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Assam govt signs pact with NDDB to boost milk output

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Guwahati, May 12: The Assam government has signed an agreement with the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) delegating the operational management of the Jorhat-based East Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited to the national dairy body.

The agreement was signed by representatives from the state government and NDDB here on Wednesday.

Addressing milk cooperative unions from across the Northeast states at the first ever Northeast Dairy Cooperative Conclave at the Sankardev Kalakshetra here, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed hope that the agreement of handing over operational management of the East Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited to NDDB would improve the financials of the ailing cooperative body, as it happened in the case of Purabi Dairy.

"Just as handing over the management of Purabi Dairy to NDDB in 2008 saved the cooperative body (West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union) from near collapse, I am certain today's decision too would prove decisive in bringing a huge positive development in the fortunes of the milk producers' union of eastern Assam," the chief minister said.

Referring to the overall daily low milk production of just about 1 lakh litres in the state (against the requirement of nearly 42 lakh litres) in comparison to Gujarat and Karnataka (with 2 crore litres and 80 lakhs of daily milk production respectively), the chief minister spoke about the measures already being implemented or are in the pipeline to bring about a "white revolution" in the state.

"We have taken a number of significant steps to bring about a 'white revolution' in the state. Firstly, we brought Gir breed of cows from Gujarat to the state. We plan to take that number to 15,000. Secondly, we are making extensive use of artificial insemination methods so that we have the best offspring of cattle," he said.

"Thirdly, we are strengthening the cooperative milk production environment by providing dairy farmers avenues to diversify their markets through initiatives such as today's signing of agreement," he stated.

"Further, we are focused on making Assam a milk-processing hub through investments on milk processing units. Moreover, we are also making attempts at providing affordable veterinary care to the dairy farmers. This would ensure a healthy livestock population in the state," the chief minister said.

"If we are able to increase the daily milk production to even a million (10 lakh) litres, it would reduce our dependence on milk from outside the state. This would result in considerable monetary gain for our dairy farmers," he said.

Representatives from the Gomati Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Tripura), Manipur Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd (Manipur), Sikkim Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Sikkim), Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd (Mizoram), Dimapur District Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Nagaland), East Khasi Hills District Cooperative Milk Union Ltd (Meghalaya) and Arunachal Pradesh Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Arunachal Pradesh) took part in the deliberations.

IANS