

MILK PRODUCTION AND THE MULTINATIONALS

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The present milk production in the country has dropped from 300,000 litres to 100,000 litres a day. We have heard that in the past large sums of money have been invested in milk production and massive projects have been started, and with all this effort we have never been able to achieve self-sufficiency in milk.

An opinion has been created that milk production is not a profitable venture. By giving a concentrate feed nothing could be recovered at the end. The advice normally given by veterinary men is to go for full range grazing with low producing cows without any concentrate feed.

To face all these hazards in dairy farming, certain farmers with some entrepreneurial capacities have gone in to produce milk products like Curd, Yohgurt, Ghee, Butter, Cheese and Ice Cream at the expense of liquid milk. A very few private entrepreneurs seem to have succeeded in their business ventures, but are caught up in a rat-race. The small dairy farmer has been forced to close down his farm and sell all his cows very cheap.

The Department of Animal Production and Health (APH) has been the sole Government Agency involved in livestock production for years. No doubt, the experience accumulated by them has been of immense value to the small farmer. All the infrastructure and the personnel supplied by this department are no more. All that is left is the Veterinary Office and a V.S. These officers have been restricted in their mobility due to the very low fuel ration. When epidemics break out in the districts like Food-and-Mouth disease and the spread of Paramphistome (a deadly worm) small farmers lose their livestock.

The dismantling of the infrastructure of the APH took place when Nestle was given a free hand to creep into the milk producing areas.

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