

Mother Dairy giving support to farmers

■ Business Bureau

MOTHER Dairy, a subsidiary of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), has expanded its network of milk procurement operations in the areas of drought affected Marathwada and Vidarbha, bringing in a major relief to the farmers of these regions. With an arrangement spanning across 7 districts of these regions, Mother Dairy has now crossed the milestone of collecting 1 lakh litres of milk per day in a short span of one year.

Today, more than 15,000 farmers from 970 villages, associated with over 600 milk producer institutions pour more than 1/lakh litres of milk per day. The districts covered under the initiative are Amravati, Wardha, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Buldana, Nanded and Osmanabad.

Dilip Rath, Chairman of NDDB, said, "Vidarbha and Marathwada have been the most drought affected regions of the State, making it agriculturally distressed; therefore dairying in such adverse climatic conditions can create additional

sources for livelihood of farmers. Taking the cause forward, NDDB through its subsidiary intervened in setting up of milk procurement infrastructure to facilitate the larger objective of rural prosperity by providing better remuneration to the farmers of the region."

He said, "With milk procurement touching 1 lakh litres per day, the benefit of these initiatives have accrued to farmers in the tune of more than Rs 45 crore till date. We plan to further scale up the operations to more than 3,000 villages, spread across 11 districts and bringing more than 60,000 farmers in the ambit." Rath also thanked and applauded the personal involvement of Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis in making the initiative a success.

Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra are less developed as compared to other parts of the State mainly due to its disadvantageous geographical location, frequent droughts, inadequate irrigation and poor socio-econom-

ic condition. This has led to increase in debt burden on farmers. It has been observed that the farmers who were earlier selling off their animals due to farm distress and non-availability of remunerative milk disposal facilities have now started purchasing new animals.

NDDB and Mother Dairy's intervention has also ensured fair, timely and transparent payment system for farmers wherein their payouts are directly transferred in their bank accounts registered with the company. NDDB has also initiated its Ration Balancing Programme which is currently in its pilot phase.

Mother Dairy, recently inaugurated the refurbished Nagpur Dairy Plant, as part of the agreement between Government of Maharashtra and NDDB. The newly upgraded state-of-the-art plant has a milk processing capacity of 50,000 litres per day expandable up to 2 lakh litres per day. The milk procured from the regions of Marathwada and Vidarbha is partially being processed in Nagpur Dairy for consumption in the city.