

State plans big push for desi cow breeds

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Nagpur: The state government plans to make a big push for the desi cow. The animal husbandry department is ready with over 4.65 lakh doses of semen of the indigenous breeds of cows. An artificial insemination drive has been planned from September 15 lasting till March 15 during which farmers would be insisted to go for the Indian breeds. The drive also coincides with the breeding season.

The officials however clarified that this has nothing to do with the A1 and A2 milk theory which claims that the former coming from foreign breeds like Jersey and Holstein is carcinogenic apart from having other health hazards. This has not been scientifically proven they said.

Even as semen doses of foreign breeds like Jersey and Holstein would be still available, attempts will be made to create awareness about the Indian breeds like Gir, Sahiwal Rathi Tharparkar, Dangi or Gaolao breeds. Before the drive in Maharashtra Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be flagging off a programme for animal disease control on September 11 in Mathura. Along with that, a campaign on promoting Indian breed through artificial insemination will be launched by the Prime Minister too, said sources.

Elsewhere the programme may be implemented in select districts but in Maharashtra it is planned to cover the entire state, said a source. Hundred villages will be covered in each district.

"The semen doses of bulls whose mothers were high yielding cows have been chosen. For Maharashtra there will be special focus on local breeds like Lal Kandhari, Dangi, Gaolao and Killari. There are some pockets where farmers prefer only the indigenous breed as against high yielding foreign breeds. This is because the breeds are well-adapted to the local fodder and climatic conditions," said Dr D D Parkale the state's additional commissioner of Animal Husbandry.

Bulls whose semen doses have been collected are from mothers who had milk yield of 2500 litre to 5200 at least, in a location cycle. There are samples of higher milk yielding blood line also. The cows of non-descript breeds will be fertilized with the semen. This may help in increasing the milk yield and breed. Though it may be a gradual process, he said.

The semen doses have been collected from different sources including the National Dairy Development Board. Awareness will be created on the Indian breeds but semen of the other breed will also be available, the officer said.

Semen of bulls of Jersey and Holstein breed that are available with the state government are of cows having a yield running up to 3500 to 5200 litres respectively during a year. This year the standard for collecting semen samples has been hiked to bulls of mothers with minimum milk yield of 5000 and 7000 litres for Jersey and Holstein breeds respectively, said the source.

NDDDB chairman Dilip Rath told TOI that, the organization will be providing technical support for the drive. For Maharashtra there will be special focus will be on breeds like Gir and Rathi. As much as 20% of NDDCD's semen stock is of indigenous breeds, he said, This comes to around 10 million doses.

Even as the minimum Indian yield of the cattle ranges from 2500 to 5200 litres, It has been found that even foreign breeds yield as much due to fodder conditions he said.