

Jharkhand facing milk crisis, heat to blame

Each family in Jharkhand on an average gets just a litre of milk after standing in queue for two to three hours as the state faces an acute milk crisis brought about by rising temperatures.

Milk production has declined by 30 percent, and the demand is far outstripping the supply.

'There are two main reasons for the decline in milk production. First is the rising temperature. In summer, the cows and buffaloes are not getting proper fodder and therefore the decrease in milk production. The second is due to reduction in milk supply from Bihar,' a senior employee of Sudha Dairy, the main supplier of milk in the state, told IANS.

'Scores of animals died in Bihar due to floods. The impact is now visible in Jharkhand as the supply has reduced,' he added.

Said Pyali Banerjee, a housewife: 'We have to stand in queue from 5 a.m. Despite standing in line for two-three hours, we get only one litre of milk. It has become difficult for my children.'

According to official estimates, Jharkhand needs 7.6 million litres of milk every day and it produces only 3.7 million litres. Jharkhand was importing around 80,000 litres from Bihar every day, which has been reduced up to 41,000 litres now.

'During summer, cows and buffaloes rarely get good fodder or green grass. In the absence of green grass and good fodder, the milk production is reduced by 30-40 percent,' said Sohan Yadav, a milkman.

State capital [Ranchi](#) itself faces a shortage. It gets 800,000 litres of milk a day as opposed to a demand of 1.2 million litres.

'The average production of milk is less than the national average. Each milk-producing animal in Jharkhand gives an average 1.59 litres a day against a national average of three litres. We have a sufficient number of animals but the production is less than the national average,' said an official of the animal husbandry department.

In Jharkhand, the availability of milk is 140 gm for each person against a national average of 235 gm.

The animal husbandry department opened its own dairy farm called Medha last year in Ranchi's Ormanjhi block. But while its production capacity is 20,000 litres a day, it produces only 4,500 litres.

The Jharkhand government is now mulling importing milk from other states to meet the demand.

Nityanand Shukla (© IANS / India eNews)