

## Cow breeders protest plan to import Gir breed semen from Brazil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
RAJKOT, OCTOBER 11

COW BREEDERS in Saurashtra are up in arms against the proposed import of one lakh semen doses from Brazil to produce Gir breed of cows as they feel it would affect the purity of the native breed in the country and affect dairy farmers adversely.

At a press conference in Rajkot, Ghanshyamji Vyas, head of Bhuvaneshwari Pith of Gondal in Rajkot district, Satyajit Khachar, scion of the royal family of the erstwhile princely state of Jasdan, Raghvendrasinh

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Cow breeders

Jadeja, scion of royal family of the erstwhile princely state of Bhadva, and BK Ahir, president of Gir Breeders Association, registered their protest against the government plan to import frozen semen dose from Brazil.

Chairman of the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog and former minister in the Vajpayee-led NDA government, Dr Vallabh Kathiria,

also supported the protest.

"The Central government wants to import one lakh semen doses of Gir breed from Brazil. We fail to understand the rationale of the decision as we have more than enough doses of this breed in the country. Our Gir cows are the original Gir breed, not the ones in Brazil. The import of doses from Brazil will destroy our pure breed resulting in fall in milk production as the Brazilian Gir cows are raised mainly for meat production and not milk production. In such a scenario, our Gir cow breeding activity will not remain sustainable," Vyas, who is also a member of the National Livestock Mission and National Gokul Mission, said.

Bhuvaneshwari Pith raises around 200 cows of Gir breed. "Our organisation has seven bulls of Gir breed and one lakh frozen semen doses are available with us. We are ready to supply them. Other organisations too have frozen doses. Why import this when we already have it," said Vyas, who is also the chairman of Gir Kankrej Gopalak Sangh, an organisation of dairy farmers raising Gir and Kankrej breeds of cows in Gujarat.

The high-milk yielding Gir breed that can survive the tropical heat is a native of Saurashtra region. Brazil started importing this breed of cows from India in the 19th century and the process continued till mid-20th century. Krishnakumar Sinhji, then ruler of erstwhile princely state of Bhavnagar, had also gifted a few Gir cows to Brazil before India's independence.

"Gir cows in India yield milk whereas Gir cows in Brazil yield meat as they have been crossbred with other breeds to make them meat-yielding bovines," Vyas said.

He added that the Central government intends to import the semen doses from Brazil within one-and-a-half month. "We met Union Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Giriraj Singh, over this issue and requested him to stop the import of semen doses. But he did not budge. We have now decided to make a representation to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and request him to intervene in the matter," added Vyas.

"The Brazilian Gir cows are Gir cows only in appearance. That is a manufactured Gir cow. Very few cows of pure Gir breed are surviving in Brazil. We exported around Gir semen doses to Brazil around 10 years ago. That means, there is demand of pure Gir breed in Brazil," Khachar, who raises around 150 Gir cows, said.

Vallabh Kathiria, chairman of the newly-formed Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog, an advisory body of the Central government, said he, too, would oppose the imports. "We will discuss the matter in the meeting of our board and then will make a representation to the Union Minister. We don't need to import semen doses as enough stock is available of our local breeds," Kathiria said.

Vyas said that population of Gir cows in Gujarat was around 16,000. "This cow is bred in other states like Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi also and we estimate total population of this breed of cows to be around one lakh in the country," he added.