

GOVT. PLANS RESEARCH ON 'INDIGENOUS' COWS

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Economics of Animal-Rearing incl. White, Blue & Pink Revolutions

Under study: Scientific research will be carried out milk products derived from Indian indigenous cows. File Photo

The government has unveiled a programme to research on 'indigenous' cows. To be funded by multiple scientific ministries, the initiative, SUTRA PIC, is led by the Department of Science and Technology (DST). It has the Department of Biotechnology, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Ministry for AYUSH (Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy) among others and the Indian Council of Medical Research as partners.

Five themes

SUTRA PIC or Scientific Utilisation Through Research Augmentation-Prime Products from Indigenous Cows, has five themes: Uniqueness of Indigenous Cows, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Medicine and Health, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Agricultural Applications, Prime-products from Indigenous Cows for Food and Nutrition, Prime-products from indigenous cows-based utility items, according to a concept note on the DST website.

Researchers from academic organisations as well as "capable voluntary organisations (NGOs) active in India with proven record of accomplishment in executing S&T-based R&D projects," were invited to apply for funding.

"The proposals under this theme should aim to perform scientific research on complete characterisation of milk and milk products derived from Indian indigenous cows; scientific research on nutritional and therapeutic properties of curd and ghee prepared from indigenous breeds of cows by traditional methods; development of standards for traditionally processed dairy products of Indian-origin cow," says the 22-page note explaining the objectives of the programme.

Budgetary outlay?

Two of the seniormost officials of some of the ministries involved said they were not aware of the specifics of the programme and claimed ignorance of the budgetary outlay. "I haven't seen the file on this programme because only research programmes, say over Rs. 1 crore, need to be formally cleared by me," Ashutosh Sharma, DST Secretary, told *The Hindu*.

The Hindu couldn't immediately contact the officer in the Science for Equity, Empowerment and Development (SEED), the department in charge of the programme.

In 2017, SEED constituted a National Steering Committee (NSC) for 'Scientific Validation and Research on Panchgavya (SVAROP)'.

Panchagavya is an Ayurvedic panacea and is a mixture of five (pancha) products of the cow (gavya) — milk, curd, ghee, dung and urine. Its proponents believe it can cure, or treat a wide range of ailments.

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