

## **Include milk in mid-day meal: Amul**

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Vadodara: Include a glass of milk in mid-day meal scheme. This is what the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) that markets Asia's largest milk brand Amul, has demanded ahead of the union budget that will be presented on Monday.

GCMMF also wants the union government to consider dairy sector at par with the agriculture sector. According to the federation, inclusion of milk in mid-day meal scheme is the only way government can counter the huge problem of malnutrition that the country is facing.

"India is struggling to tackle the problem of malnutrition which can be tackled if one glass of milk is included in diet of school going children twice or thrice a week," said GCMMF's managing director R S Sodhi.

He added that in every state, co-operatives are ready to supply milk for the government scheme. "In Gujarat, there are 71 talukas where milk is supplied in mid-day meal scheme under Dudh Sanjivani Yojana. Similarly, the Karnataka Milk Federation supplies milk to all the schools of Karnataka. But there should be a nation-wide policy," he said.

It is worth mentioning here that the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has already launched 'Gift Milk' through its newly established NDDB Foundation for Nutrition. Through this initiative, the national board wants cooperatives and corporates of the country to sponsor a glass of milk for the underprivileged children of the country.

Demanding that like agriculture income is exempted under income tax, income generated from dairy sector should also be exempted from income tax.

"In agriculture sector, income is generated by those who have their own agriculture land whereas in dairy sector, a majority of farmers are landless for whom animal husbandry is the only source of income," he said, "hence there should be no income tax on farmers income from dairying."

"Gujarat government has already announced that cattle loan will be at par with crop loan. We want that this policy should be announced at national level," he added.