' Union Ltd started its revival plan.

The milk union took up the mission of empowering small and marginal women farmers engaged in dairy/livestock and agriculture farming in Sundarban. Procurement of almost all agricultural produce of farmers such as milk, indigenous duck & hen eggs, rice, pulses and forest honey were started at DCSs to stop exploitation by middle-men. The union became the first organic milk & livestock union in the country. Availability of quality and hygienic food to the consumers were stressed.

Presently, Sundarban Milk Union, popularly known as Sundarini (South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal) has 70 Women DCS covering 3500 women farmers with peak milk procurement of over 4000 Kg per day from 7 blocks. The prominent feature of Sundarban Milk Union is that a milk producer has to submit the "Know Your Farmer" (KYF) information (including bank account & identity proof) to become a DCS member. Every milk sample gets tested at DCS level in presence of farmer with acknowledgement slip. 100% payment is done to individual Bank Account of farmers through NEFT in 10 days interval. Sundarini is paying premium price to its farmers and minimum 75% of the consumer rupee is going back to them. Sundarini is now implementing VBMPs under NDP-I (NDDDB), NPDD (GoI), Millennium Alliance (FICCI).

The Milk Union initiated extensive campaign for awareness and skill development of farmers on organic and sustainable livestock farming. It has also started the process for organic certification of all Sundarini products. 100% green fodder, Azolla based milk, egg production without using any chemical pesticide or manure is being promoted. Farmers are being advised to use ethno-veterinary medicine and set up herbal garden. The Union stressed



on procurement of 100% SS milk cans/milk pails for farmers and marketing of cow ghee, honey in glass bottles only.

During 2017-18, Sundarini has marketed 7 tonnes of honey and has a target of 15 tonnes next year. Organic mangrove forest honey of Sundarban is collected in cooperative mode.

Dairying in West Bengal

In terms of value of output, milk is the single largest agricultural commodity in India. NDDDB has been undertaking several initiatives for transforming dairying into an instrument for the development of India's rural people. Today more than 1.66 crore milk producers affiliated to about 1.86 lakh cooperative societies/producer institutions are being benefited from the dairy cooperative movement in the country. West Bengal has always been active participant to the schemes being implemented by NDDDB.

Presently, 14 functional milk unions collectively procure about 188 thousand Kg of milk per day from 2,58,000 milk producers covering over 4000 dairy cooperative societies. State's milk production grew at about 2.7 % compared to nation's 4.9 % in last 10 years. As on March 2018, West Bengal's cooperative infrastructure includes 164 BMCs, 12 chilling centres and 11 dairy plants.

Under NDDDB's National Dairy Plan I (NDP I), 26 sub projects of 10 End Implementing Agencies (EIAs) are under implementation with the total

