

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO B/526

B/526 The Honourable First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière (**Mr Bhagwan**)

To ask Dr the Honourable Minister of Agro Industry and Fisheries:

Whether, in regard to the project for the increased production of milk locally, he will state where matters stand?

REPLY

Mr Speaker Sir,

The objective of Government with regard to increased milk production in Mauritius is clearly spelt out in the Strategic Options for Crop Diversification and Livestock Sector 2007-2015. Our target is to achieve in the medium term, at least 10 per cent of our requirements from the present 2 per cent self sufficiency to reach 12 million litres of milk a year.

2. In reply to Parliamentary Question B/38, I indicated the measures being taken by my Ministry to encourage entrepreneurship in the dairy sector. As at date, three major players have proposed to invest some Rs 350m in this sector. They are **Krish Cow Farms & Dairy Products Ltd, Golden Cream Dairy Farm Ltd, and Surat & Co Ltd**. These three investors will act as catalysts for the boosting up of the whole milk sector.

3. As per its business plan, Krish Cow Farms & Dairy Products Ltd together with its Indian partners, propose to invest some Rs202M on the 101A of land leased to the Company at Salazie. The target is to produce 40000litres of milk a day with 2000 cows. The dairy complex will start operation with a herd of 1300 cows plus the existing herd from local breeders in the region estimated at 300 animals. The Company will, thus, collaborate and work closely with local breeders.

4. At Salazie, some 53A has been leased to **Golden Cream Dairy Farm Ltd**. About 30A of that land have already been cleared for fodder cultivation and cowshed construction. As per its project, Golden Cream Dairy Farm Ltd plans to invest some Rs 63M and the production target is estimated at 9000 litres per day. The promoters have retained the services of dairy producers in South Africa for the successful implementation of the project.

5. Surat Co Ltd plans to invest some Rs55M for a 250 milking cow unit. The expected daily production is estimated at 5000 litres. The Company will take possession of the 250A of land leased by Rose Belle Sugar Estate (RBSE) by the end of June 2008 and has indicated that it will be able to supply fresh milk within 6 months after start of operation.

Mr Speaker,

6. I am tabling copies of the three projects submitted to my Ministry.

7. As regards the Food & Allied Industries Ltd (FAIL) which was allocated 10ha of land at Richelieu on lease for fodder production, the company has, requested for some more time to take a final decision regarding the utilisation of the land.

8. In addition to these big players, there are also other small scale projects which can help to achieve the projected 10 per cent self sufficiency. Six persons have regrouped themselves in a cooperative society, namely the Petit Merlo Dairy Cooperative Society Ltd to exploit the 29A of state land leased to them at Petit Merlo. Clearing of 20A of land has already started and as at date 2A has been planted with fodder (Elephant grass). AREU has prepared the Preliminary Environment Report (PER) which will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment and NDU by the end of May 2008. Furthermore, a project to the tune of Rs3.4M (Rs2.5M from the Decentralised Cooperation Programme) for funding under the Direct Support Scheme has been submitted and a reply is due by 30 May 2008. The project will empower these persons to improve milk yield in a sustainable manner

through adoption of modern farm management techniques (e.g better waste management system), acquisition of equipment and training.

9. Krish Cow Farms & Dairy Products Ltd, Golden Cream Dairy Farm Ltd, and Surat & Co Ltd are already discussing with potential suppliers of animals from South Africa and Australia for import. As regards the small operators, application forms for cash grant (Rs15,000/head) have been sent to 21 dairy cooperative societies. A private company has taken the initiative to import 25 dairy heifers from South Africa which will be sold to farmers at Rs68,000/animal. A meeting with all stakeholders namely my Ministry, AREU, Mouvement Autosuffisance Alimentaire (MAA), Empowerment Programme (EP), SME Partnership Fund, Ministry of Industry, SMEs Commerce and Cooperatives, Mauritius Meat Authority (MMA), all Cooperative Societies and the importer is scheduled today to look into the funding for the import of animals (300 heads).

10. Training of cow breeders and new entrepreneurs is ongoing. About 100 breeders and entrepreneurs have been trained so far by AREU. A Milk Processing Unit is being set up at Curepipe Livestock Research Station in order to train staff, farmers and entrepreneurs. AREU together with Engineering Division of the Ministry has finalised the design for a model cow shed for (i) 10 cows; (ii) 20 cows; (iii) 30 cows; and (iv) 50 cows with all basic amenities (milk areas, cow pen, nursery pen).