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Amul eyes control of dairies lying dormant in Saurashtra

GCMMF Members Approach Union Agriculture Minister For GDDC's Assets

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Vadodara: Milk unions in Kutch and Saurashtra, which are members of the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) that markets brand Amul, have demanded that dormant dairies once owned by Gujarat Dairy Development Corporation (GDDC) be handed over to them.

Kutch's Sarhad Dairy on Sunday made a representation regarding this before Union agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh, who was on a one-day visit to Anand to launch golden jubilee year celebrations of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

After Sarhad Dairy, Junagadh's Girnar Dairy along with other dairies in Saurashtra too have decided to approach the Union government seeking its intervention to get control of the GDDC's assets which are pres-

ently under NDDB's control.

GCMMF's member unions in Kutch and Saurashtra region presently procure 21 lakh litres milk per day but are struggling to increase their milk processing capacity.

"If GDDC's dormant facilities in Kutch are handed over to us, it will not only help strengthening the dairy sector in the border district but also ensure that we save upon Rs 1.20 crore that we have to spend every month to transport raw milk which is presently processed at Mother Dairy, Gandhinagar. This savings will ultimately help milk producers (farmers) get better returns for their milk and we will be able to serve our consumers better," Sarhad Dairy's chairman Valamji Humbal, told TOI.

GDDC's assets are located in Bhavnagar, Junagadh, Jamnagar, Kutch, Surendrana-

gar and Rajkot districts. GDDC became a sick company in 1994 and had sought rehabilitation under Board for Industrial Finance and Reconstruction (BIFR). The state government had proposed NDDB a rehabilitation scheme which envisaged transfer of GDDC's dairies and units to NDDB.

NDDB and GCMMF in the past have blamed each other for not developing dairy sector in Saurashtra and Kutch region.

GDDC's sick units were offered to GCMMF in 2003 but the federation which was then headed by Father of India's White Revolution Verghese Kurien had raised objections to the restriction on the use of GDDC's land which was stated in the agreement drafted by NDDB, Gujarat government and GDDC.

"NDDB was set up by Government of India with the primary objective of providing support and strengthening co-operative dairy sector in the country. In 2005, after it took control of GDDC's assets, the dormant facilities in Saurashtra-Kutch are either lying dormant or are being used by a producer company. All we are demanding is that NDDB should help co-operatives in Gujarat by transferring GDDC's assets to us," Ram-sinh Bhetariya, chairman of Girnar Dairy said.