

Press Release from Sikkim Milk Union

One-Day Training Programme on Good Hygiene and Manufacturing Practices Held at Neya Mangzing

Namchi, 18 January (Pranesh Pakhrin/Ritu Manger) A one-day training programme on Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) was successfully conducted on Saturday at the Neya Mangzing GPK Hall. The programme was organized by the Sikkim Milk Union and funded under the National Programme for Dairy Development (NPDD) SK-07K (2025–26). The primary objective of the training programme was to create awareness about modern scientific dairy practices and promote clean milk production. The event was graced by the Chairman of the Sikkim Milk Union, Shri Y.K. Mishra, as the Chief Guest, along with the Managing Director, Dr. T.B. Ghatani. The programme was also attended by Panchayat and Zilla Panchayat members, officials from various departments, and more than 100 dairy farmers representing various milk societies under Namchi District.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by the President of Neya Mangzing Milk PCS. This was followed by a technical session conducted by Dr. Tshering Gyalpo Bhutia, Manager (P&I), Gangtok, who delivered an informative presentation on simple and effective methods for producing clean and high-quality milk. He explained key hygienic practices to be followed during milking, storage, and transportation to ensure milk safety and quality.

Subsequently, Dr. Prerna Pradhan, Veterinary Officer, Yangang, addressed the participants and briefed them on various government schemes available for dairy farmers. She explained the cattle insurance scheme, which primarily covers cows aged one to two years and provides insurance coverage of up to ₹50,000. The premium amount varies based on farmer categories such as General, OBC, and SC/ST, with full premium support available in certain cases. She also elaborated on veterinary healthcare initiatives, including free or subsidized vaccination, veterinary services, and emergency mobile veterinary support. Dr. Pradhan further created awareness on Lumpy Skin Disease, its prevention, and the role of AI workers, while sharing simple ethno-veterinary practices such as the use of black pepper, turmeric, coconut oil, and neem water.

The programme also saw the participation of Ms. Dipisha Sharma, Assistant Manager, SISCO Bank, Yangang, who spoke on the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and PMEGP loan schemes. She explained that KCC loans are provided at low interest rates to support agriculture and allied activities, with special benefits for SC/ST farmers, enabling easy access to credit and financial assistance.

Ms. Kavita Rai, Deputy Registrar, Cooperation Department, addressed the gathering on the importance of the cooperative system. She highlighted the historical evolution of cooperatives and their vital role in supporting farmers and rural communities. Emphasizing proper registration, she explained how it ensures transparency, accurate auditing, and accountability in daily operations. She also mentioned the celebration of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and highlighted the seven fundamental principles of cooperatives.

Thereafter, Ms. Vaishnu Rai, Deputy Director, Agriculture Department, spoke about various government agricultural schemes aimed at protecting farmers from crop losses and supporting them financially. She explained schemes such as PMFBY, which provides crop insurance against natural calamities, pests, and diseases, and PM-KISAN, under which farmers receive direct financial assistance in their bank accounts. She also discussed PKUY and PDMC schemes that promote improved farming practices and reduce cultivation costs, encouraging farmers to register and utilize these schemes effectively.

Addressing the gathering, Managing Director Dr. T.B. Ghatani interacted directly with dairy farmers and explained the functioning and initiatives of the Sikkim Milk Union. He emphasized the importance of scientific methods in milk production, proper handling, cleanliness, and hygienic milking practices. He also spoke about initiatives to promote scientific dairy animal management, including the implementation of the BIS Type-I cattle feed policy by the Union. Additionally, he

introduced the Gwala Gyan leaflet, which provides comprehensive information on locally available green and dry fodder and scientific feed preparation methods. Dr. Ghatani patiently listened to the issues faced by farmers and assured them that the Union would work sincerely to address their concerns. He also directed dairy society office bearers to strictly adhere to proper milk collection norms for the overall improvement of the Union. Highlighting the growing market demand for milk, he encouraged youth to take up dairy farming as a sustainable source of income and employment. Shri K.B. Kafley, Zilla Adakshya of Neya Mangzing Territorial Constituency, stressed the importance of registering dairy cooperative societies and urged concerned officials to expedite the registration process so that farmers could avail various government benefits. He also informed the gathering about his initiative to strengthen dairy cooperatives by providing GCI almirahs for record maintenance under his discretionary fund and announced further support in the future.

As the Chief Guest, Chairman Shri Y.K. Mishra highlighted the various contributions of the Government of Sikkim toward strengthening the dairy sector and improving the livelihoods of dairy farmers across the state. He specifically mentioned the ₹8 per litre milk incentive announced by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, describing it as the main driving force behind the growth and encouragement of dairy farming in Sikkim. He assured the gathering of the Sikkim Milk Union's unwavering commitment to support dairy farming and its farmers at every stage, stating that the Union has consistently worked—and will continue to work—diligently and dedicatedly for the welfare and benefit of its dairy members. He also encouraged farmers to focus on producing high-quality milk to meet market demand and enhance their income.

During the programme, four progressive dairy farmers were felicitated for their selfless service and valuable contributions to the dairy sector. The programme concluded with the distribution of veterinary medicines, including mineral mixtures and deworming tablets, to all participants, making the training programme both informative and beneficial for the dairy farming community.