

## 'A fourth of dairies ill-equipped'

A total of 450 dairies across the country were assessed.

Even as milk production becomes a key contributor to agricultural income in India, an investigation has found that a fourth of India's dairies had no shelter for animals and half of these institutions housed sick and injured animals.

The findings were part of an assessment of conditions in 450 dairies, spanning 10 of the country's top milk-producing States and involved assessing the health and living conditions of about 25,000 cattle.

### Hormones administered

Nearly 55% of dairy owners allowed their sick animals to be milked. To increase milk production, hormone Oxytocin was being wantonly administered, even though it is a restricted drug that can only be given after advise from a registered medical practitioner. "Illegal use of Oxytocin to increase the milk let down is a common occurrence in 46.9% dairies," says the report prepared by the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO). "Dairy owners use it in excessive quantities (3 to 4 ml.)"

### Delhi the worst

The authors of the report alleged that Delhi had the "worst" cattle management problem in the country. None of the dairies had a male calf of more than two months of age and were flourishing in "illegal establishments". There was also minimal veterinary care and indiscriminate use of Oxytocin here.

The investigation was carried out in Punjab, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Tamil Nadu. The National Capital Territory of Delhi was picked because of its strategic significance and also because it was the "centre of media attention."

In Uttar Pradesh — India's largest milk producer with over 20 million tonnes of production — 92% of dairies didn't have a visiting veterinarian and 48% of them used sick animals for milking.

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