

## **Conservation of Native Breeds – Value chain management through farmer collectives**

### **Introduction**

The livestock sector has emerged as a vital sector for ensuring a more inclusive and sustainable agriculture system. India is blessed with a huge biodiversity of 43 indigenous cattle breeds and 16 Buffalo breeds which has survived over last hundreds of years in respect of their suitability for specific purposes in concerned local environment. In Tamilnadu, 05 indigenous cattle breeds (Kangeyam, Bargur, Umblacherry, Alampadi and Pulikulam) are unique; in those **Bargur cattle is a breed of dairy cattle, native to the Bargur region of Bargur forest hills in Anthiyur Taluk of Erode District in Western Tamil Nadu in India.** They are also often used for draught purposes in their native areas. They have been generally raised in herds exclusively by the Kannada speaking Lingayats of the Bargur region. They are primarily raised to carry out agricultural operations in the hilly terrain. They are also well known for their trotting ability.

### **Bargur Cattle Characteristics**

The Bargur cattle are very hardy animals and usually very good for general draught purposes. The animals are known to be very aggressive in nature and are of fiery disposition. And for these reasons they are pretty difficult to train. But they are well known for their endurance, speed and trotting abilities. They are accustomed to forest hills of the rugged and inhospitable forests of the Western Ghats. The Bargur cows are pretty good for milk production. This milk belongs to A2 milk variety because this milk contains A2 casein protein. Average milk production of the cows ranges from 250 to 1300 kg per lactation.

### **Status of Bargur breeds**

The number of Bargur cattle in the native tract was estimated at 95,400 in 1977, 46,600 in 1982 and 10,102 in 2003. A 2007 enumeration of pure-bred Bargur cattle in the entire native tract found about 2,500 heads, with only 1,100 breedable females. From 1977 to 2009, the fall in the breedable female population is more than 93 percent.

### **Bargur Buffalo Characteristics**

These buffaloes are found in the Bargur hills in Tamil Nadu. Coat colour varies from black to light brown or brownish black. Greyish white stockings from carpal/tarsal joint to fetlock are present predominantly in females. These buffaloes are maintained under extensive system and are reared for manure, milk and meat (male calves are sold for carabeef). The animals are adapted to graze in the hilly terrain due to its small size (about 102 cm in height). The milk yield of the animals ranges from 1.5 to 2.0 litres per day and mainly used for household consumption.

## Importance of Native Cattle Conservation

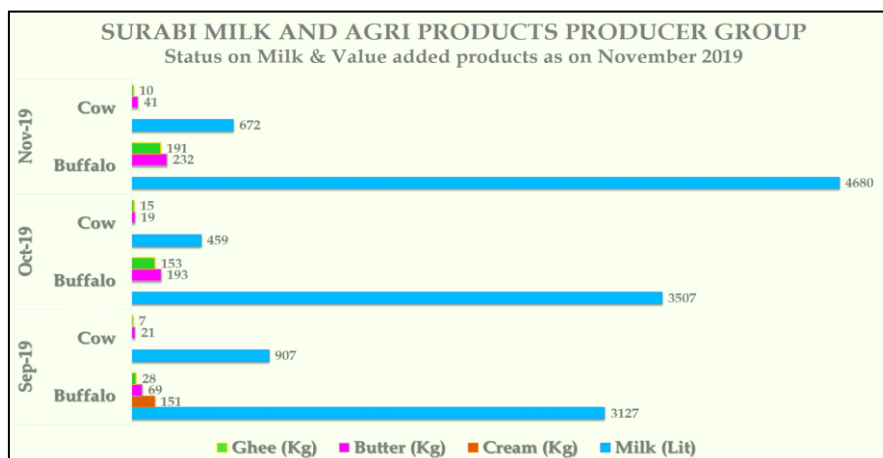
In recent times, several of the **indigenous breeds suffered decline mainly due to their becoming uneconomical**. Draught breeds utility has decreased because of mechanization in agriculture. The local breeds have following merits over exotic breeds viz,

1. Better disease resistance than exotic breeds
2. More suitable for low input management system
3. Survive better in local environment
4. Suitable for draught work

In addition, existence of superior indigenous breeds can provide valuable research inputs for developing superior breeds. It is **therefore important that Indigenous breeds of cattle are conserved, developed and proliferated**.

## KVK Initiatives to Conserve Bargur Cattle

Keeping this in view, ICAR KVK – MYRADA, Erode district took the initiative of bringing the importance of maintaining the Bargur breed, with the support of Erode District Collector to look for alternative way to conserve this native breeds. Since, there were no milk marketing facilities in the remote hill areas, it was decided to form milk producers group called **“Surabi milk and Agri products Producers Group”** and initially enrolled with 232 farmers and initiated the milk marketing from September 2019 by involving local rural youths. The community managed resource centre (Marutham and Kurinji CMRC) promoted by KVK have facilitated the milk collection and marketing the products in the neighboring towns like Anthiyur, Gobichettipalayam and Sathyamangalam. The production started with 50 liters to 400 liters per day in the first 2 months period. This initiative straight away supported the producers to get additional income of Rs.10/- per liter of milk.



## Technical intervention of KVK:

- Clean milk production
- Scientific feeding management – Mixed fodder cultivation and azolla
- Promotion of EVM practices to manage diseases
- Micro nutrient management of livestock
- Value addition and marketing

In order to enhance the milk collection and marketing with the support of District Collector, Erode the Surabi milk & Agri Products Producers group **could mobilize milk chilling unit, vehicle for transportation of milk and required milk canes for collection and storage.** With the support of Marutham CMRC **the quality of milk is ensure by supplying of lactometer to the milk collecting youths, this centre also supported for on spot payment for milk producers** which made the farmers happy and continuously supplying to the producers group.

KVK has supported the Surabi to make use of the Home Science Lab for producing value **added products like Curd, Butter, Ghee and Paneer with the brand name of ‘Surabi’.** ICAR KVK MYRADA Erode District organised inauguration programme on milk chilling unit at Tamaraikarai village in Bargur hills of Anthiyur Taluk 22.11.2019. During the programme District Collector Mr. Kathirvan, IAS, Anthiyur Constituency MLA Mr. K. R. Rajakrishnan, Mr. Sakthi Ganesh, IPS, Mr. Naganathan IFS, Mr. Viswanathan IFS, Mr. Balaganesh, PO DRDA and Dr. A. Paramasivam, BCRC were delivered special address on importance of Bargur breeds.

## Conclusion

In order to scale up the milk marketing in Erode district, the milk outlet being established in 4 locations of Erode Town in order to market the A2 milk from Bargur cattles. It is also in the process of procuring 1000 litres of milk from Bargur native cattles by March, 2020. By the intervention of this Surabi milk & Agri Products Producers group, the following benefits are obtained by farmers as well as consumers.

- Farmers gets better price for their quality milk
- Value added products in milk such as Ghee, Butter, Curd and Paneer are being produced
- Employment opportunities for Bargur hills rural youth and SHG's
- Good Quality milk and A2 casein protein milk for consumers in the Town
- The growers will get dividend every year for the milk supported by Surabi milk & Agri Products Producers group

The Bargur hill farmers are expressing that, Since the market avenue is created for their Bargur cattle and get better price, the farmers have decided not to sell their animals in future, instead they all planned to conserve the animal and to improve their livelihood. The value chain activity of KVK, helps in increase the income of farmers and more importantly to conserve our Bargur Native breeds.

## Photo Gallery



**Bargur Native Breed**



**Field survey**



**Milk collection and testing**



**Milk Storage in Cooling Unit**



**Committee Meeting**



**Sale of Milk – Door Steps**



**Sale of Milk – Surabi Outlet**



**Value addition – Cream separator**



**Value addition – Butter and Ghee**



**Producers Group Formation & Launching of Milk Sales – Media Coverage**