



SUCCESS STORY

Enjoying the Cream of the Crop

Women farmers trained in livestock management practices increase incomes



Photo: Suzanne Ross, USAID India

Milk production increased after women farmers learned improved dairy farming techniques. With increased milk production, the women are not only improving their families' nutrition, they are increasing their incomes by selling the excess milk.

“Everything I've learned is new to me. I've been farming and tending cows all of my life but now, when I observe changes in my cows, I know what to do. This program has been a godsend.”

—Female farmer, age 64.

About 40 percent of poor women farmers and their young children in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh do not have access to enough food and nutrients to lead healthy and productive lives.

To help supplement family diets and provide additional income, USAID's Partnership for Innovation and Knowledge in Agriculture (PIKA) with the Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust and the University of Wisconsin, promotes improved dairy production through women's self-help groups in Uttar Pradesh.

By teaching women farmers improved dairy farming practices, such as making water available to livestock throughout the day and providing animals with shelter and shade, the self-help groups have helped women increase their cows' milk yields, which in turn improves their families' nutrition. With improved milk yields the women are able to sell the excess milk and make much needed extra income.

The Training Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Dairy in Rai Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh is using training materials developed with USAID support to teach the women's groups about improved dairy farming practices that they then share with other women in their communities. The innovative training materials use simple images to show women with low literacy how to protect their cows from disease and increase their dairy productivity.

Kiran Singh, a community volunteer, said: “I was told how to improve the feed so that I get more milk and how to keep the cattle sheds clean and hygienic. I learned when to vaccinate the cows, how to handle pregnancy in my cattle, and when to stop and start milking the cows so that we don't lose milk later.”

To help women access markets for their surplus dairy products, a partnership with the National Dairy Development Board provides the marketing infrastructure for the milk producers. By adopting the new dairy practices, 32,000 women dairy farmers have seen a 25 percent increase in milk production. On average, the women now earn 500 rupees (\$11) more every month, increasing their incomes to over 3,000 rupees (\$66) a month.