

MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning (E4L)" Webinar Series

Topic: "Evolving Agricultural Extension with Agri – Startups: A case of Sid's Farm Private Limited"

Schedule:
29-11-2022, 19:00-19:45 PM

MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad- 500 030, INDIA



About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning" Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The twelve-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.





Speaker

Dr. Kishore Indukuri
Founder & CEO
Sid’s Farm Private Limited

Kishore Indukuri

About the Speaker

Kishore Indukuri, Founder and CEO of Sid’s Farm Private Limited, is an entrepreneur based in Hyderabad, Telangana. An IIT Kharagpur graduate with a Ph.D. in Polymer Science and Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, he worked at Intel Corporation before venturing into dairy farming in 2013. He established Sid’s Farm with a vision of delivering quality milk and dairy products while strengthening farmer–enterprise relationships. Under his leadership, the company has developed an integrated dairy model emphasising rigorous quality testing, farmer education, transparent procurement, direct marketing and productivity enhancement. His entrepreneurial journey highlights the role of agricultural extension in building sustainable dairy value chains and connecting farmers with consumers.

Introduction

Dairy farming plays a vital role in improving farmers' livelihoods, generating rural employment and contributing to agricultural and rural economic development. It provides a regular source of income, particularly for small and marginal farmers, while creating employment opportunities for rural women and youth. However, dairy farmers face several challenges, including rising feed and fodder costs, animal health issues, low productivity, milk quality concerns, limited access to institutional credit and inadequate market linkages. Dependence on intermediaries and fluctuations in milk prices can further affect farm profitability and economic security.

Addressing these challenges requires an integrated and farmer-centred approach that goes beyond milk production to encompass the entire dairy value chain. Continuous farmer education on scientific feeding, animal health, breeding, hygiene and quality management is essential for improving productivity and reducing production costs. Access to veterinary services, quality breeding inputs and affordable credit can help farmers strengthen their dairy enterprises. Simultaneously, effective milk collection, chilling, quality testing, processing and direct marketing systems are necessary to minimise post-collection losses, maintain quality and ensure remunerative prices. Strong linkages among farmers, dairy enterprises, financial institutions, veterinary service providers and consumers can further improve market access and institutional support.

In this context, agricultural extension plays a crucial role in connecting knowledge, services, institutions and markets. By facilitating capacity building, technology adoption, collective action and enterprise development, extension services can contribute to sustainable dairy farming, stronger farmer–enterprise partnerships and improved livelihoods.

Evolution of Sid's Farm and Its Business Model

Sid's Farm began as a small dairy farm in 2013–2014, with a commitment to supplying quality milk to consumers. Initially, the enterprise faced challenges in achieving profitability because the cost of milk production was substantially higher than the price offered in the bulk market.

To address this gap, the enterprise adopted a direct-to-consumer marketing strategy. Initially, the founders approached residential communities in Hyderabad, distributed information about their milk and organised tasting sessions to introduce the product. Gradually, consumer confidence and word-of-mouth promotion helped expand the business.

The enterprise subsequently began procuring milk from neighbouring farmers, creating opportunities to connect dairy producers with consumers through an organised marketing and quality-assurance system.

Farmer Engagement and Extension Services

A major focus of the discussion was the importance of continuous engagement with dairy farmers. Sid's Farm works with approximately 5,000–5,500 farmers and employs extension personnel to provide guidance at the village level.

The extension teams conduct farmer education programmes on antibiotic use, milk quality and good dairy farming practices. Farmers are encouraged to inform the enterprise whenever antibiotics are required for animal treatment. In such cases, the enterprise emphasises transparency and bears the loss associated with milk rejection rather than penalising farmers for reporting the treatment.

The extension approach also extends beyond milk quality to improving overall dairy productivity. Initiatives include promoting azolla cultivation, tree fodder and strategies to reduce expenditure on concentrated cattle feed. These interventions aim to improve feeding practices, reduce production costs and enhance milk productivity

Milk Collection, Chilling and Quality Assurance

Sid's Farm has established village-level mini chilling centres to facilitate prompt chilling and preliminary testing of milk. These facilities help maintain milk quality throughout the procurement and processing chain.

The process involves:

- Conducting basic milk quality tests at village-level collection points.
- Recording procurement details in the system.
- Chilling milk in small collection units to approximately 4°C.
- Transporting the chilled milk to bulk milk chilling centres.
- Conducting more extensive quality testing, covering approximately 45 parameters, at the bulk chilling stage.

When quality issues are detected, the extension team investigates the possible source and provides further guidance to farmers to prevent recurrence. This approach integrates quality control with corrective action and capacity building.

Direct Marketing and Consumer Trust

Building a reliable consumer base requires more than product promotion; it also depends on transparency, consistent quality and consumer engagement. Sid's Farm initially established its market by directly approaching residential communities, conducting milk-tasting sessions and communicating its commitment to quality.

The enterprise also organises regular farm visits, described as dairy tourism, through which consumers can observe the production process, animal care, fodder cultivation, milk processing and quality-testing procedures. These visits help consumers understand the production system and strengthen their confidence in the product.

According to the information presented during the discussion, the enterprise conducts approximately 10,000 milk tests daily and supplies around 60,000–70,000 litres of milk per day, primarily in Hyderabad. Word-of-mouth promotion, transparency and direct engagement with consumers were identified as important factors contributing to its growth.

Institutional Linkages and Access to Credit

During its initial stages, the enterprise collaborated with a bank to facilitate credit for dairy farmers supplying milk to the company.

The enterprise also facilitated the formation of joint liability groups and arranged loans for farmers. This initiative helped farmers access finance for dairy-related activities and supported the expansion of the milk procurement network.

The enterprise is also exploring structured credit arrangements for farmers who have been associated with its network for at least one year. The proposed approach aims to connect farmers with banks and a non-banking financial company (NBFC), enabling investment in dairy expansion and productivity improvement.

Veterinary Care and Productivity Enhancement

Their is a need to strengthen the veterinary support and improve access to quality breeding services. Sid's Farm is exploring ways to provide veterinary assistance through field-level personnel and facilitate access to veterinary credit.

The enterprise also supports selected farmers through subsidies for sex-sorted semen, which is relatively expensive compared with conventional semen. Such interventions aim to improve breeding opportunities, support the development of productive dairy herds and encourage the continued participation of farmers and rural youth in dairy farming.

Major Learnings for Agricultural Extension Professionals

The experiences of Sid's Farm offer several lessons for agricultural extension and rural advisory services:

- **Link production with markets:** Farmer support becomes more effective when technical advice is integrated with reliable procurement, quality standards and remunerative market access.
- **Adopt continuous, problem-oriented extension:** Farmer education should respond to practical challenges identified through procurement, testing and field interactions.
- **Build partnerships:** Collaboration among enterprises, farmers, banks and veterinary service providers can help address constraints that cannot be resolved through advisory services alone.
- **Promote transparency and accountability:** Clear quality protocols and constructive feedback can strengthen trust among farmers, enterprises and consumers.
- **Support farm-level efficiency:** Guidance on feed management, fodder cultivation, animal health and breeding can contribute to improved productivity and reduced production costs.
- **Encourage enterprise-led extension models:** Private dairy enterprises can complement public extension systems by providing regular field-level support linked to market requirements.

Key Highlights

- **Direct-to-Consumer Marketing:** Sid's Farm adopted a direct marketing strategy to build consumer trust, ensure better market access and promote quality dairy products.
- **Farmer-Centric Extension Services:** Continuous farmer education on antibiotic use, milk quality, scientific feeding, fodder cultivation and dairy productivity strengthens farming practices.
- **Quality Assurance and Infrastructure:** Village-level milk chilling centres, systematic testing and quality monitoring help maintain milk quality across the dairy value chain.
- **Institutional Linkages and Financial Support:** Collaboration with banks and financial institutions facilitates access to credit and supports dairy enterprise expansion.
- **Integrated Dairy Development:** Veterinary care, improved breeding services, productivity enhancement and transparent farmer–enterprise partnerships contribute to sustainable dairy farming and improved farmer livelihoods.

YouTube Link:
https://youtu.be/ofZARufoyNE?list=PLcfEugbo2RL0&t=2915

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