

Flood hits milk supply by 35-40% in Maha

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SUPPLY OF MILK in Kolhapur and Sangli, which were hit by floods last week, has been reduced by 35-40%, according to industry people.

Milk procurement of Kolhapur's prominent dairy producers Warana Dairy has fallen sharply. MC Yedurkar, MD, Warana, said that supply has fallen by at least 1.50 lakh litres. Normally, the daily collection is around 4.75 lakh litres and it has been reduced to some 3.25 lakh litres to 3.50 lakh litres, he said, adding that there is acute shortage of green fodder that has been destroyed during flood.

Cattles have been drinking contaminated water and have fallen sick. The industry may require at least three years to come out of this crisis since the mindset of the people has changed, Yedurkar said.

Instead of dairy, people are now looking at setting up tyre shops or working in MIDC areas as they have seen their cattles drowning in water, he said. Warana supplies around 2 lakh litres to Mumbai and 20,000 litres to Pune.

Yedurkar said that the economy of this area depends on milk and sugarcane, and

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production of both items has been affected due to flood. Therefore, it will take a long time for people to come out of this.

DV Ghanekar, MD, Gokul Dairy, said that the daily procurement has been hit by around 1.30 lakh litres from an average of around 4 lakh litres. Disruption in transportation due to damaged roads, closure of routes and, to some extent, shortage of fodder have also hit supply.

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Vivek Kshirsagar, MD, Katraj Milk Dairy, said that the damage cannot be assessed in monetary terms. Since milk supply from western Maharashtra was hit because of floods, Katraj stepped in Pune to ensure that the supply was not affected by stopping the production of its byproducts. From a daily collection of around 1.25

lakh litres, the collection was raised to some 1.75 lakh litres during this period.

Prakash Kutwal, secretary, Maharashtra Milk Producers and Processors Association, said that buffalo milk supply has been hit by around 20% and the shortage may remain for another 15-20 days. "Our procurement prices were earlier ₹25 per litre (₹20 from the dairy and ₹5 per litre subsidy from the government). Now there is no subsidy and yet the procurement prices have gone upto ₹28 per litre but the consumer price shall remain the same at ₹44 per litre," he said, adding that the dealer margins have reduced from ₹12 per litre to ₹8-9 per litre.

The Maharashtra Milk Producers and Processors Association had stepped up efforts to ensure that the supply of milk in the state is not affected because of the floods. The areas that have been hit by the floods account for some 10 lakh litre of milk, of which Gokul alone accounts for 6.5 lakh litre. Most of the other local dairies have stepped up collection to ensure that the consumers do not suffer and the supply was smooth on Thursday, he had stated earlier. The association had also written to all dealers in the state exhorting them not to take advantage of the current situation to hike milk prices.