



Remembering Father of White Revolution on this World Milk Day

Food and Agriculture Organization declared the celebration of World Milk Day on 1st June since 2001 with an objective to recognize milk as a global food, along with celebrating the importance of the dairy sector. Each year since, the benefits of milk and dairy products have been actively promoted around the world, including how dairy supports the livelihoods of one billion people. This year, our theme will focus on Sustainability in the dairy sector with messages around the environment, nutrition and socio-economics.

Nearly 20% of the World's agriculture land is cared by Dairy sector. Milk is one of the most produced and valuable agricultural commodities worldwide. Milk and dairy products contributes to about 14% of global agricultural trade. About 600 million people live on dairy farms, 240 million people are directly or indirectly employed in dairy sector and 400 million additional people are supported by job created in support of dairy farming. In India, milk is the largest agricultural crop valued at more than 8 lakh crores.

Operation flood program made India the number one milk producing country from a milk deficient country in the 70s. We remember today the father of the white revolution, Dr Kurien, who played a key role in this transformation. We celebrate National Milk Day on his birth anniversary every year on 26th November. Dairy farming provides livelihood to one billion people at the moment, and in India, dairying is a source of livelihood for over 100 million farmers.

India is the largest milk producer globally, with 198.4 Million tonnes of milk produced in 2019-20. India is leading the world in milk production since 1998 by overtaking the United States of America. In 2020, India contributed 22 per cent of global milk production. Moreover, the per capita availability of milk increased from 170 g/day in 1970 to 406 g/day in 2020. The milk production in India is growing at the rate of 4.5% CAGR in last 2 decades as compared less than 2.0% CAGR of the world. This rise in milk production and becoming the global leader is mainly due to the efforts of farmers and Dr. Verghese Kurien, whom we call as "The father of White Revolution". His "Billion Litre Idea" has changed the Indian dairy industry.

About 411 farmers in Anand, Gujarat started a cooperative movement dairy in the 1940s for the betterment of farmers under the leadership of Tribhuvandas K. Patel, founder Chairman of Amul and with the support of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Before that, Polson was supplying milk products to British Army and the Bombay Milk Scheme. The farmers involved were exploited in financial terms by the middleman. To provide better remuneration to farmers and remove the middleman, Tribhuvandas Patel and Sardar Patel helped create the Kaira District Cooperative Milk Producer's Union (KDCMPU). Dr. Verghese Kurien was an engineer sent to Anand,



Gujarat, to manage Government Dairy Business. He found a way to manufacture milk powder from buffalo milk, which reduced the wastage of surplus milk then. He introduced the supply chain approach in dairying; he connected farmers directly to consumers, which reduced the production cost and increased the returns to farmers.

In 1965, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri approached Dr. Kurien to replicate the Amul model across the country. National Dairy Development Board was registered under the Ministry of Agriculture, and Dr Kurien was the founder chairman of NDDB. The aim was to replicate the Anand pattern across the country, which started in 1970 as Operation Flood. In three phases, operation flood was launched across 700 towns of the country for empowering Indian farmers economically. This helped India becoming the world's largest milk producing country from deficient milk producing country. India is leading the world in milk production since 1998.

The cooperative societies made farmers self-sufficient, broke the shackles of gender, caste, religion, and community. India is self-sufficient in milk production now with everyone's support in the process, especially rural women, who are the backbone of the Indian dairy industry.

In recent times, the animal welfare activists, vegan lobby and some multinational interested in promoting their products at the cost of milk have started anti-milk propaganda, calling milk as cruel and unhealthy. However, it is proved beyond doubt that milk is pious, milk is complete foods, it is healthy and it helps in prevention of several diseases. This said not only by our age old experience but proven by most scientifically designed studies. Milk is a vegetarian food as it does not involving killing animal or its progeny. Fermented milk products like dahi, chhash and probiotics have also shown evidence that they can help in prevention of infection by corona virus. So, keep up your habit of drinking milk and be happy and healthy.

Greetings of World milk day to all.

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The greatest satisfaction and joy came from the priceless reward that comes when farmers whose lives depend on your efforts appreciate what is being done for them.

Dr. Verghese Kurien

