From volume to value

Reimagining growth in India's dairy sector

February 2026

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Foreword

India's dairy sector today represents both a remarkable success story and a defining opportunity for the future. From being a net importer in the 1950s to emerging as the world's largest producer of milk, the journey has been transformative, touching over 80 million rural households. Yet, this achievement cannot mask the pressing need to enhance productivity, ensure sustainability and unlock the full potential of value-added products and exports. As the sector stands at this critical juncture, we believe the time has come to move decisively from volume to value. This means building a dairy ecosystem that is more productive, climate-smart, inclusive and globally competitive. It also means reimagining institutions, investing in fodder and animal health systems, strengthening farmer incentives and accelerating infrastructure development to create resilient supply chains.

At EY, we are privileged to have partnered with governments, cooperatives, private enterprises and multilateral institutions across the agricultural and food systems value chain. Our experience from pioneering initiatives such as the electronic National Agricultural Market (e-NAM) to structuring innovative PPPs and investment strategies has taught us that bold ideas, when combined with collaborative execution, can transform entire sectors. We see the same potential in dairy today.

This paper is an invitation to policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and farmer organizations to think collectively about the next chapter of India's dairy transformation. If pursued with vision and commitment, the strategies outlined here can not only secure the livelihoods of millions but also position India as a global benchmark in productivity, quality and sustainability. It is my sincere hope that this thought leadership will serve as a catalyst for dialogue and action, inspiring stakeholders to co-create a future where India's dairy sector is not only the largest in scale but also the strongest in value.

Satyam Shivam Sundaram
Partner, EY LLP

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Introduction

क्षीरं सद्गुणसिन्धुरेकममृतं तस्मिन्नपि क्षीरता

Milk is an ocean of virtues, it is nectar - and even in nectar, it is the essence of milk that lends it value.

Milk is more than nourishment in India, it is symbolism, sustenance and strategy. Revered in the Vedas and ritualized across cultural traditions, milk and dairy have been central to India's agrarian economy and nutritional ecosystem for millennia. Today, dairy is the single largest agricultural enterprise in India, involving over 80 million rural households, most of them small and marginal farmers. Crucially, dairy has also contributed to improving the livelihoods of the most deprived, including landless farmers. For households often vulnerable to debt cycles and distress sales, the steady cash flow from milk provides a critical lifeline, allowing families to avoid extreme measures and ensuring resilience in the face of shocks. In many cases, it is women who manage dairy income, further deepening its role in empowerment and household security.

The dairy and animal husbandry sector contributes 4.5%[1] to national GDP, with milk alone accounting for more than one-fifth of India's agricultural output by value—a share larger than that of rice and wheat combined. In a country where landholdings are shrinking and climate variability is rising; dairy has emerged as one of the most reliable and regular sources of cash income for millions of farming families. India is today the largest milk producer in the world, accounting for over 24%[2] of global output. Yet this achievement hides a more complex reality: the country's average yield per animal remains less than half the global average and far below levels achieved in the U.S., EU, or New Zealand. The sector is dominated by unorganized players, suffers from significant infrastructure and processing gaps and remains largely absent from global trade flows despite its scale. These inherent paradoxes raise important questions about the future course of India's dairy sector.

[1] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1908343
[2] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1897084

Adding to this complexity is the opportunity presented by India's diverse basket of value-added products—ranging from hundreds of varieties of traditional sweets to beverages such as lassi and buttermilk. If standardized properly with stringent quality controls, these products offer substantial potential for market expansion both domestically and internationally. With the right branding and marketing, India could position its unique dairy heritage globally, not just as commodities but as cultural exports. Furthermore, integrated solutions that enhance shelf life and accelerate transport and handling could unlock nearby markets in Sri Lanka, the subcontinent, Africa and South-East Asia, where import regulations are relatively easier to meet.

Globally, too, the dairy industry stands at an inflection point. The world produced 982 million tons of milk in 2024, supporting the livelihoods of over 150 million[3] households and providing critical nutrition in both developed and developing countries. Yet the sector faces mounting pressures ranging from volatile prices and rising input costs to climate-related disruptions and shifting consumer preferences. Moreover, dairy is under increasing scrutiny for its environmental footprint, contributing an estimated 5.9%[4] of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, primarily in the form of methane.

Amid these challenges, dairy remains indispensable—not only for its economic role in rural economies but also for its contribution to food security, nutrition and gender empowerment. As the sector transitions from a predominantly volume-driven model to one focused on value, productivity, quality and sustainability, fundamental rethinking is required. This paper offers a deep dive into the global and Indian dairy landscapes, examines structural challenges and emerging opportunities and proposes strategies to catalyze a new era of dairy-led rural transformation—one that is not just richer in liters, but in livelihoods, nutrition and resilience.

[3] https://www.fao.org/dairy-production-products/production/milk-production/en
[4] https://www.wri.org/insights/milks-environmental-impact

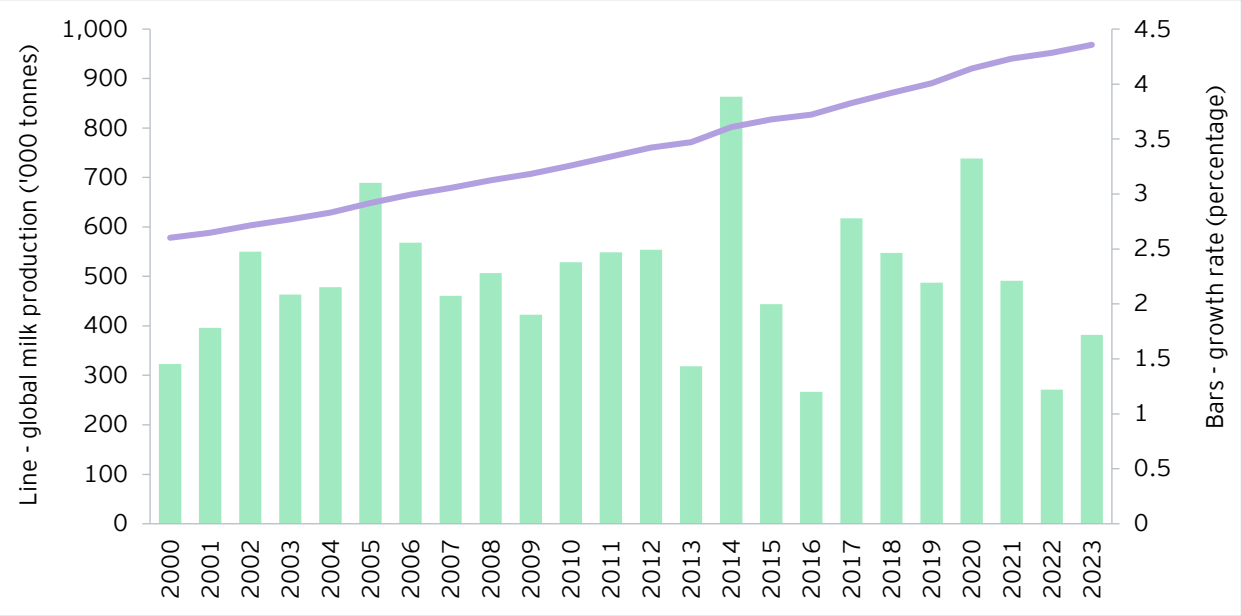
01

An overview of the **global dairy industry**

1.1 Global milk production

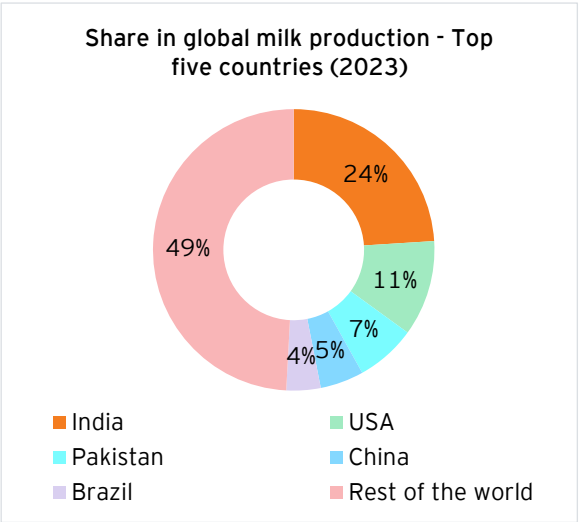
The global dairy sector produced approximately 982 million tons (81% cow milk, 15% buffalo milk and 4% for goat, sheep and camel milk combined) of milk in 2024[5], making milk the largest single commodity in global agricultural output by volume. However, production growth has slowed and the sector expanded by just 1.4% in 2024, down from 1.9% in 2023, continuing a trend of moderating growth observed over the past decade[6]. This deceleration has been shaped by volatile input prices, climate disruptions, structural adjustments in major producing regions and evolving consumer preferences. In the coming decade milk production is expected to grow at a CAGR of 1.8%[7].

Figure 1: Global milk production volume and YoY growth rate



Milk production is highly concentrated geographically. India leads by a wide margin, followed by the US, Pakistan, China, Brazil, Germany, Russia, France, New Zealand and Turkey. While some of these countries are self-consumption-driven (e.g., India, Pakistan), others such as New Zealand and Germany are geared toward exports.[5]

Figure 2: Share in global milk production - Top five countries



[5] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/07/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2025-2034_3eb15914/full-report/dairy-and-dairy-products_1dd2e5a6.html

[6] https://www.milksa.co.za/sites/default/files/202412/2024%20World%20Dairy%20Situation%20Report.pdf

[7] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/07/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2025-2034_3eb15914/full-report/dairy-and-dairy-products_1dd2e5a6.html

Notably, not all regions of the globe are contributing to an increase in global milk production. Africa and North America have registered a decline in milk production in 2024 compared to the previous year, however strong growth in Oceania, Europe, Central America and Caribbean and South America have more than offset the decline[8].

Figure 3: Global heatmap of milk production in 2023

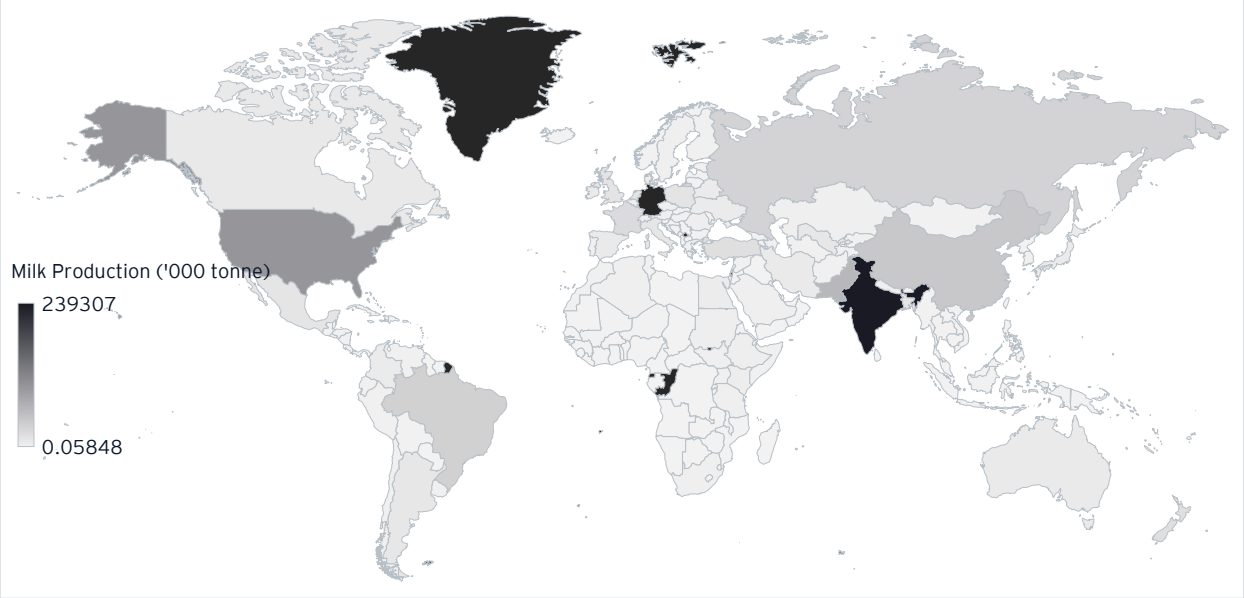
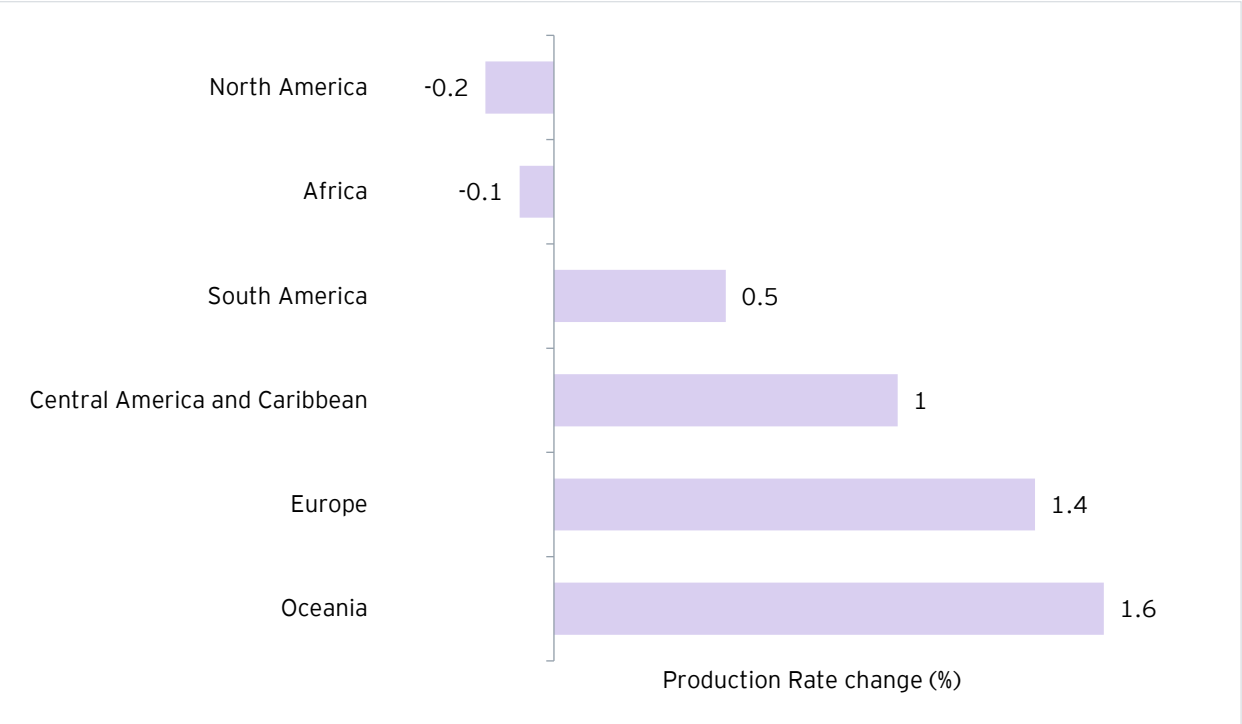


Figure 4: Change in milk production volumes - Region wise

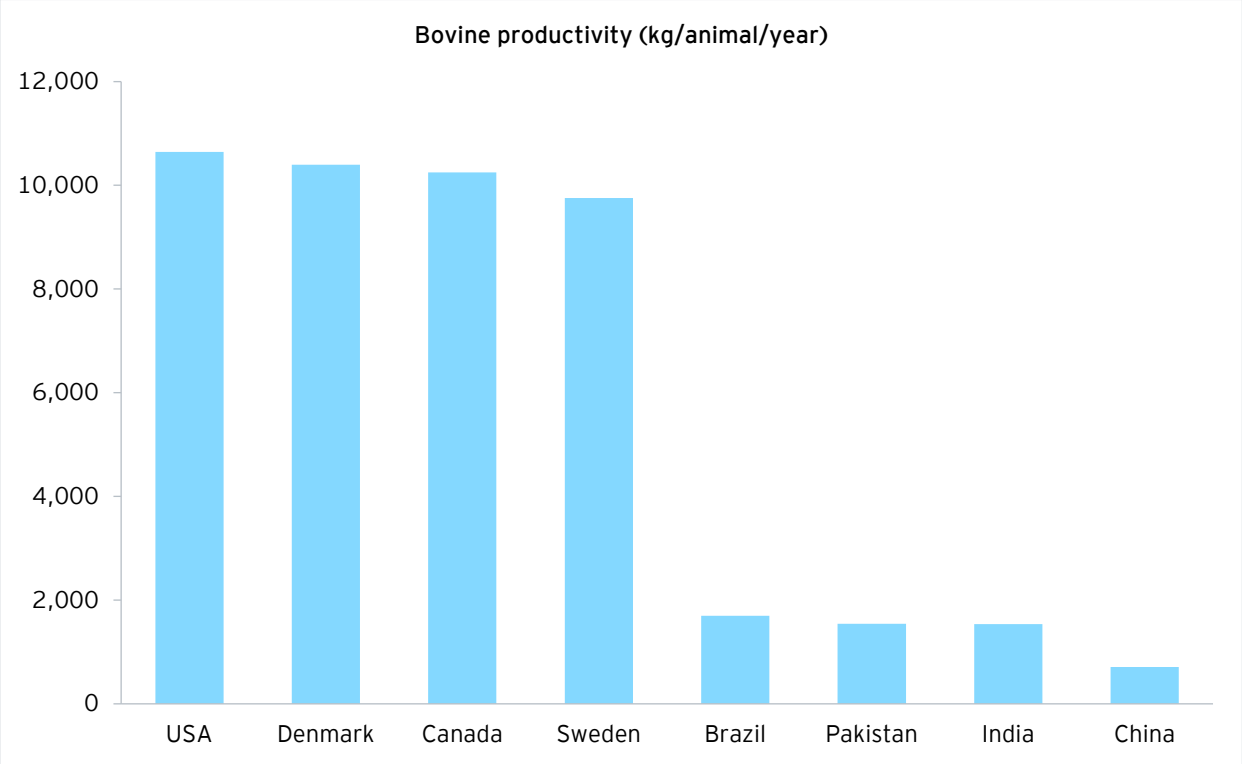


[8] https://www.dairyindustries.com/news/46055/fao-says-volume-up-for-asian-dairy-in-2024

1.2 Productivity variations

While total production volumes offer one view, per-animal productivity tells a different story that highlights sharp disparities between countries with intensive systems and those with extensive or semi-intensive systems. In 2023, the highest milk yields per animal were observed in the US, Denmark and Canada often exceeding 9,000 kg/animal/year, driven by high-yielding breeds, optimized nutrition and mechanized milking systems. In contrast, countries like India, Pakistan and much of Sub-Saharan Africa (despite large animal populations) reported much lower yields, often in the range of 1,000–2,000 kg/animal/year[9]. **The USA's case is peculiar as it features in the top five both in production volume and productivity**. This dichotomy reinforces a structural insight: some of the top producers by volume are not the most productive on a per-animal basis.

Figure 5: Bovine Productivity – Select countries

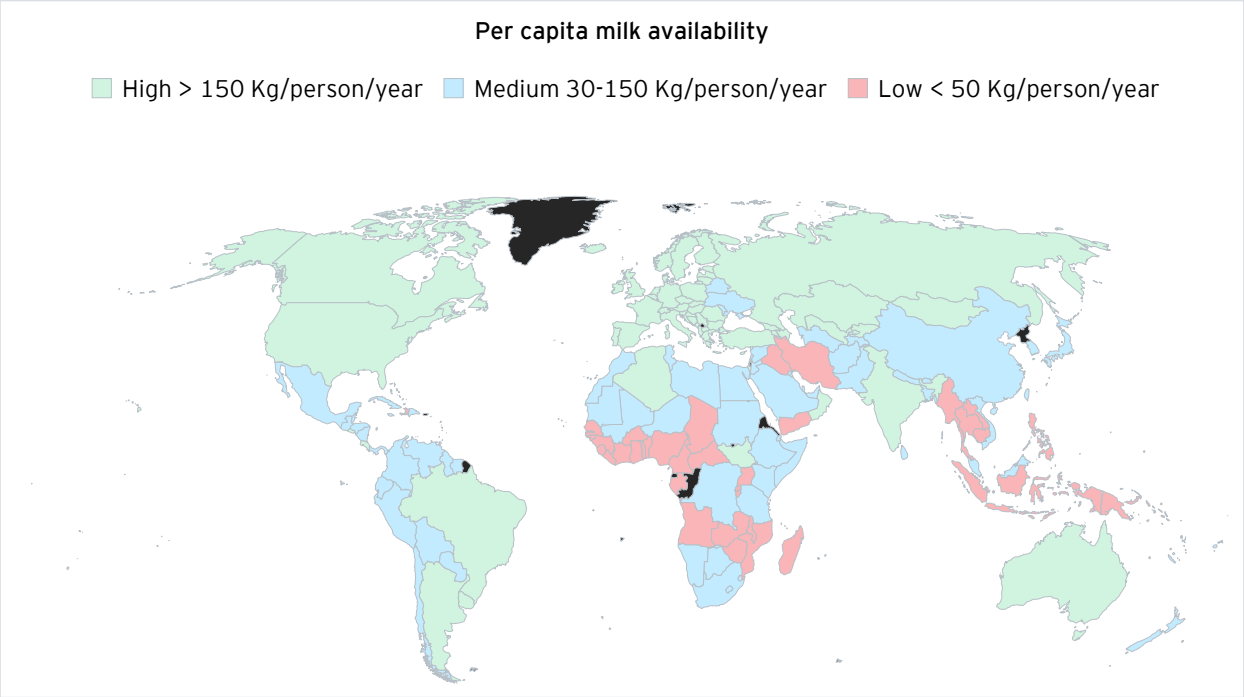


[9] https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/milk-yields-per-animal

1.3 Per capita availability

Globally, milk remains a daily staple for billions of people, yet how much is consumed varies dramatically by geography. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) classifies per-capita supply as high (>150 kg/year) across most of Europe, North America, Argentina and Australia; medium (30–150 kg) in India, Japan, Kenya and much of Latin America; and low (<30 kg) in most of Central Africa and much of East and Southeast Asia. Recent country data illustrate the extremes: Denmark led the world in 2022 at about 396 kg per person[10], while many nations in sub-Saharan Africa remained below the 30 kg threshold. Encouragingly, the historical gap is narrowing as per-capita consumption in developing countries has almost doubled since the 1960s, driven by rising incomes, urbanization and diet diversification.

Figure 6: Global Heat Map of Per-capita Availability



Looking ahead, the **OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2024-2033** projects world per-capita intake of fresh dairy products to **grow roughly 1% a year** over the next decade, with India and Pakistan accounting for the bulk of incremental demand[11]. By contrast, per-capita use in Europe and North America is stable or edging down, as consumers substitute from full-fat drinking milk toward cheese, butter and plant-based alternatives. China offers a cautionary note: its per capita milk intake fell from 14.4 kg in 2021 to 12.4 kg in 2022 amid slower economic growth and a shrinking birth-rate, leaving farms with surplus product and dampening global import demand[12]. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan Africa remains the only region where per-capita consumption has been declining over the past two decades, underscoring persistent nutritional gaps even as overall world demand continues to rise.

[10] https://www.fao.org/dairy-production-products/products/milk-and-milk-products

[11] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2025/07/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2025-2034_3eb15914/full-report/dairy-and-dairy-products_1dd2e5a6.html

[12] https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-dairy-farms-swim-milk-fewer-babies-slow-economy-cut-demand-2024-09-20/

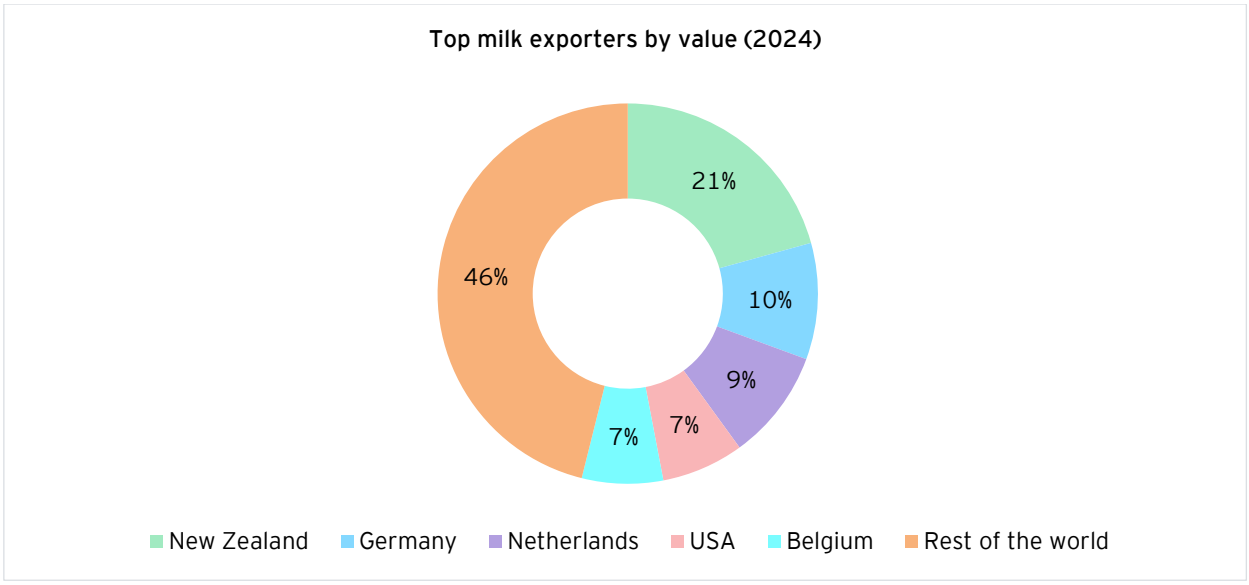
1.4 Global milk trade

Global trade in drinking and concentrated milk (HS 0401 + 0402) was worth about US$33.3 billion in 2024, down 4% from 2023 but still 9.6 percent higher than 2020. Europe supplied just over half of that total, Oceania (essentially New Zealand) a further quarter, with North America, Asia, Latin America and Africa making up the balance. Unsweetened liquid milk made up roughly 38% of trade value, while sweetened or concentrated milk accounted for the remaining 62%[13].

1.4.1 Export side

Five countries dominate the business. New Zealand alone shipped US$6.9 billion (21%) followed by Germany (US$3.3 billion, 9.9%), Netherlands (US$3.1 billion, 9.4%), The US (US$2.33 billion, 7%) and Belgium (US$2.30 billion, 6.9%). Together these five suppliers generated 53.9% of world milk export earnings in 2024. [14]

Figure 7: Top milk exporters

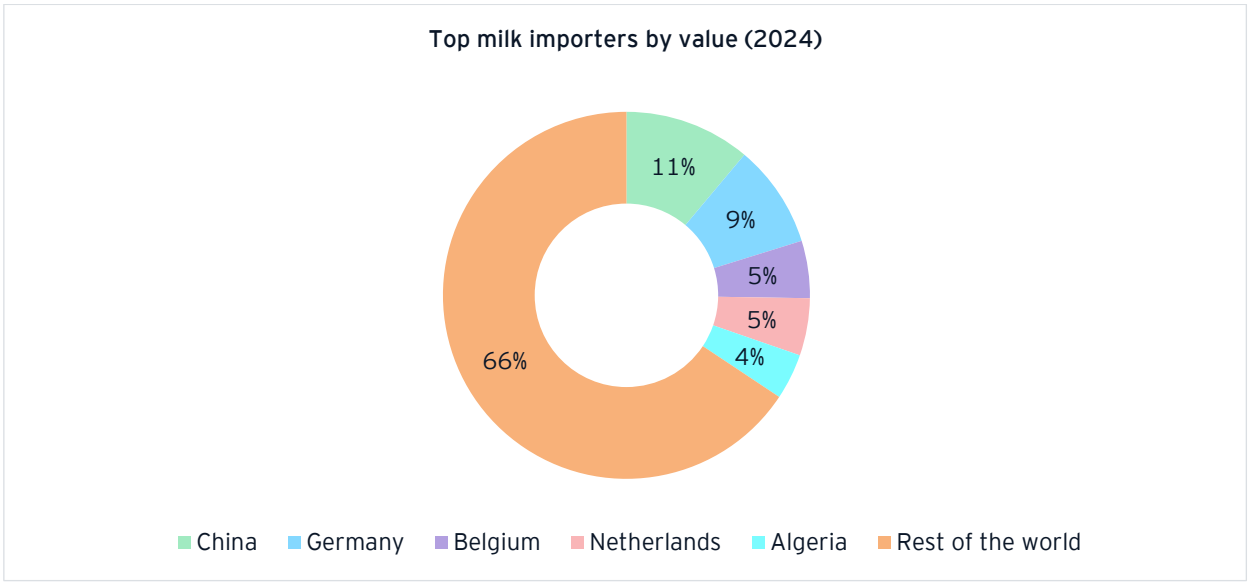


[13] https://www.worldstopexports.com/top-milk-exporting-countries/
[14] https://www.worldstopexports.com/international-markets-for-imported-milk-by-country/

1.4.2 Import side

On the demand front, mainland China remained the single largest market in 2024, buying US$3.8 billion of milk (11.3%) followed by Germany (US$2.9 billion, 8.6%), Belgium (US$1.8 billion, 5.2%), Netherlands (US$1.6 billion, 4.7%) and Algeria (US$1.35 billion, 4%). These top five accounted for 34% of global import expenditure while Asia as a region absorbed 39% of world imports, Europe 40.2% and Africa about 9.7%.[9]

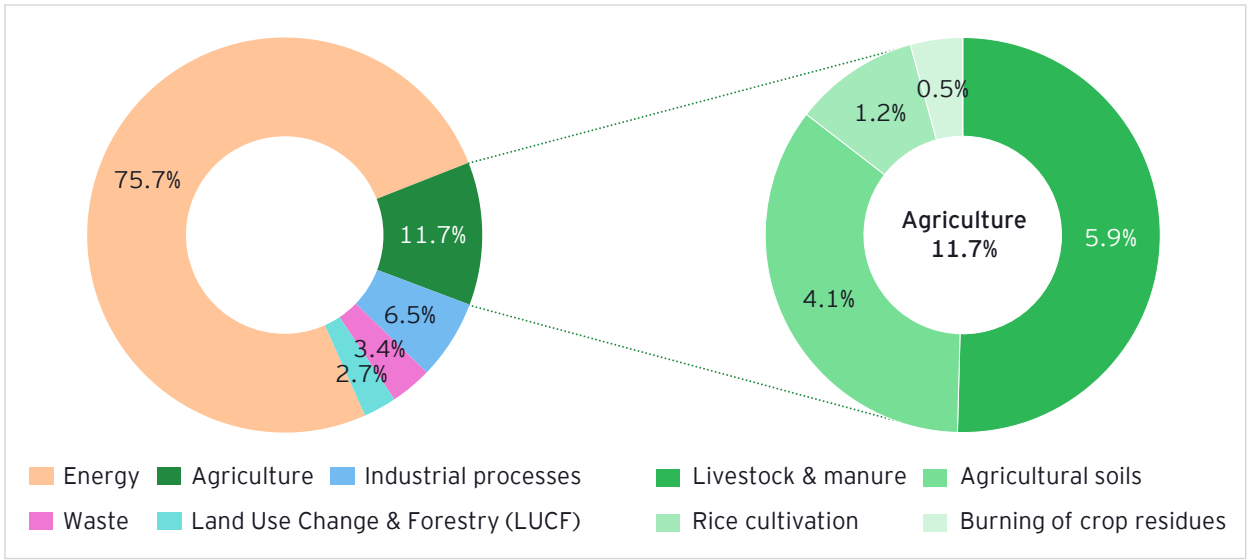
Figure 8: Top milk importers



1.5 Environmental impact

Globally agriculture sector is responsible for 11.7% of all GHG emissions, of which approximately half (5.7% of total) come from livestock and manure alone. By far, methane emission (due to enteric fermentation) is the sector's single biggest climate issue. Not because overwhelming quantities of methane are produced by the sector but more so because the 20-year warming impact of the gas is 80 times that of CO_2 placing it in the category of super pollutants. Thus, cutting down on enteric fermentation is the key to reducing emissions from the sector.

Figure 9: Dairy's contribution in global emissions



Source: WRI

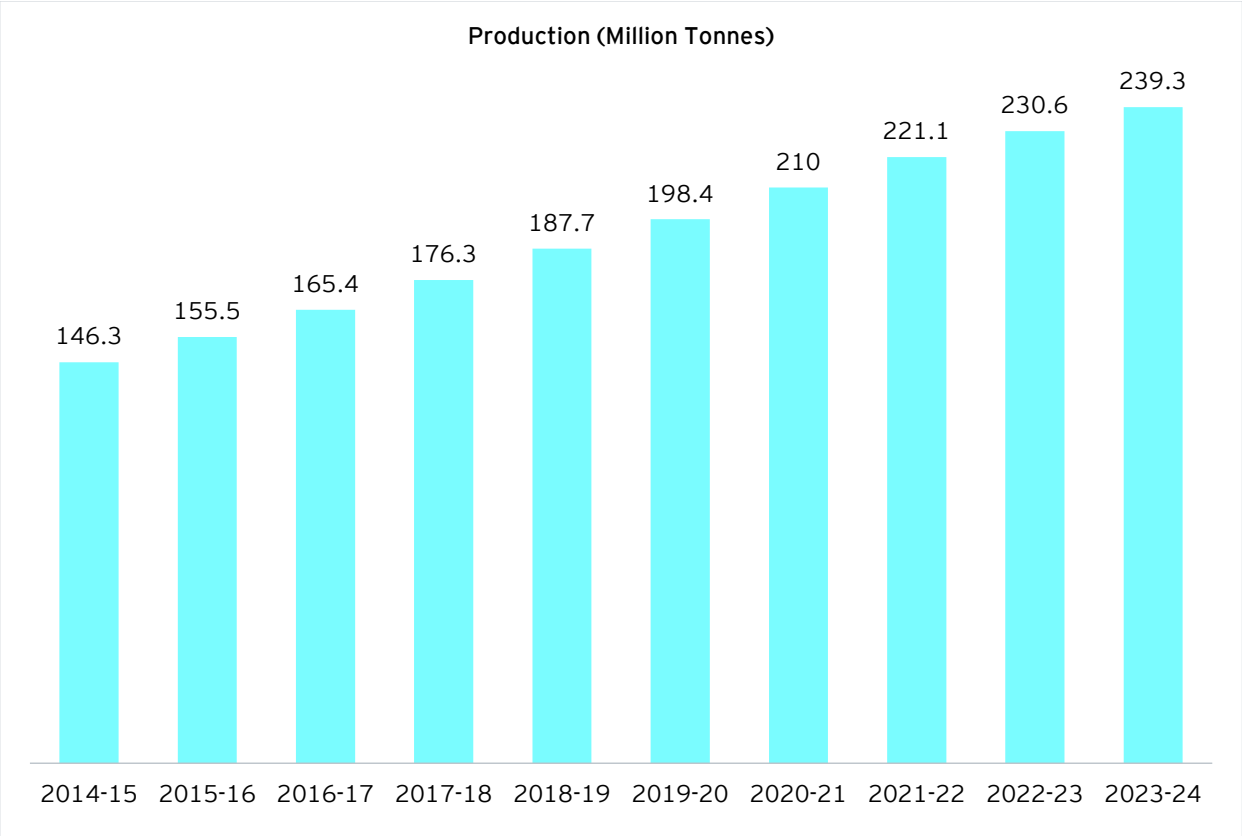
02

Dairy in India

2.1 Production

India produced 239.3 million tons[15] of milk in 2023-24, the largest output of any country and about 24.3% of global production. The sector rests on the world's biggest dairy herd and involves more than 80 million rural households, making milk the single-largest agricultural commodity in terms of value. Output has risen from 146.3 million tons in 2014-15 to 239.3 million tons in 2023-24, exhibiting a ten-year CAGR of 5.7%. This consistent growth faster than the global average has been possible due to consistent interventions including Operation Flood launched 1970, National Dairy Plan, Rashtriya Gokul Mission etc. The sector contributes approximately 5% to the national economy[16].

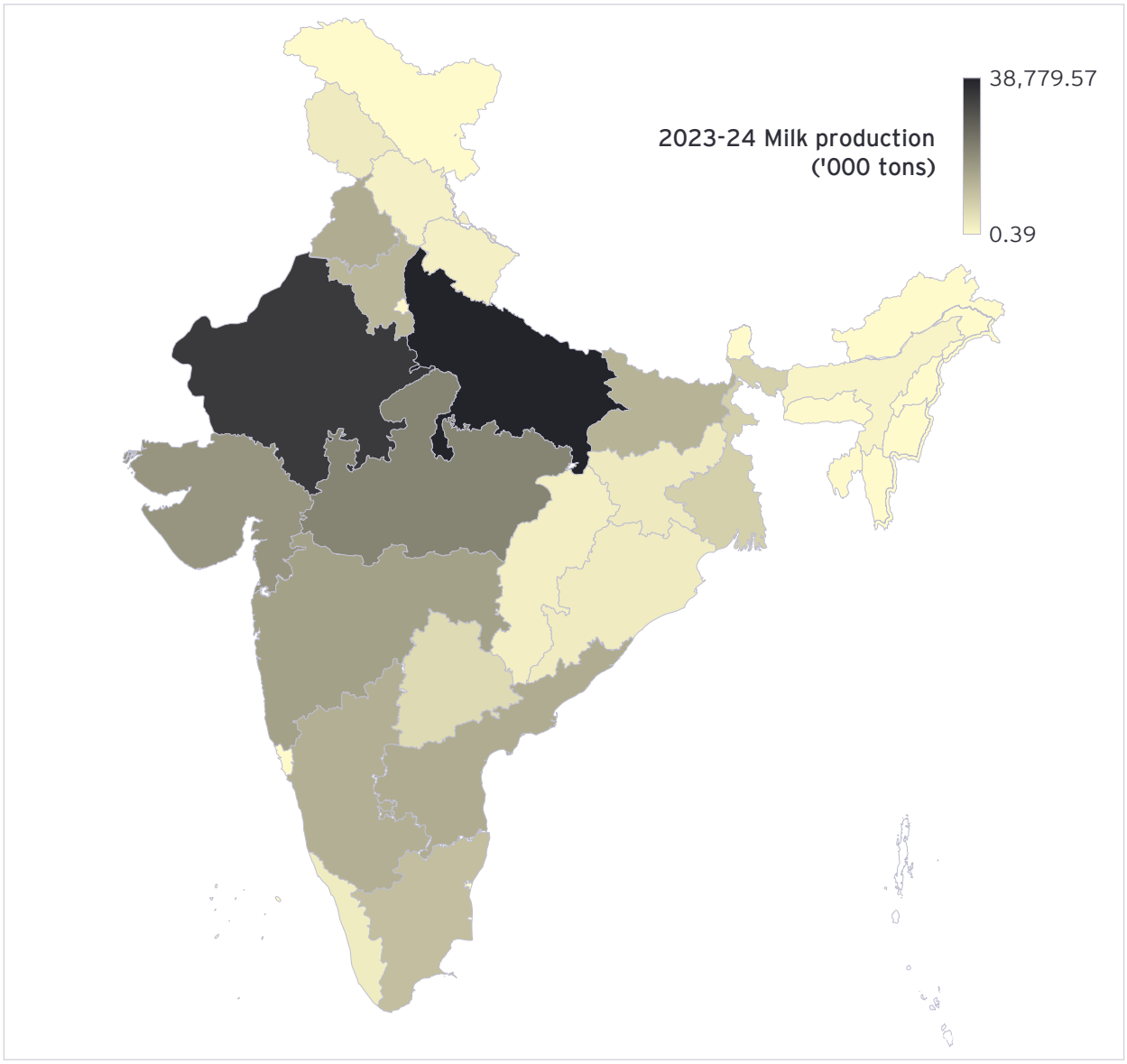
Figure 10: Milk production in India (2014-2024)



[15] https://www.nddb.coop/information/stats/milkprodindia
[16] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2172546

Within the country production is regionally concentrated. In 2023-24 Uttar Pradesh was the largest producer of milk (16.2%) followed by Rajasthan (14.5%), Madhya Pradesh (8.9%), Gujarat (7.7%) and Maharashtra (6.7%). The top five together accounted for over half of India's milk production[17].

Figure 11: National heatmap of milk production volumes



[17] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2077745

2.2 Productivity

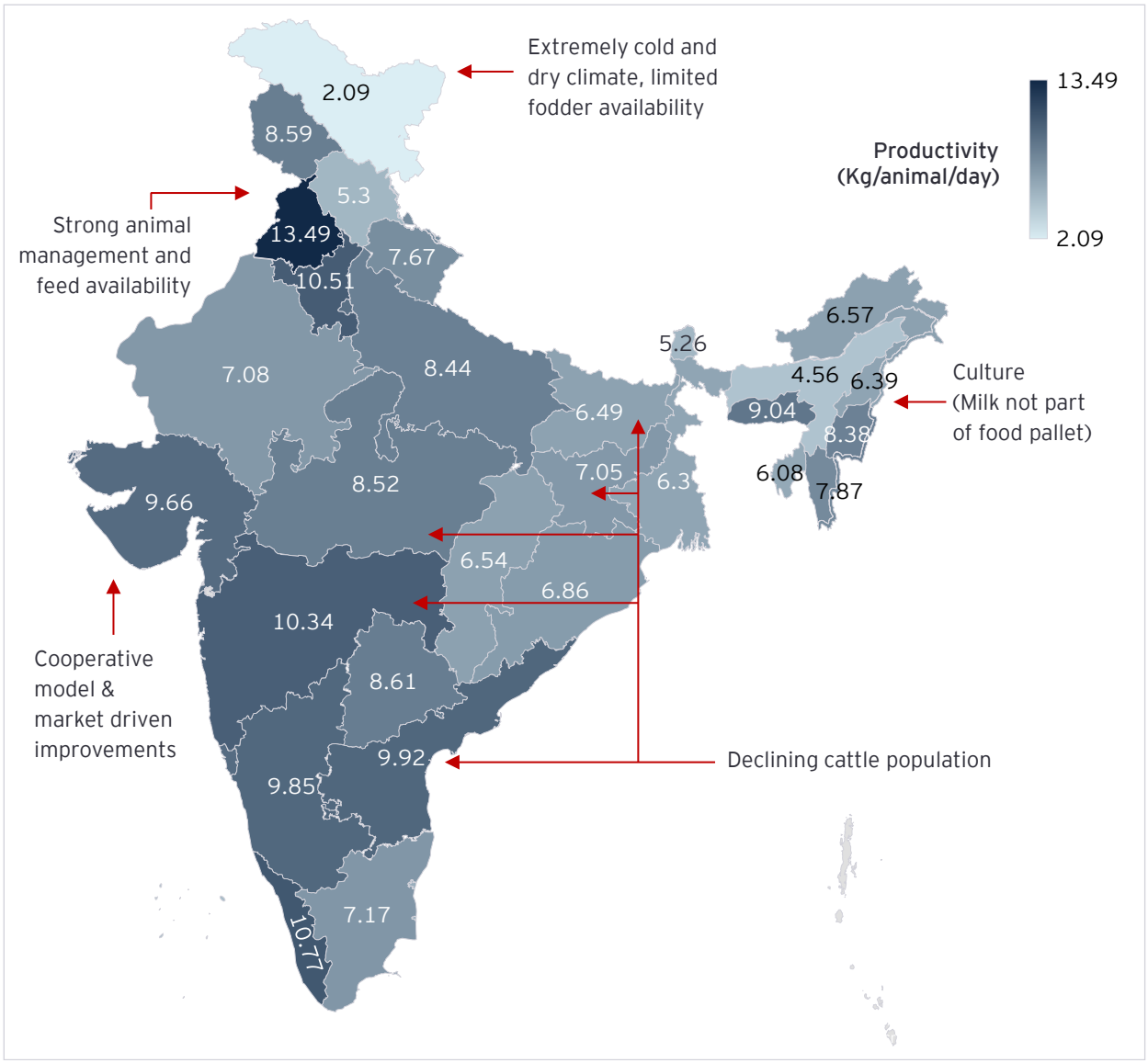
Productivity (annual milk yield per in-milk animal) offers a sharper lens than sheer production volume as it filters out the size of herd or bovine population of the state. Nationally, the average yield in 2023-24 was about 2072[18] Kg per animal per year. Since bovine productivity is shaped by a mix of multiple factors including breed genetics, herd structure, feeding regimes, availability of veterinary and Artificial Insemination (AI) services, animal management, climate, cluster etc. similar to regional variations in total production, productivity also has considerable variation from state to state.

In productivity, Punjab tops the national table with 13.49 kg/animal/day followed by Haryana at 10.51 kg/ animal/day[19]. On the other end of the spectrum, much of the eastern and north-eastern belt still averages below 4 kg across species. Further, India being diverse country a number of varied market and cultural drivers also impact productivity. For example, productivity improvement is driven by cooperatives in western states while in north-eastern states productivity remains low since milk has limited demand in the region as it's not part of the traditional food pallet. It is worth mentioning that the total herd size is shrinking in some states namely, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Bihar even as productivity improves. This indicated a larger share of in-milk animals in herd composition, which is a promising sign.

[18] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2101854

[19] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376799772_Livestock_Production_Statistics_of_India_-_2023

Figure 12: National heatmap of bovine productivity (2024)



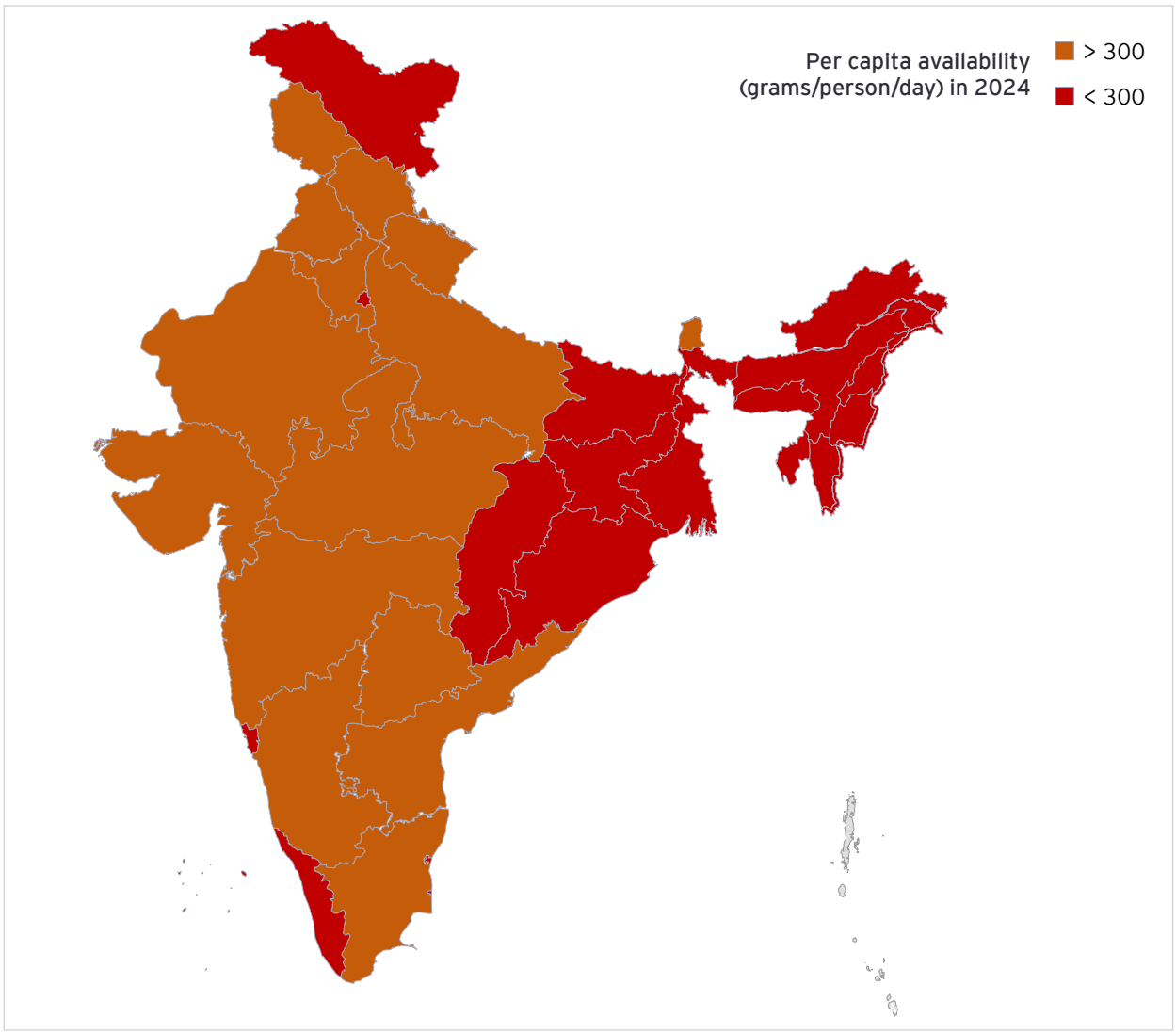
Juxtaposing production and productivity for top ten milk producing states reveals that how high-output leaders such as Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan still lag in per-animal efficiency, whereas some smaller producers like Kerala and Tamil Nadu score highly on productivity despite modest volumes.

2.3 Per capita availability

Per capita availability of milk in India is estimated to be 471 grams/ person/ day in 2023-24 up from 307 grams/ person/ day 15 years ago in 2013-14, rising by 4.37% YoY over the last decade[20].

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recommends daily consumption of 300 grams of milk per individual[21]. Contrasting this with per capita availability reveals that while India as country may be self-sufficient in milk, 22 of its states and UTs (making up 33% of country's population[22]) are consuming less than recommended quantity of milk.

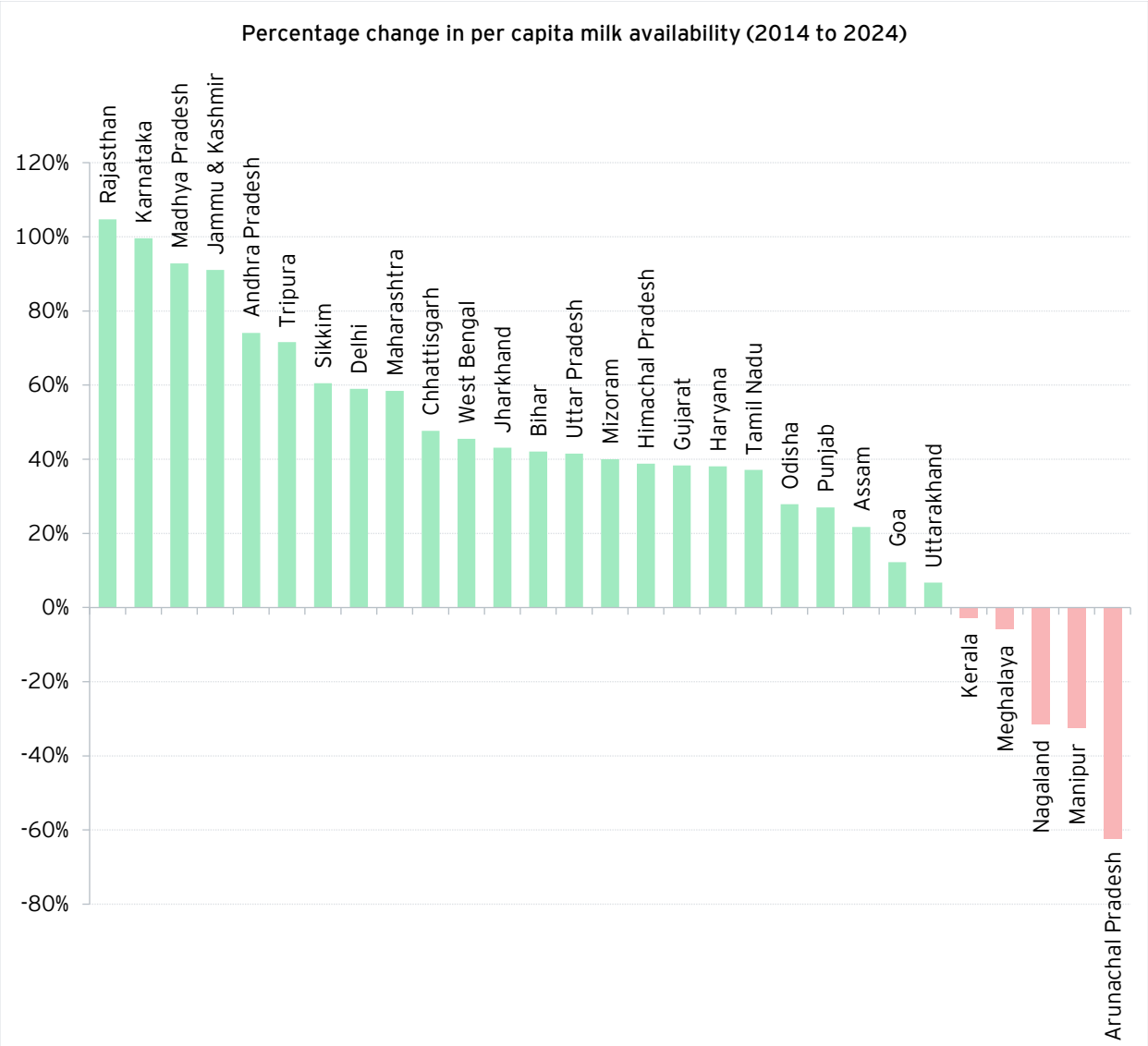
Figure 13: Per capita availability of milk in 2024 - By states



[20] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=151889&ModuleId=
[21] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2101849
[22] Per capita monthly Consumption Expenditure in Milk & Milk Products | nddb.coop

It is notable that the increase in per capita milk availability has not been uniform across the country. While states and Union Territories like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnatak and Jammu and Kashmir have registered over 80% growth in per capita availability since 2014-15, in the same period some states have registered a per capita availability decline[23].

Figure 14: Percentage change in per capita availability of milk 2014 to 2024 (Source: NDDB)



[23] https://www.nddb.coop/sites/default/files/statistics/per_capita_availability_of_milk_by_states_2025.pdf

2.4 Trends in value added products

While traditional products like ghee and curd dominate the market new products such as western style yogurt and flavored milk are growing at a much faster pace. Organic milk remains the fastest growing category with a projected CAGR of 24.6% (2025-2033). The table below presents the market size and growth rate for key product categories in India.

Table 1: Market size and CAGR of major categories of milk-based value-added products (Source: IMARC)

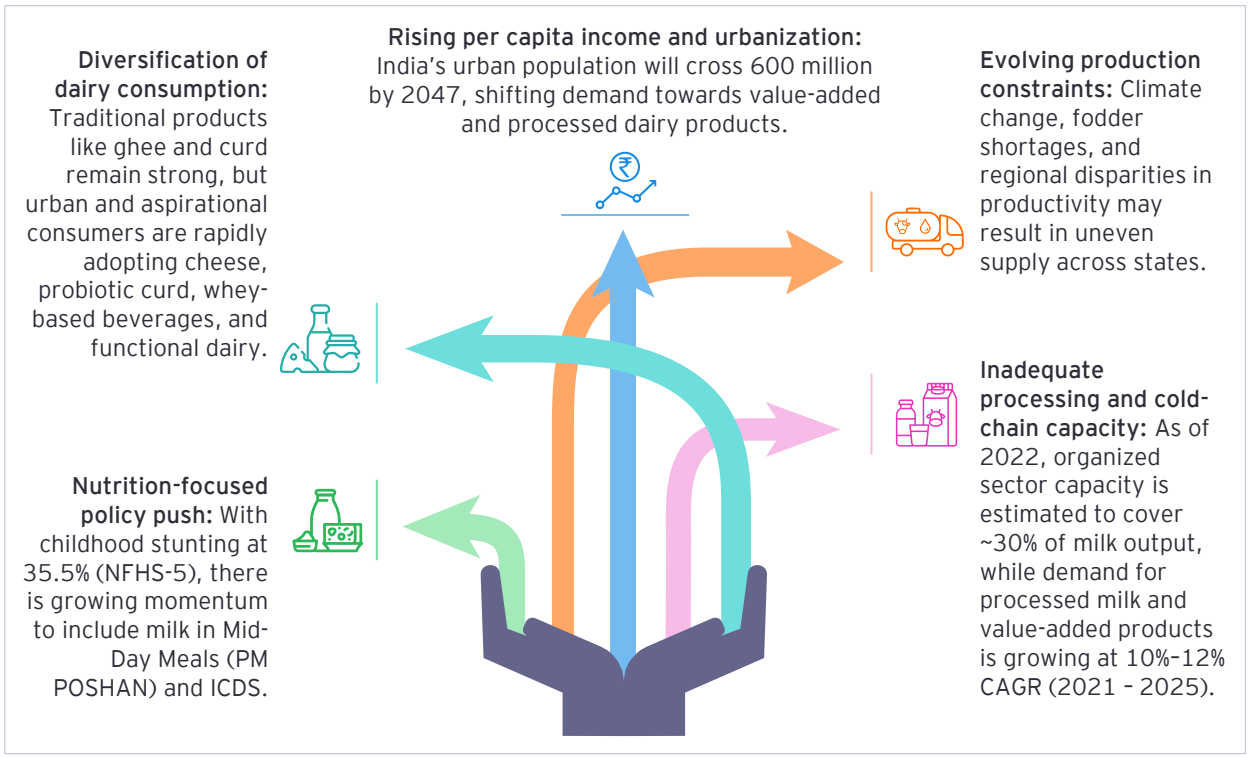
Category	**2024 market size** *(INR crore)*	**CAGR** *(2025-2033)*
Liquid milk	9,94,210	12.7%
Ghee (cow + desi)	3,48,200	8.4%
Ice cream	26,800	16.7%
Skimmed milk powder	16,200	9.1%
A2 milk	11,620	12.1%
Flavored milk	6,330	20.7%
Organic milk	1,291	24.6%
Cream	870	10.8%
Milk shake	760	17.5%
Yogurt (western style)	290	19.7%

The current landscape is shaped by multiple factors acting in tandem. Some trends emerging in the market are:

- **Shift to value-added consumption:** While traditional staples like ghee and curd remain dominant, urban and aspirational consumers are rapidly adopting cheese, probiotic curd, yogurt drinks and whey-based beverages. **Rising per capita incomes and urbanization (600 million-plus urban population by 2047) are driving premiumization** and demand for convenience-oriented, packaged dairy.
- **Health and nutrition as a growth driver:** Government nutrition-focused interventions (Mid-Day Meals, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and high stunting prevalence (35.5% as per National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) fueling demand for milk and fortified dairy products. Functional dairy (probiotics, fortified milk, protein-enriched drinks) is emerging as a distinct growth category.
- **Cold-chain and processing expansion:** Currently, only ~30% of milk output passes through the organized sector[24]. Yet, value-added products are expanding at 10%–12% CAGR (2021–2025)[25], demanding more investment in chilling, processing and last-mile logistics. Investments in cold-chain, automation and extended shelf-life technologies (e.g., Ultra high temperature, aseptic packaging) are reshaping supply capacity.
- **Regional disparities in productivity:** Southern and western states lead in processing capacity, while northern and eastern states still have fragmented, informal supply chains[26].
- **Diversification and premiumization:** Segments like cheese, ice cream (INR26,800 crore) and flavored milk (INR6,330 crore) are growing steadily, with a double-digit CAGR[27]. There is increasing launch of premium Stock Keeping Unit (SKUs): artisanal cheese, organic milk, probiotic drinks, high-protein dairy.
- **Threat of dairy analogues:** Plant-based alternatives (soy, almond, oat milk, vegan cheese/ice cream) are entering urban markets, posing substitution risks in metros. Although niche today, these categories are being backed by venture funding and are capturing young, health-conscious consumers.
- **Export and processing opportunity:** Rising demand in West Asia, Africa and South-East Asia for Indian ghee, paneer and skimmed milk powder can open export opportunities[28]. Aligning with global quality and Codex/ISO standards will be crucial for India to capture these export markets.

[24] https://gcwgandhinagar.com/econtent/document/15880675151FSTSE0601_StatusOfDairyIndustryInIndiaAndItsFutureScope.pdf
[25] https://blog.sathguru.com/food-and-retail/how-modern-dairy-products-are-replenishing-the-dairy-market-in-india/
[26] https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2025/3/43558.pdf
[27] https://www.imarcgroup.com/flavoured-milk-market-india
[28] https://www.dsir.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-10/AF_Animals_Milk_Dairy_Intro_0.pdf

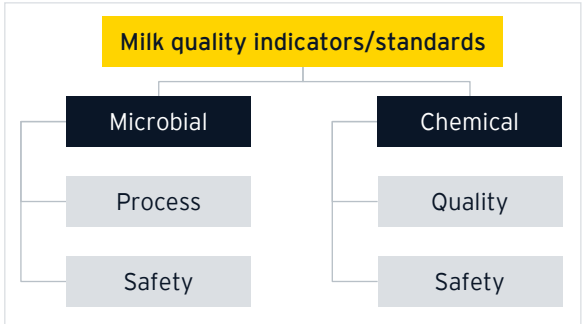
Figure 15: Factors impacting domestic consumption of milk-based value-added products



2.5 Quality standards – Indian vs. International

Milk quality standards are critical for safeguarding consumer health, ensuring consistency in processing and unlocking the sector's vast export potential. On the global stage, only milk and dairy products meeting internationally benchmarked standards can access high-value markets, where even minor lapses can lead to trade rejections and long-term credibility losses. Thus, strengthening milk quality protocols is central to positioning India as a reliable supplier in the global dairy value chain. Broadly milk quality standards/indicators can be grouped into four categories.

Figure 16: Flowchart of categories of milk quality indicators



2.5.1 Benchmarking India's performance on quality standards to global norms

A comparative analysis of quality standards for milk in India (as set by FSSAI) and international standards (EU standards) is presented in the table below. The analysis reveals that India quality standards for most variables are similar to those followed globally and, in some cases, even more stringent (example: Coliform count). An exception to this is the India standard higher limit for antibiotic residue. India standards allow for up-to 10 micro-grams/ kg of milk which is double the internationally acceptable norm. Revision of these standards to reflect global market norms will be a critical step in promoting dairy exports.

With respect to compliance with set standards, the results obtained during a stress-test conducted by FSSAI revealed that while chemical standards are being met, the dairy industry is failing to meet both microbial process and microbial safety standards, with more samples violating microbial process standards viz-a-viz microbial safety standards.

Table 2: Comparative analysis of India vs international milk quality standards - select parameters

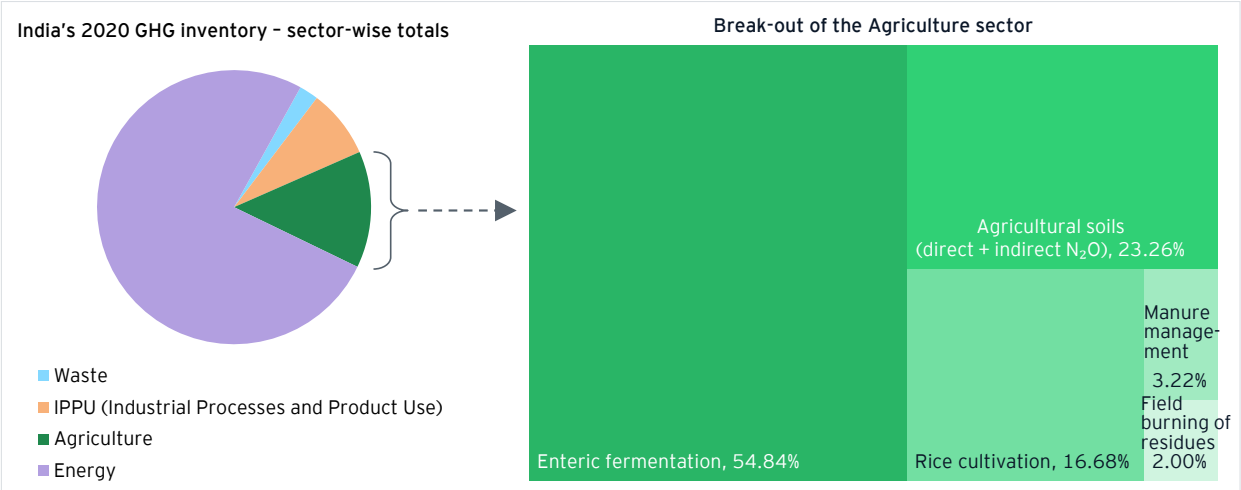
	Parameter	Indian standards[29]	International standards	FSSAI product-survey result*
Process Hygiene	**Aerobic plate count** (Process-hygiene)	5 × 10^4 cfu/ml	5 x 10^5 cfu/mL[30]	27.3% samples above limit
	Coliform count	10 cfu/ml	5 cfu/mL[20]	18.2 % samples above limit
Microbial Safety	**Listeria monocytogenes** (Pathogen)	Absence in 25 g	Absence in 25 g[20]	1.2 % samples above limit
	Salmonella spp. (Pathogen)	Absence in 25 ml	Absence in 25 ml[31]	0.53% samples above limit
Chemical Safety	**Aflatoxin M1** (AFM1)	Not yet enforced	0.05 µg kg^{-1}[32]	Regulatory gap
	Antibiotic residues (Samples – Ampicillin)	10 µg kg^{-1}	5 µg kg^{-1}[22]	Samples compliant to Indian standards
	Pesticide residues	0.01–0.05 mg/kg	0.01 mg/kg[33]	Samples compliant to Indian standards

Survey done during Diwali 2020

2.6 Emissions

India emitters 2,959 million tons of CO2 equivalent of GHG every year, of which 406 million tons or 13.72% are attributable to the agricultural sector.[34] Within the agricultural sector pie, enteric fermentation is responsible for the largest share of GHG emissions making up 54.84% of total emissions[35]. Thus, enteric fermentation or dairy is responsible for roughly about 7.52% of the country's GHG emissions while contributing 4.5% to its economy or GDP[36].

Figure 17: GHG emission in India split by sector (2020)[37]



[29] https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Report_of.pdf
[30] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32005R2073
[31] https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%3A%2F%2Fworkspace.fao.org%2Fsites%2Fcodex%2FStandards%2FCXC%2B1-1969%2FCXC_001e.pdf
[32] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1881\
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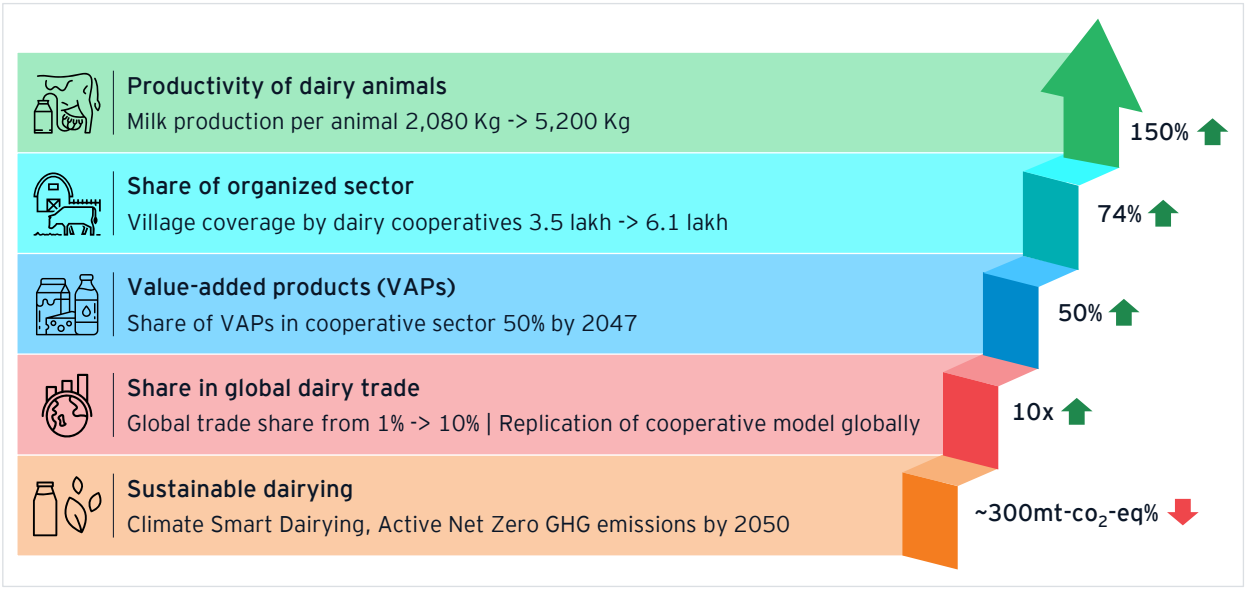
[34] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=153647&ModuleId=3
[35] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/India%20BUR-4.pdf
[36] https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/chapter/chapter-2/
[37] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/India%20BUR-4.pdf

2.7 2047 targets

India's dairy sector targets are aspirational. As India completes 100 years of Independence the country aspires to scale productivity per animal by a factor of 2.5X while increasing organized sector presence, value addition and share in global trade and decreasing emissions. 2047 targets are presented below:

Figure 18: 2047 dairy sector targets[38, 39]



[38] https://www.icar.org/Documents/Anand2025/PPTs/2_April/1.%20Ppt_Symposium_Jignesh%20Shah_01.04.25_Indian%20Dairy%20Sector_ICARIDFISO.pdf

[39] https://beta.nddb.coop/vision-2047

03

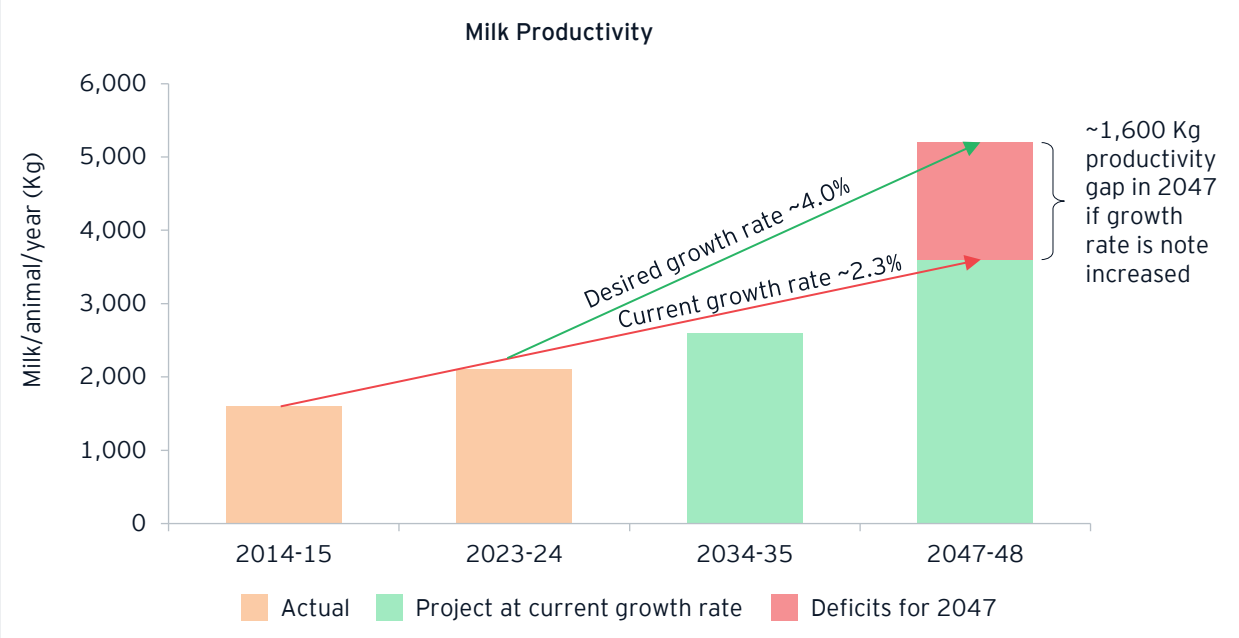
A deep dive into **bovine productivity**

3.1 Why scaling productivity is critical

With India's milk demand projected to rise significantly, driven by rising population, urbanization and income growth and pressure on feed and fodder resources increasing, enhancing productivity is a national imperative. An increase in productivity will help ensure nutritional security, reduce per-liter GHG emissions, contribute to doubling farmer incomes and improve India's competitiveness in global dairy trade.

As the adjoining graphic illustrates, during the last decade bovine productivity in India has improved ~2.3% YoY, continuing at the same rate of growth will result in a ~1,600 kg productivity gap in 2047. Thus, to meet 2047 productivity target of 5,200 Kg per animal per year, bovine productivity needs to grow 1.8x faster than its current growth rate at ~4% per year.

Figure 19: Milk productivity growth rates - current and desired



3.2 Factors of bovine productivity

Per animal milk production depends on a constellation of factors. Animal genetics, breeding, farm and animal management, vaccination, animal healthcare and welfare, feed management, climatic factors, governance, data availability and farmer's behavior all are directly or indirectly responsible for bovine productivity in a dairy ecosystem.

These factors can be broadly grouped into four categories:

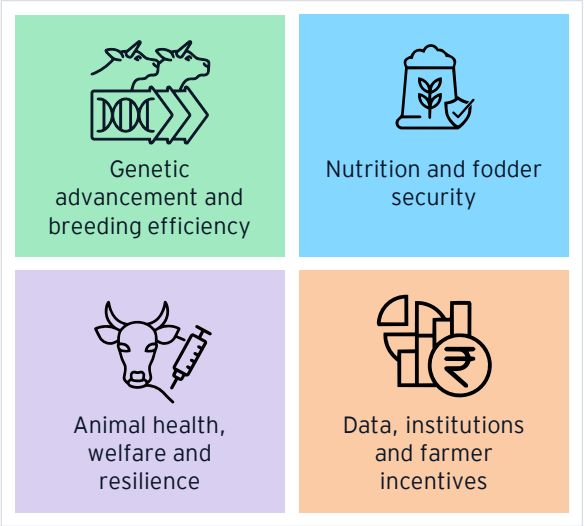
A. Genetic Advancement and Breeding Efficiency

B. Nutrition and Fodder Security

C. Animal Health, Welfare and Resilience

D. Data, Institutions and Farmer Incentives

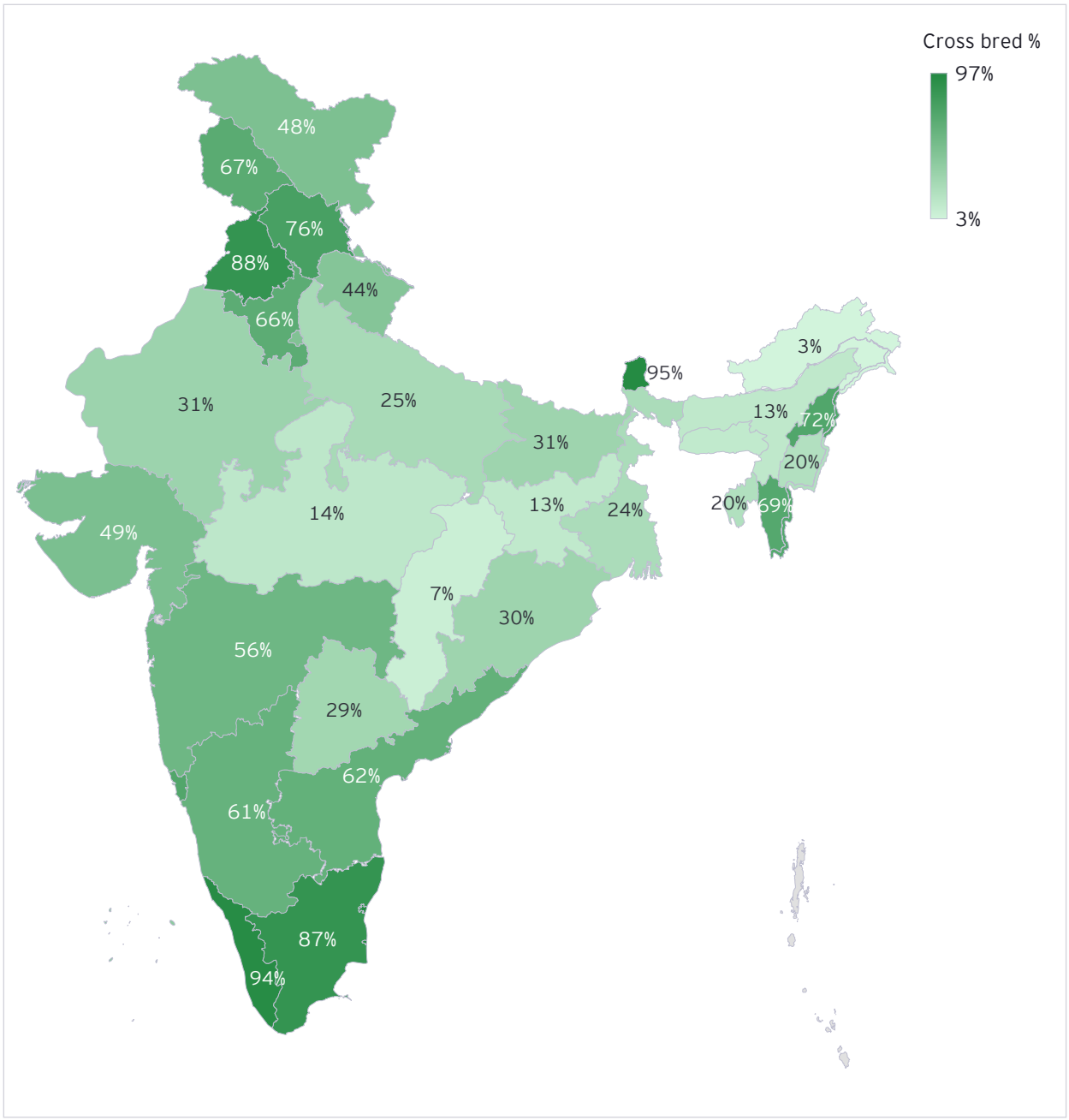
Figure 20: Pillars of bovine productivity improvement



3.2.1 Genetic advancement and breeding efficiency

Milk yield begins with the cow's genetic ceiling or potential. India's low milk productivity per animal is a direct consequence of poor genetic potential and suboptimal breeding practices. Over 65% of breedable bovines are not covered by Artificial Insemination (AI)[40] and only a fraction of AI services uses sex-sorted semen or genomic bulls. Even in areas with AI coverage, conception rates remain below 35%[41] and tracking of sires or progeny is inconsistent. Lack of access to advanced reproductive technologies, poor record-keeping and limited awareness among smallholders have further constrained genetic gains. The limited coverage of AI in breeding is reflected in the percentage of crossbred animals by states. Additionally other ARTs (Assisted Reproductive Technologies) such as Embryo transfer technologies also need to be encouraged.

Figure 21: Percentage of crossbred animals - By state



[40] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2172546
[41] https://www.nddb.coop/services/animalbreeding/animalreproduction/ai

3.2.2 Nutrition and fodder security

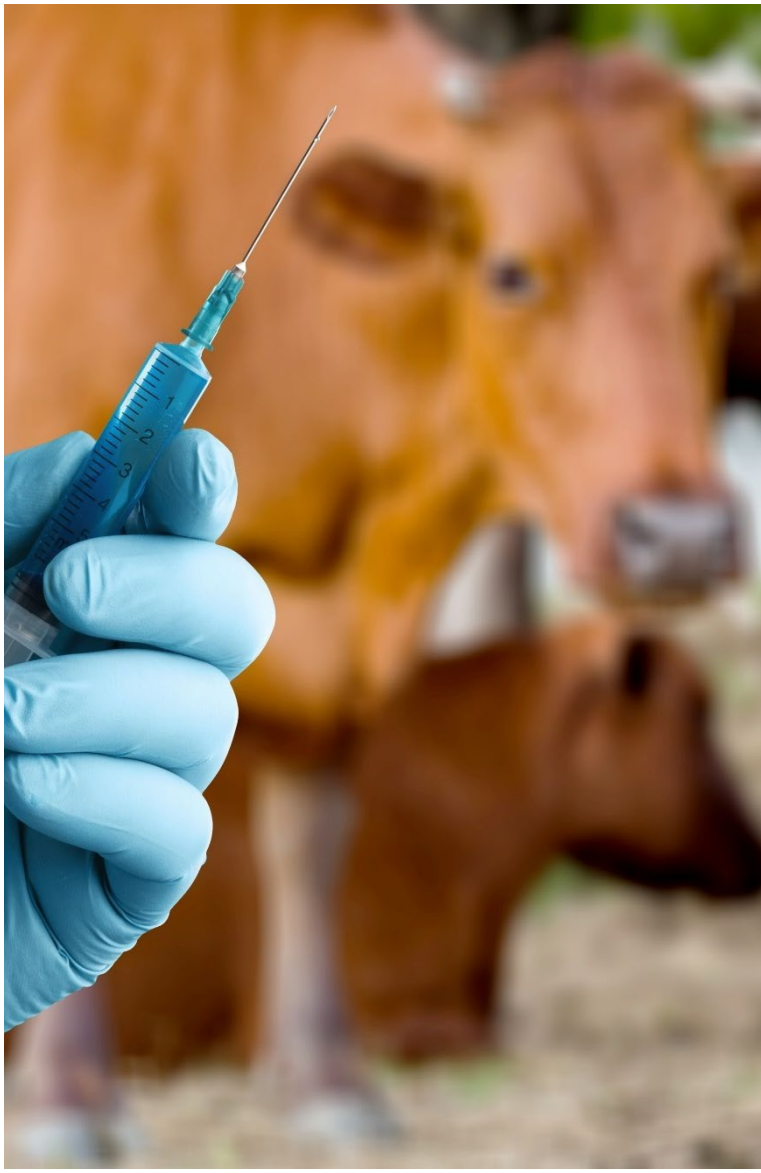
Feed quality and balance dictate how much of that genetic potential is expressed or realized. Feed and fodder constitute over 60%–70% of the total cost of milk production in India yet a significant portion of dairy animals continue to face chronic undernutrition, particularly in lean seasons. The country faces an overall green fodder deficit of ~23%, dry fodder deficit of ~10% and concentrate feed deficit of ~31%[42]. These deficits result in poor body condition scores, reduced milk yields, low conception rates and increased susceptibility to disease. Most farmers rely on crop residues, which are low in nutritional value and unbalanced. Access to quality silage, Total Mixed Ration (TMR) and mineral supplements remain minimal outside organized farms. Moreover, India also lacks region-specific fodder balance plans, structured fodder markets, or last-mile distribution systems for processed feed.

3.2.3 Animal health, welfare and resilience

The productivity of dairy animals is intricately linked to their health and welfare. Diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS) and endo/ ecto-parasite infestations are among the top contributors to reduced milk yield, infertility and early culling in Indian dairy herds. As per DAHD estimates, FMD alone causes productivity losses worth INR24,000 crore annually. Yet, vaccination coverage remains patchy, veterinary access is limited and disease surveillance is weak across some states. Moreover, rising climate variability has begun to severely impact animal welfare. Heat stress, driven by increasing frequency of heatwaves and erratic monsoons, lowers feed intake, milk yield and fertility and most dairy sheds lack basic thermal insulation or summer cooling mechanisms, leaving animals exposed to avoidable distress.

3.2.4 Data, institutions and farmer incentives

Finally, productivity increases when information and rewards reach the dairy farm. Digital animal IDs (e.g., Pashu Aadhaar) are enabling traceable genetics and help maintain precise health records while organized sector and cooperatives can aggregate volumes, reduce input prices and extend vaccination and veterinary coverage. Lastly, price-linked incentives such as bonuses can translate technical gains into farm cash-flow, for example, investing in productivity improving interventions.

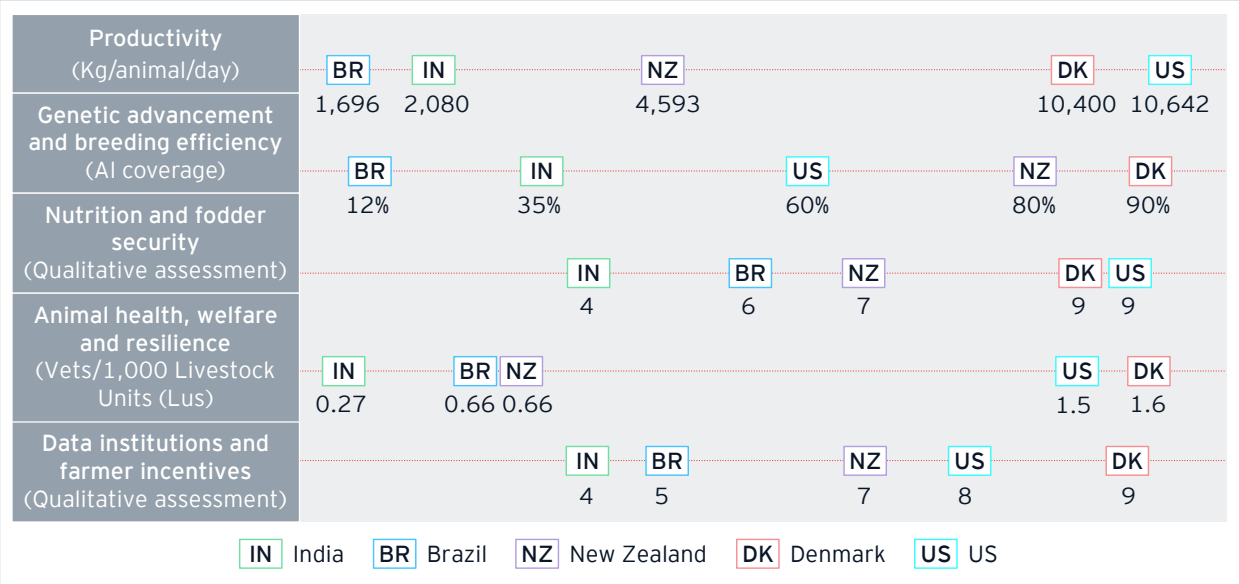


42 https://sansad.in/getFile/annex/268/AU1187_M8CBve.pdf

3.3 India vis-à-vis other countries

To benchmark India vis-à-vis other countries on the four categories of factors impacting productivity, proxy variables for each of the four broad categories of factors were identified and a sub-set of five countries (USA, Denmark, Brazil, India and New Zealand) was selected. The results are presented in the infographic below.

Figure 22: India vis-a-vis selected countries on factors impacting bovine productivity (EY analysis on secondary data)



It is notable that while India is the leading producer of milk in the world the sector does not lead globally in any of the five key drivers critical to value realization, thus our current position is that of volume leaders and not value leaders, making it critical to align development priorities to value realization and volume sustenance.

3.4 Inter-state disparities in dairy ecosystem

For meaningful planning in the dairy sector, it is essential to not just view individual factors discussed above in isolation and instead assess how they interact as part of a larger ecosystem. AI coverage, vaccination, presence of organized sector, processing infrastructure and per capita consumption cannot be viewed in isolation of each other as they are not stand-alone indicators and each exerts a push or pull on the others, collectively shaping bovine productivity outcomes. Further, to determine the areas or interventions where public investment shall be focused, it is critical to identify limiting factors. For instance, in a particular dairy industry ecosystem, while AI, vaccination and demand may be very high, the lack of organized collection may be limiting the potential value creation in the sector, while in another, poor AI coverage might be the culprit. The following analysis for four selected states attempts to present an overall ecosystem picture of the dairy sector in different states across India and to bring out the interplay (push or pull) of factors on each other.

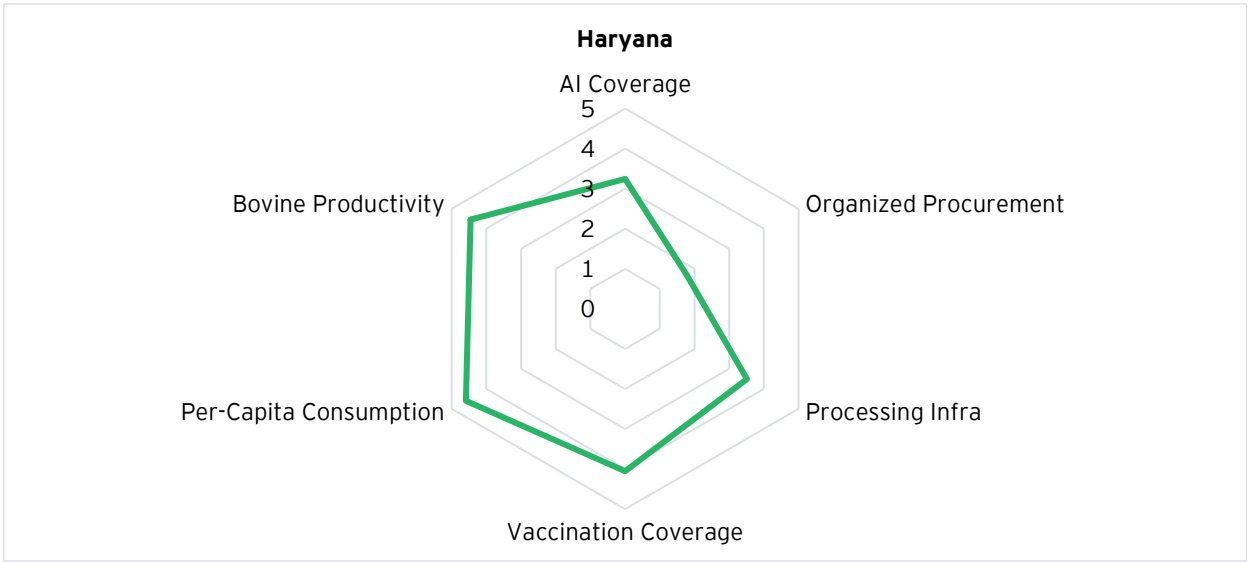
3.4.1 Methodology

The following analysis has been performed using data available through Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics (BAHS), 2024. Six indicators were selected on which all state and UTs across India were ranked. The ranks were then converted to a five-point scale (Rank 1 was given 5 points and Rank 36 was given 0 points). The selected indicators are, AI coverage (Number of Ais performed/ Bovine population), Organized Procurement (Organized procurement/ Total milk production), Processing Infrastructure (Sum of number of milk processing factories and liquid milk plants), Vaccination coverage (Number of vaccination/ Bovine population) and Bovine productivity (Average yield per in-milk animal). Results for selecting four states have been discussed below.

3.4.2 Haryana

Haryana presents a mixed picture. While the state outperforms in bovine productivity and per-capita availability of milk the same is not true in terms of AI coverage, Organized procurement and processing. The lack of organized procurement is partly explained by the high in-house consumption of milk across the state driven by dietary preferences and culture. Similarly, since organized procurement remains limited, consistent supply for processing industry is difficult and partly explains the moderate performance of the state in terms of processing infrastructure availability. Future development plans for the state shall focus on ARTs (Assisted Reproductive Technologies) including artificial insemination, use of sex-sorted semen, embryo transfer, in-vitro transfer, etc. to improve productivity and increase **marketable surplus**.

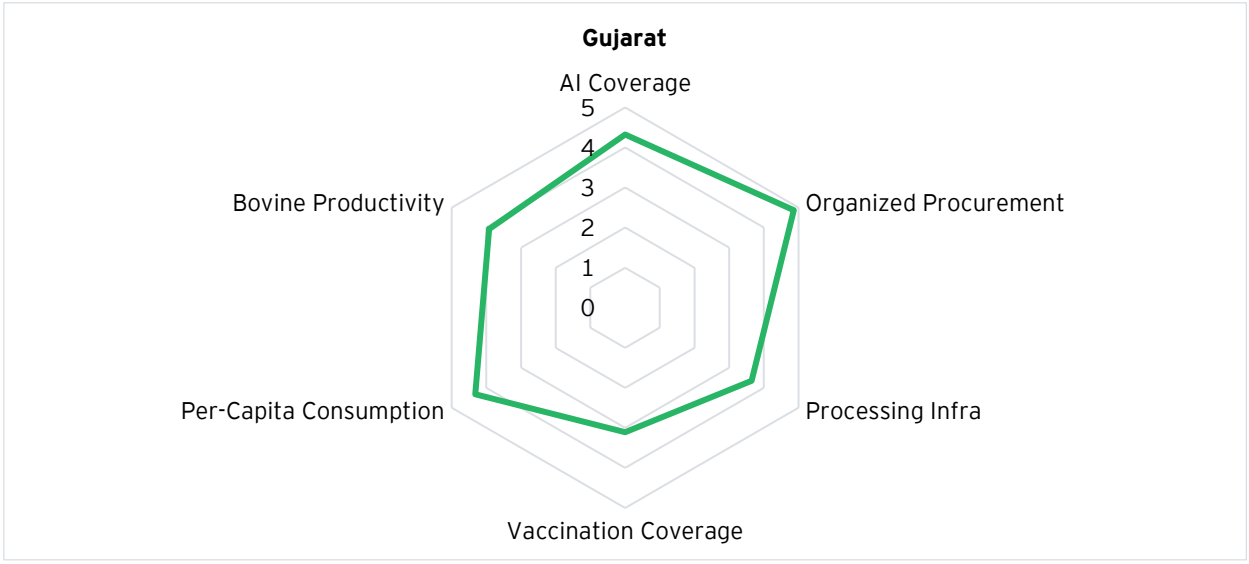
Figure 23: Spiderweb with relative score for Haryana



3.4.3 Gujarat

Gujarat has one of the most well-rounded dairy ecosystems across the country. Driven by a long history of strong performance of milk cooperatives in the state, the share of organized procurement is the highest across the nation. Led by the services extended by the cooperatives to its member farmers, AI coverage in the state is also promising. However, vaccination coverage in the state has some scope for improvement. **The strong reach of cooperatives to virtually every dairy farmer in the state makes a case for Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) for vaccination delivery in the state.**

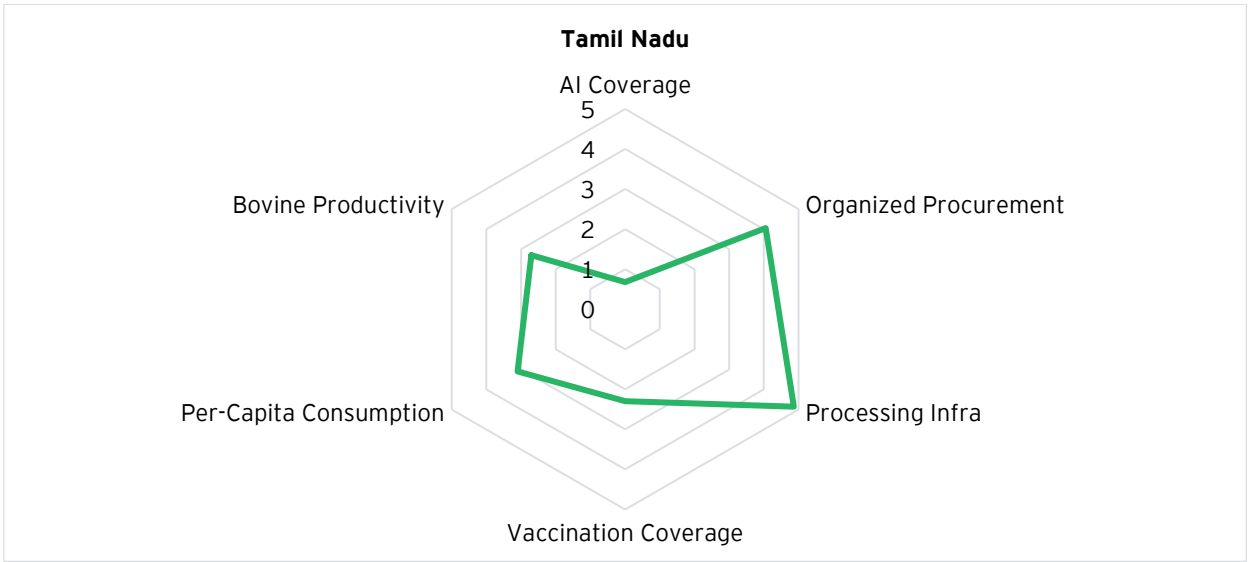
Figure 24: Spiderweb with relative score for Gujarat



3.4.4 Tamil Nadu

The state leads the country in terms of availability of dairy processing infrastructure (that is likely driving organized procurement). Despite being a large state Tamil Nadu registered the worst per animal milk production numbers in the region at 7.17 kg/ animal/ day. Further, AI and vaccination coverage (both indicative of farmer's willingness to invest in dairy) are poor and detailed analysis is required to bring out the reasons for the same. **Dairy development plans for the state shall be based on two mail pillars, genetic improvement through ARTs and animal disease management.**

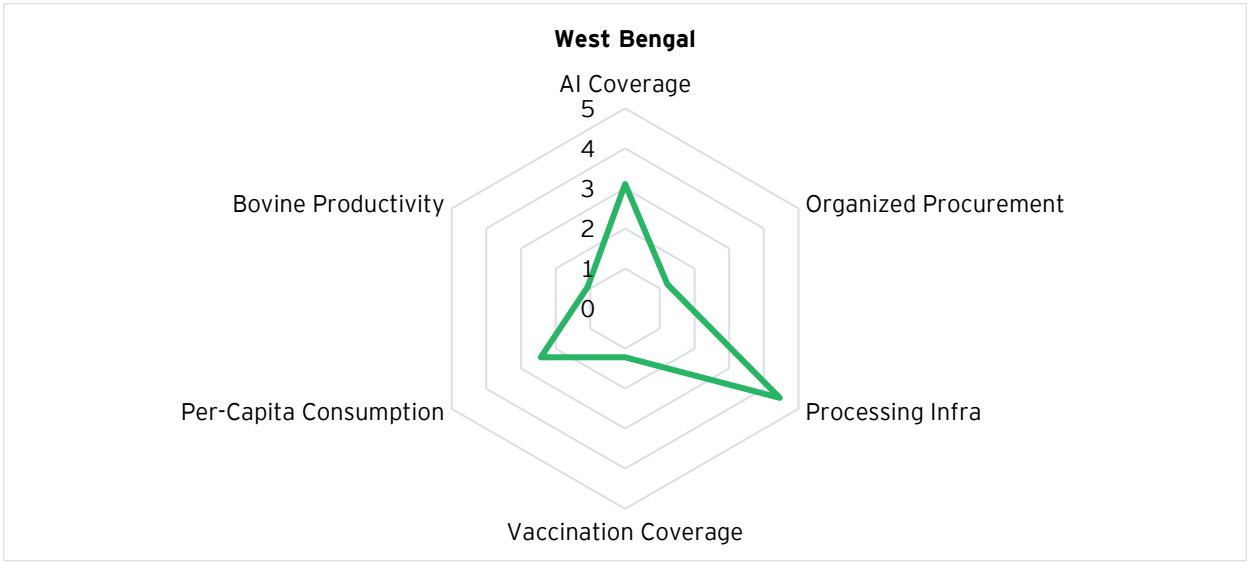
Figure 25: Spiderweb with relative score for Tamil Nadu



3.4.5 West Bengal

Unlike in the case of Tamil Nadu where the presence of processing infrastructure is driving organized procurement despite poor productivity, in case of West Bengal organized procurement is low indicating that most of the dairy processing infrastructure in the state is underutilized. The lack of vaccination and AI coverage need to be viewed in correlation to the poor productivity of animals and lack of organized procurement. As productivity remains low, marketable surplus remains virtually inexistant and the typical dairy farmers' earnings remain low, leaving them with little scope to make investments in the animals' health and breed improvement of his/her herd. Poor heard structure (lack of cross-breeds and exotics), lack of scientific feeding (use of Total Mixed Ration, Silage, Concentrates) and limited investments in animal health management are the likely causes of poor productivity of milch animals in the state. Thus, **development strategy for the state could focus on improving feeding and animal nutrition which can result in immediate short-term gains. In parallel dairy farmers could be incentivized to invest the surplus cash being generated in animal vaccination and bread improvement.**

Figure 26: Spiderweb with relative score for West Bengal



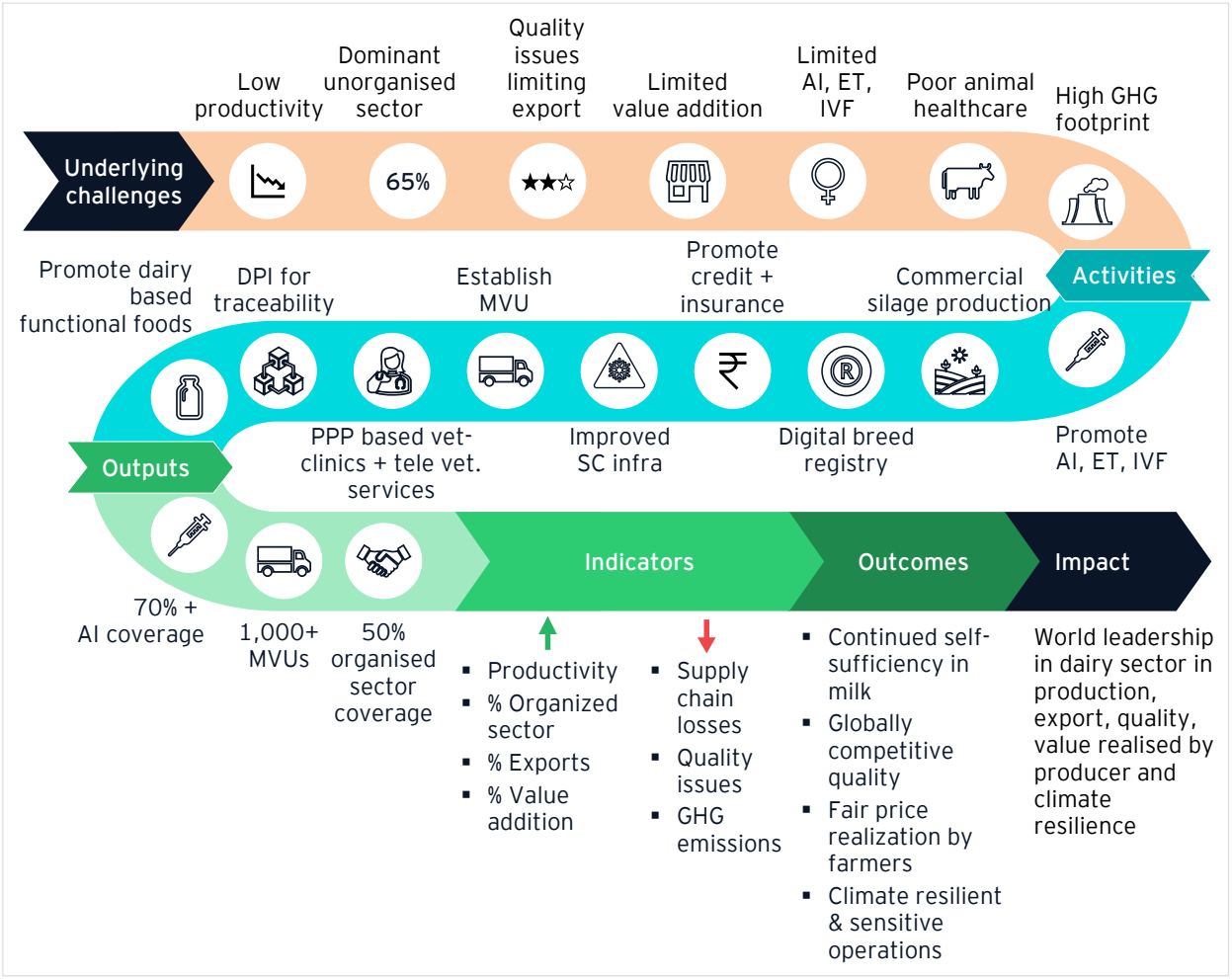
04

From volume to value: strategies for dairy development in India

4.1 Theory of change

The next frontier of **growth in Indian dairy lies not in expanding herd size or volume, but in systematically improving productivity** and global competitiveness. This will require a deliberate shift toward market-driven, climate-smart and inclusive strategies that can address underlying challenges of low productivity, dominant unorganized sector, quality issues, limited value addition, fodder shortages and high GHG emissions etc. while meeting the nation's aspirational targets of improving productivity by 2.5X and global trade by 10X among others[43]. Applying a theory of change lens to this context, has allowed us to come up with specific strategies/recommendations that can transform the dairy industry landscape in India. Some recommendations are presented below.

Figure 27: Theory of Change



[43] India aims for 10% share in global exports by 2047 - The Economic Times

4.2 Genetic advancement and breeding efficiency

Genetic improvement is a long-gestation but high-impact lever. International evidence shows that each generation of superior breeding can improve milk yield by 4%–5%, improve feed efficiency and reduce disease susceptibility. For India to double its per-animal productivity by 2047, genetic advancement must be positioned as the bedrock of transformation, grounded in science, supported by digital tools and made accessible to small and marginal dairy farmers across states.

Specific strategies may include:

- **Increasing AI coverage from current ~25% to 75%** of breedable bovine population and lead to >55% conception rate through improved training, semen quality and doorstep delivery models.
- **Setting up one In Vitro Fertilization (IVT) / Embryo Transfer (ET) facility per high-density dairy district** and ensuring 25% of total breeding are conducted through sex-sorted semen and at least 10% through IVF/ET.
- **Creating an integrated Digital Breed Registry** covering 100% of AI and IVF services, linked to Bharat Pashudhan and accessible to farmers and service providers via a centralized livestock mobile app.
- **Conducting genomic evaluation of all breeding bulls** under central and state programs and certifying 100% of bulls used for AI by genetic merit, eliminating the use of uncertified bulls in AI by 2035.
- **Promoting community bull programs** through establishment of more than 10,000 community bull units in difficult-to-reach areas by 2030, using genetically superior bulls.
- Develop and scale a voluntary **national animal productivity certification system** with digital tagging.

Table 3: Strategic interventions – Genetic advancement and breeding efficiency

Pillar	Interventions	Targets 2030	Targets 2047
Genetic advancement and breeding efficiency	Promote AI coverage through RGM convergence	Coverage 50% Conception 45%	Coverage 75% Conception 55%
	Promote IVF/ET in each high-density district via Mobile Veterinary Unit (MVU) and quality semen	15% SS semen 5% IVF/ET	25% SS semen 10% IVF/ET
	Integrated Digital Breed Registry linked to Bharat Pashudhan	75% livestock registered	100% livestock registered
	Genomic evaluation and 100% genetic merit certification of AI bulls	50% bulls certified	100% bulls certified
	Establish 10,000 community bull units	3,000 units	10,000 units
	Develop voluntary national animal productivity certification system	Pilot in 10 states	Scale nationally

4.3 Nutrition and fodder security

Strengthening fodder and feed systems is one of the most immediate and scalable ways to improve milk productivity. Among these, silage, especially maize and sorghum-based silage offers high nutrition density, year-round availability and storage efficiency. Strategic investments in silage entrepreneurs, decentralized TMR hubs and fodder supply chains are essential to build nutritional security for India's dairy animals.

Specific strategies may include:

- Seed money for the creation of 25,000 silage entrepreneurs.
- Facilitating PPP investments in 1,000 fodder parks especially in aspirational districts.
- Establishment of Silage Banks in 50% of dairy blocks, with minimum storage capacity of 100 MT per unit.
- Bringing an additional 1 lakh hectares under dual-purpose and high-yielding fodder crops (e.g., Napier, maize, sorghum) – Additional area can come from underutilized wasteland (Class III–V), state farms etc.
- Establishing 1,000 decentralized TMR production units by 2035.
- Providing subsidized TMR packages to all dairy households.
- Implementing district-level feed and fodder balance plans with mandated GIS-based fodder balance assessments and planning.
- Link fodder and nutrition advisories with digital services on the centralized livestock mobile app.
- Roll out an AI-driven feed rationing advisory system that provides tailored feed management advice, linked to farmer IDs and individual animal performance data.
- Undertaking training and capacity building of dairy farmers in silage production and integration into balanced feeding plan.

Table 4: Strategic interventions – Nutrition, fodder and security

Pillar	Interventions	Targets 2030	Targets 2047
Nutrition and fodder security	Create 25,000 silage entrepreneurs	5,000 new entrepreneurs	20,000 new entrepreneurs
	PPP investment in 1,000 fodder parks	200 parks	Additional 800 parks
	Establish Silage Banks in 50% of dairy blocks	20% blocks	Remaining 30% blocks
	Bring 1 lakh ha under high-yielding fodder crops	30,000 ha	Additional 70,000 ha
	1,000 decentralized TMR units and nationwide subsidized TMR	300 units	Additional 700 units
	District-level GIS-based feed and fodder balance planning	Implemented in 100% districts	-
	Advisory integration via livestock app	App launched	-
	Launch AI-driven feed rationing advisor	Beta launch	Nationwide rollout
	Training in silage and balanced feeding	1 lakh farmers	1 lakh more farmers

4.4 Animal health, welfare and resilience

Improving animal management will be crucial for long-term sustainability and climate resilience of the dairy sector. Focus shall be on 100% vaccination coverage, conducting deworming drives, deploying MVUs with digital case recording and enhancing telemedicine support.

Specific strategies may include:

- **Ensuring 100% annual vaccination coverage** for FMD, Brucellosis and HS in breedable bovines.
- **Conducting biannual deworming drives** for all dairy animals with >90% coverage.
- **Deploying 10,000 Mobile Veterinary Units** (MVUs) equipped with digital case recording, integrate with 24x7 tele-veterinary platforms and doorstep follow-up via Krishi Sakhis/Para-vets.
- **Subsidizing installation of solar-powered fans, sprinklers and misting systems** in cattle sheds by 2040 to combat extreme heat in summer months.
- **Subsidized calving pens, soft bedding and water troughs** for dairy sheds.
- **Undertaking training and capacity building** of dairy farmers in animal handling and stress reduction.

Table 5: Strategic interventions – Animal health, welfare and resilience

Pillar	Interventions	Targets 2030	Targets 2047
Animal health, welfare and resilience	MVU for 100% vaccination for FMD, Brucellosis, HS	Coverage of 30%	Coverage of 100%
	Biannual deworming with >90% coverage	75% coverage	90% coverage
	10,000 MVUs with digital case recording and para-vet linkages	6,000 MVUs	4,000 more MVUs
	Subsidy for cooling systems in sheds	Pilot in 500 hot climate districts	Nationwide scaling by 2047
	Subsidies for calving pens, soft bedding, water troughs	30% of sheds covered	70% of sheds covered
	Farmer training in animal handling and stress reduction	1 lakh farmers	1 lakh more farmers

4.5 Data, Institutions and farmer incentives

Key interventions in data, institutions and incentives could be centered around a real-time dashboard to monitor AI coverage, yield, health and feed parameters at block and district levels, tagging and digital registry and farmer productivity cards (physical or digital) and launching productivity-linked incentive schemes for farmers.

Specific strategies may include:

- **Launching a real-time National Dairy Productivity Mission (NDPM) dashboard tracking** AI, yield, health and feed parameters at block/district level – Integrated into the central dairy productivity app.
- **Creating a national livestock service delivery portal** integrating AI bookings, vet visits and feed orders.
- **Tagging and digital registry of 100% dairy animals** (>300 million), linked with farmer Aadhaar, veterinary records and productivity data.
- **Launching farmer productivity cards** (physical or digital) to all dairy households with animal-wise data on services, yields and entitlements.
- **Launching productivity-linked incentive schemes** - Milk Yield Bonus Schemes offering additional payments to farmers exceeding lactation benchmarks.
- **Expanding access to livestock insurance** and risk mitigation.
- **Certifying and upskilling** 2.5 lakhs AI technicians, para-vets and livestock field workers under a common curriculum.

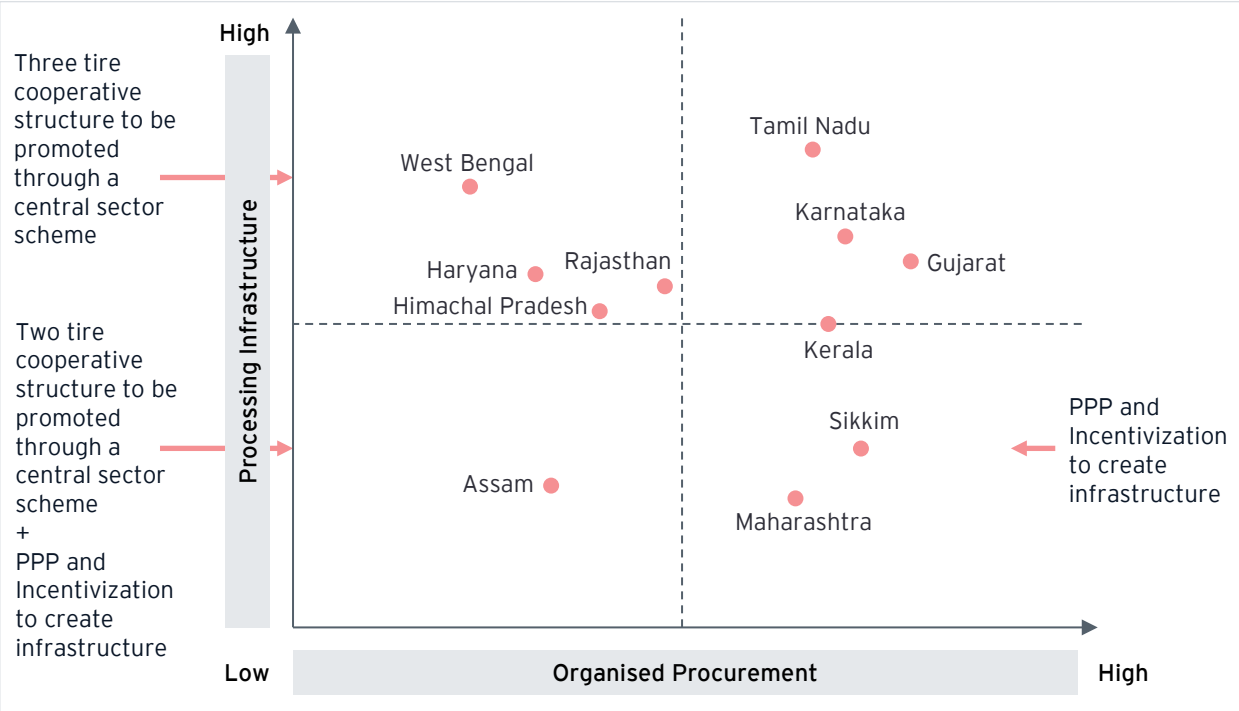
Table 6: Strategic interventions – Data, Institutions and farmer incentives

Pillar	Interventions	Targets 2030	Targets 2047
Data, institutions and farmer incentives	Launch real-time NDPM dashboard – Integrated into central livestock app	Launch by 2027	-
	Create a central livestock app integrating AI, vet visits, feed, etc.	Launch by 2027	-
	Tag and digitally register 100% dairy animals	Tag 200 million animals	Tag remaining 100 million
	Launch Farmer Productivity Cards	Issue to 60% households	Scale to 100% households
	Productivity-linked incentive schemes	Launch by 2027	-
	Expand livestock insurance access	30% household coverage	70% household coverage
	Upskill 2.5 lakh livestock workers	1.5 lakh trained	1.5 lakh more trained
	50% NDPM frontline workers to be women	Achieve 35% by 2030	Achieve 50% by 2047

4.6 Prioritizing infrastructure expansion

Investing in infrastructure across the milk value chain will be critical for achieving the value addition and export targets set for 2047. The following infrastructure development strategies are recommended for different states across the country.

Figure 28: Dairy infrastructure expansion strategies for different states in India – select states



Source: BAHS, 2025

4.6.1 High infrastructure – Low procurement

In states such as West Bengal, Rajasthan, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, Infrastructure is available but underutilized possibly due to weak farmer linkages. Organized procurement thorough a proven cooperative led system will stabilize milk flow in the supply chain. Thus, a **three-tier cooperative structure shall be promoted in these states/ regions with incentives through a central sector scheme**.

4.6.2 Low infrastructure – Low procurement

Low infrastructure and low organized procurement indicate that these states (for example Assam) are structurally weak states with both demand and supply gaps. **Foundational cooperative structures in tandem with public-private investment** are essential to seed growth and attract long-term investment in the sector.

4.6.2 Low infrastructure – High procurement

In states that have high share of organized sectors in procurement but limited processing infrastructure, such as Kerala, Sikkim and Maharashtra, **creating infrastructure under public-private-partnership** and quickly and efficiently bridge the gaps.

Conclusion

India's dairy sector stands at a decisive inflection point. From being the world's largest producer of milk, it must now transition towards becoming a benchmark for productivity, sustainability and value creation. This paper brings out that while volumes have risen steadily, per-animal yields remain far below global averages, fodder and veterinary gaps persist, quality and infrastructure challenges constrain competitiveness and the sector's environmental footprint is disproportionately high.

The path forward lies not in expanding herd size, but in accelerating productivity through genetic advancement, improved nutrition and fodder security, animal health and welfare systems, robust data and institutional frameworks and farmer-centric incentives. Equally important is the urgent need to expand and modernize infrastructure, strengthen cooperatives, integrate digital tools and build resilient cold-chain and processing networks that can unlock the true potential of value-added products and exports.

To deliver these transformations in a coordinated manner, India requires an integrated approach that goes beyond fragmented schemes. As a first step, a nation-wide primary survey to capture herd and species level data and gain deeper insights may be launched. Thereafter, a National Dairy Mission based on a well laid out National Dairy action plan/ roadmap for 2047 could serve as an umbrella framework, converging genetics, nutrition, health, data, infrastructure, sustainability and market development into a unified program. Such a mission, anchored in cooperative strength but open to public-private partnerships and innovation, would not only accelerate progress towards the 2047 targets but also ensure that growth is inclusive, climate-smart and globally competitive.

By shifting decisively from volume to value and by institutionalizing this transformation through a mission-led approach, India can redefine its global leadership in dairy—not just in liters produced, but in productivity achieved, livelihoods secured, nutrition delivered and resilience built for the future.

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Bengaluru

12th & 13th Floor
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Ground & 1st Floor
11, 'A' wing, Divyasree Chambers
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3rd & 4th Floor
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Chandigarh - 160 002
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6th & 7th Floor, A Block,
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THE SKYVIEW 20
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Horizon Tower, JLN Marg
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Jaipur, Rajasthan – 302018

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3rd Floor, Unit No 301
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