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Title: Need to include dairy farmers in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, presently cattle shed construction and fodder plants are already included in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. The availability of land is very difficult in Kerala in comparison to other States and as a result, the number of dairy farmers who are getting benefits under this programme has been reduced in Kerala. Most of the existing dairy farmers have 2 to 8 milking cows for their livelihood and 80 per cent of the total consumed milk in Kerala is produced by these farmers. The major issues faced by this sector are diseases, unavailability of cattle feed and workers. They are not in a position to pursue their profession of dairy farming as they cannot eak their livehihood.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to include dairy farmers under MGNREG Programme and efforts should also be made to attract more farmers in this sector.