

Important government schemes for livestock production in India, The important features and eligibility criteria.

Animal husbandry, dairying and livestock rearing activities play an important role in shaping the national economy and the socio-economic development of the country. They contribute to the food basket, nutrition security and household income of the farmers and generate gainful employment in rural areas, particularly among landless, small and marginal farmers and women, besides providing cheap and nutritious food. Livestock particularly serves as an insurance for farmers who are often ravaged at the hands of natural calamities, droughts and floods.

Increasing urbanization has led to a structural change in agricultural employment with the sprouting of peri-urban areas. High levels of rural-urban migration have led to extension of rural activities in the cities. Increasing poverty, unemployment and food insecurity have resulted in cultivation of marginal lands. Lack of organized employment in cities is pushing people to take up informal employment. Livestock rearing has become a common practice filling this gap. For the proper management and care of both livestock animals and dairy produce, a number of government policies and schemes have been developed to improve the standard of control of animal diseases, scientific management and up gradation of genetic resources, increasing availability of nutritious feed and fodder, sustainable development of processing and marketing facilities and enhancement of production and profitability. Some of these schemes and programmes have been listed below.

National livestock mission (NLM): A centrally sponsored scheme under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (Ministry of Agriculture), The National Livestock Mission is comprised of four sub missions one of which is Livestock Development. Under this credit based scheme, subsidy is provided for development of livestock to farmers. NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) is the subsidy channelizing agency under this Sub Mission of Livestock Development. The mission is an attempt to promote livestock, pig development, feed & fodder development and skill development, technology transfer and extension as livelihoods

National dairy plan phase I (NDP I): The National Dairy Plan Phase I, a centrally sponsored scheme for the period of 2011-12 to 2018-19 aims at carrying out projects in the participating states to provide technical and implementation support to the states. Through a credit based system, funding be provided to the eligible implementing agencies through Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DADF) to the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). With the International Development Association (IDA) being the nodal funding agency, the scheme

is planned to increase productivity of milch animals, increasing milk production to meet the growing demand for milk. Helping rural milk producers' access organized milk processing sector is another objective with which the scheme has been planned.

National programme for bovine breeding & dairy development (NPBBDD):

The programme, being implemented since the 12th five year plan of the country aims to improve the bovine breeding and dairy services of the country. Managed by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DAHD), the programme provides funds to farmers through the infrastructure of the State Livestock Development Board, State Animal Husbandry Departments, State Milk Federations and other supporting NGOs and universities/colleges. The programme aims to not just assist farmers in quality insemination services and inputs in breeding but the dairy arm of the programme, aims to strengthen the infrastructure of quality milk through cold chain. It also aims to create and improve infrastructure for procurement, training for dairy farmers, strengthen dairy cooperatives, increase milk production through technical inputs to dairy farmers, along with rehabilitation of potentially viable milk unions/federations.

Livestock insurance: As a centrally sponsored scheme, this has been one of the old schemes which helps ensure insurance of high yielding cattle and buffaloes at the maximum of their current price. The premium of the scheme being subsidized to 50%, the entire cost of subsidy is borne by the Central Government. Provided maximum for 2 animals per beneficiary for a maximum of three years, this scheme becomes very critical when dealing with diseased cattle. Implemented through the State Livestock Development Boards, the objective remains to provide protection mechanisms to the farmers and cattle rearers against any eventual loss due to death of animals, demonstrating the benefit of insurance of livestock, ultimately improving livestock health and better products.

Intensive dairy development programme (IDDP): As a centrally sponsored scheme, the programme was launched in backward, hilly and Non-Operation Flood regions in order to ensure proper care and support of technical services to the dairy farmers in these locations. It also aimed at providing employment opportunities to the local population through dairy farming along with indirectly affecting the social, nutritional and economic status of the families.

Livestock health and disease control (LH & DC): In order to control emerging and exotic diseases, the Livestock Health and Disease Control, the centrally sponsored scheme was launched in the 12th Five year plan of the government of India. The scheme helps collect, compile and disseminate monthly animal disease status in order to help the States control the spread of diseases. Certain diseases like the Rinderpest, Foot & Mouth Disease, Brucellosis, Classical Swine Fever etc come especially under the scheme as a separate component owing to the seriousness of the disease in livestock. Under this vaccination and awareness component play crucial roles at the ground level. The scheme is also responsible for establishment of Veterinary Council of India at Center and State Veterinary Councils.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM): Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) has been launched in December 2014 with an outlay of Rs 2025 crore for development and conservation of indigenous breeds through selective breeding in the breeding tract and genetic upgradation of nondescript bovine population. The scheme comprises of two components namely National Programme for Bovine Breeding (NPBB) and National Mission on Bovine Productivity (NMBP).

Objectives of RGM:

1. Development and conservation of indigenous breeds;
2. Breed improvement programme for indigenous breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock;
3. Enhancing milk production and productivity of bovine population by increasing disease free high genetic merit female population and check on spread of diseases ;
4. Upgrading nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi ;
5. Distribution of disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service;
6. To bring all breedable females under organised breeding through AI or natural service using germ plasm of high genetic merits;
7. To arrange quality Artificial Insemination (AI) services at farmers' doorstep;
8. To create e-market portal for bovine germplasm for connecting breeders and farmers;
9. To increase trade of livestock and livestock products by meeting out sanitary and phyto sanitary (SPS) issues;
10. To select breeding bulls of high genetic merit at a young age through application of genomics.