



45th DIC — A Grand Success

Greater efforts are required to rid milk farmers of their socio-economic inhibitions and challenges. This would result in them forging a closer affinity with the dairy fraternity and pave the way for a more inclusive and enquiry-based participation.

With the successful conclusion of the 45th Dairy Industry Conference (DIC) in February, 2017 at Mumbai, I would like to express my deep gratification and appreciation for the same to all stakeholders for making the Conference an outstanding one.

Hailed as one of the best DICs held so far, this mega-event encapsulated what Indian dairying stands for and aspires to achieve. Participants across dairying and allied spectrums deserve kudos for their whole-hearted support in this effort by IDA.

I am indebted to the Chief Guest Shri Dilip Rath, Chairman, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) for gracing the occasion. I also extend my thanks to all dignitaries and delegates, my farming brethren gathered from far corners of the country, respected awardees honoured by IDA, members of IDA, and the eminent speakers at the Technical and Industrial sessions. Dr. Kurien Oration Lecture by Shri Anil Bokil of 'Arthakranti Pratishthan' was highly inspiring and thought-provoking. The impressive IIDE 2017 Dairying Exhibition by M/s Koelnmesse YA Tradefair Pvt. Ltd. deserves special mention. Credit for the smooth functioning at the 45th DIC may be attributed in large measure to the efficient handling of the various registration counters. Meticulous planning by the organizers — IDA (West Zone) — under the leadership of their Chairman Shri Arun Patil, deserve all praise for successfully organizing a

Conference of this magnitude.

The takeaways from the 45th DIC have been many, and readers will find details of the proceedings and emerging recommendations in the April and May issues of *Indian Dairyman*.

I would, however, like to share some of my own observations:

No other agro-economic sector is as closely inter-related to climatic conditions and national resources as dairying and livestock. Although climate change is a global phenomenon, its negative impacts are more severely felt by developing countries like India which rely heavily on their natural resource base for sustenance. Our rural communities are greatly dependant on dairy farming — one of the most climate-sensitive economic sectors. Keeping this in mind the deliberations at the Conference rightly centered on "Climate Change and Dairying" generating discussions that elicited innovative approaches to the challenge.

India is home to the largest bovine population consisting of 190.9 million cattle and 108.7 million buffaloes (19th Livestock Census - 2012, All India Report 2014). However, the average per animal productivity is low and necessitates the maintenance of large number of animals in order to achieve the required milk productivity. The biggest challenge presented by changing climatic conditions is to achieve a balance between the large

'Any land will flow with milk and honey if it is worked with honest hands.'

— Rudolfo Anaya

“An illiterate farmer can represent the difficulties of the agricultural classes much better than an Indian learned but without experience in that particular field. I, for one, think that no substantial progress in the country is possible so long as farmers do not attend our political and social conferences in numbers proportionate to their numerical strength.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



bovine population, low productivity per head and simultaneously improve the sustainability of the dairy sector.

IT and technology have been the major drivers of advances taking place in the Indian dairy sector. IDA believes in harnessing the power of technology for the benefit of the dairying fraternity, especially the farmer producers. With this intent Indian Dairy Association Mobile App was launched at the 45th DIC — a one-point destination for the entire Indian dairying community. The App received a tremendous response as it addresses the needs of all dairy stakeholders.

The Farmers' Sessions at the DICs have been acknowledged as one of the most effective platforms for milk producers to voice their concerns and seek meaningful solutions. I would yet again appeal to dairy farmers, big and small, to strive for greater participation at these sessions. The facility for Simultaneous Interpretation System (SIS) at the 45th DIC enabled farmers to listen to the deliberations in Hindi resulting in more effective discussions. However, small farmers conversant only in their native languages are still diffident to air their views. I would suggest the provision for immediate translation/interpretation from vernacular to English or Hindi to facilitate better interactions.

In the 45th DIC, farmer representatives expressed concern over lack of lodging facilities for milk producers in a city like Mumbai. According to them the exorbitant hotel charges were a deterrent and prevented them from participating in the Conference in large numbers. At the next Conference — the 46th DIC to be organized by IDA (South Zone) — efforts must be made to provide

all assistance to farmers to facilitate their boarding and lodging at reasonable costs.

The DICs witness participation from heterogeneous groups such as academics, industrialists, dairy professionals, milk producers and students. There is thus a need for discussions in smaller groups which may be formed on commonalities based on language, region or issues. As India is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual nation, efforts should be made to accommodate views from different cross-sections of society. Holding sessions in smaller groups might seem irrelevant initially, but can be very effective in addressing concerns of the local people. They could even be recognized as issues of national importance in the future.

This Dairy Industry Conference saw an impressive attendance of over 1350 delegates. Measures must be taken to further increase participation and I welcome members' suggestions regarding the same. Greater efforts are required to ensure that our farmers are rid of their socio-economic inhibitions. This would result in greater affinity with the dairy fraternity leading to a more inclusive and enquiry-based participation. Their queries, suggestions and practical viewpoints, when given due consideration, would help address several grassroots issues which would ultimately benefit the dairy sector as a whole.

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