The White Revolution in India
The end or a new beginning?

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Milk production and consumption in India


It was enormously successful in the major cattle belt areas of India, mainly in the north and west.

Per capita availability of milk increased from 130 gm/day in 1950-51 to 299 gm/day in 2012-13.

India became the leading milk producing country in the world with total production of 132 million tonnes in 2012-13.

The situation today

• The White revolution has increased milk productivity and the processing infrastructure but not transformed the farming system.
• Still many smallholder dairy producers are managing their farms with traditional knowledge and practices.
• Prevalence of infectious and contagious diseases is still high and reproductive health of dairy animal is poor.
• Vaccination and other disease control programmes are sporadic in nature, and antibiotic use is unregulated.
• About 80% of total marketed milk is still handled by informal dairy sector without much knowledge and capacity- posing risk to human health.
• ILRI’s research in Assam, north east India suggest that cooperative system is not equally effective in each and every regions/ places.
• Bacteriological quality and antibiotic residue of marketed milk is not acceptable.

The way forward

• The White Revolution indubitably made a great contribution to Indian dairy industry but many more things are to do....
• A ‘third way’ of dairy development driven by demand and value chain evolution with system approach may be an answer.
• Any such new initiative needs to focus more on food-borne and zoonotic diseases originating from dairy animals.
• With emerging market opportunities diagnosis, treatment and control of trans-boundary diseases need bigger investment and resources.
• Better farm hygiene and environmental health are critical for sustainable growth and well being of men and animals.
• Animal welfare , feed and nutrition of dairy animal should be adequately addressed.
• Gender mainstreaming and health care of women of farming families are to be given special consideration.