

Mechanised production of Indian dairy products

The flavour of the new millennium is India's traditional milk products. To fully benefit from emerging new opportunities, this sector needs to take initiative in many areas such as technology improvement, the automation of manufacturing processes, overall improvements in quality, enhanced shelf life of products and improved packaging. These interventions will be necessary to maintain a favourable environment for the traditional milk product sector's future growth, reports AMEFT guest author Dr J V Parekh.

India's output of traditional dairy products is estimated at over Rs 150,000 crores, while the organised sector accounts for Rs 30,000 crores. The share of indigenous products in this sector is at present only Rs 15,000 crores, but it is expected to rise rapidly in the coming years.

The organised sector has started showing keen interest in processes and equipment for manufacturing traditional products, the standardisation of products, as well as refining packaging and improving safety and shelf life. Any innovation which can enable the organised sector to manufacture and market indigenous milk products on an industrial scale can have a far-reaching impact on the dairy industry as well as on the economic condition of milk producers.

The market for indigenous products far exceeds that of western dairy products like butter, milk powder and cheese. Enormous scope exists for further expansion of the market for indigenous milk products – provided quality and safety are ensured and shelf-life is extended to facilitate distribution over larger areas.

Major innovations are needed in manufacturing, quality assurance, packaging and process engineering to adapt these products to current marketing and consumer requirements. Some commercial processes have been developed for the manufacture of ghee, khoa, shrikhand and gulam jamun but there is still much to be done.

Indigenous dairy products are in strong demand from Indians and even non-Indians in various parts of the world and hence these products have high export potential. But this requires mechanised and hygienic production which will generate products with a long shelf life.

The Indian dairy industry is passing through a phase of automation and up-grading of technologies. A large gap can be observed between the knowledge of the latest technologies and end users in the dairy industry. The dairy industry needs to recognise the importance of indigenous products to sustain its overall growth. Secondly, adequate attention and investment are necessary to raise the status of this product category from a predominantly non-organised sector to emerge as a mature segment of the industry. |