

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE WILL NOT IMPACT MILK PRODUCTION: AMUL

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R.S. SodhiVIJAY SONEJI

The Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) played havoc in the country, killing thousands of cattle in many States. The situation in Gujarat is completely under control and the disease will not impact the milk production, sales or its prices in the long run, said R.S. Sodhi, Managing Director (MD) of Amul, the cooperative giant in the milk sector.

Vaccination must

Mr. Sodhi told *The Hindu* that the decrease in milk production in Gujarat, where 91,000 cases of LSD were reported, was just 0.25%. Proper vaccination could curb the disease in other parts of the country too, he said and offered to share Amul's expertise with other States to deal with the situation.

"Vaccination is the best way to curb the disease. On the national level, I don't think there will be any impact in the production due to the LSD. We had a good monsoon. Milk production will improve now. In the organised sector, LSD had no impact on production and procurement. I also don't see any impact of LSD on the milk prices and milk production in the long term," Mr. Sodhi said.

Mr. Sodhi said Gujarat faced LSD for the second year in a row, reporting more than 91,000 cases of LSD and 3,260 deaths this time. The disease was reported first from the Saurashtra region, in the districts adjoining Rajasthan. In 2021, it was more in south Gujarat.

"The government's veterinary infrastructure is very strong in Saurashtra region. In northern and central Gujarat, we have very good infrastructure. So we made joint teams immediately and decided to provide treatment for affected animals. It takes seven to 12 days for an animal to recover from this disease. During the time, milk production decreases to 50 to 70%," he said.

He said vaccination of animals around the affected areas was also started simultaneously. "We created a ring of vaccination around those affected areas to prevent spreading of the disease. Till now we have vaccinated around 33 lakh animals. The government also imposed restriction on movement of animals. As a result, the spreading stopped. The recovery rate of affected animals is also good. The decrease in production was about 50,000 litres a day out of the daily production of two crore litres. It was just 0.25%. As of now, in Gujarat the LSD is in total control. There are no new cases. The production of milk is also normal now," he said.

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