Initiatives for Vidarbha farmers

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- Cotton and soybean farmers of Vidarbha and Marathwada region are in a debt trap.
\n
- Diversifying options like the dairy sector makes way for the farmers to get out of their problems.
\n

\n\n

What is the situation of the farmers in these regions?

\n\n



\n\n

\n
- The two regions Vidarbha and marathwada have more than half of cotton area of the state, which itself accounts for a third of the country’s share.
\n
- But only 2.7% of Maharashtra’s cotton is irrigated compared to nearly 60% of Gujarat’s.
\n
- There is a wide gap in average per hectare cotton yield between the states.
\n
- The farmers of these regions used to grow jowar and bajra but with changing food habits, their cultivation has declined.
\n
- A greater portion of these regions' agriculture will have to be climate resilient as both are rain deficient.
\n
- Farmers in the regions are going for long-duration hybrids, for better quality cotton.
\n
- To meet the operation costs farmers are getting into debt traps which in

many cases are leading to self-engineered deaths.
\n

\n\n

What measures have been taken by the government?

\n\n

\n
- **Dairy initiatives -** In October 2016, the National Dairy Development Board commenced operations.
\n
- The National dairy development board helps setting up the farmer producer companies.
\n
- But the board does not intend to stay for the long-haul.
\n
- Once farmer producer companies gain the capacity to take over the operations and marketing, the board will exit.
\n
- Milk collection averages 1.25 lakh litres per day which is processed at a refurbished dairy in Nagpur, given by the state government.
\n
- Money is credited to the seller bank accounts; this is a steady source of income which takes care of their daily needs.
\n

\n\n

\n
- **Bamboo Initiatives -** The Maharashtra Bamboo Development Board was set up last year to promote cultivated bamboo, using tissue cultured seedlings.
\n
- It helps the farmers lso supplement their income as bamboo is a versatile crop that has varied utility including for the paper and timber industry.
\n

\n\n

What are the issues with dairy initiative?

\n\n

\n
- **Use of technology -**With the help of an Android-based app, farmers can know whether they are giving their animals the right diet, overdosing them with some nutrients or under-providing others.
\n

- For this, they have to tag their animals and feed data regarding weight, lactation stage and current milk yield.
  \n
- The usage of modern technologies for monitoring animals has not been widely understood by the farmers.
  \n

\n\n

  \n
- **Ideological clashes -**The growth of the dairy industry is tied to the meat industry.
  \n
- Unless non and post-lactating animals are culled, farmers will not be able to give proper care to the productive ones. This is where ideology clashes with economics.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Financial Express

\n

