

Cooperative wants milk powder included in free food kits supplied by Kerala govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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ERCMPU says it already has 150 tonnes of the product in stock

The Ernakulam Regional Cooperative Milk Producers' Union has appealed to the State government to include milk powder produced by the cooperative in the free food kit being supplied by the government as part of COVID-19 relief measures.

Chairman of the regional milk cooperative John Theruvath said on Tuesday that the cooperative had about 150 tonnes of milk powder already in stock. The stock has piled up since the cooperative began converting excess milk procured by the union into powder as part of its efforts to help dairy farmers. Mr. John said that the milk cooperative has been procuring all the milk that was arriving at its primary centres with a view to helping farmers.

ERCMPU comprises primary dairy societies and farmers affiliated to them in Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kottayam and Idukki districts. The daily procurement is to the tune of 3.90 lakh litres to 3.95 lakh litres per day. The cooperative is also converting about 50,000 litres of milk into powder after using around 30,000 litres for making value-added products.

The Ernakulam region is the second of the three regional cooperatives, after Malabar region, to become self-sufficient in milk production. Mr. John said that the regional cooperative comprised 933 Anand Pattern Cooperative Societies at the primary level, in which around 46,000 dairy farmers are members.

The cooperative had recently submitted a memorandum to Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development J. Chinchurani appealing for support. The cooperative, the appeal said, was incurring extra expenditure on conversion of milk and that a package of support should be extended so that the dairy sector would not reel under the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 lockdown.

The State government had declared that the entire quantity of milk produced by farmers under the cooperative would be procured despite the constraints in selling the produce due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown imposed to contain the pandemic.

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