130-yr-old military dairy farm closed

600 Cows May Be Shifted To Manipur

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In tune with the Centre's decision in 2017 to close down military dairy farms across the country, a British-era dairy farm in Bowenpally in Secunderabad Cantonment was shut on Wednesday and 600 milch cows reared there are likely to be shifted to Manipur.

Highly-placed defence sources told TOI that the orders pertaining to shift the cows had been received from the ministry of defence (MoD) recently. Shifting of the Jersey breed cows in DCM vans was at a brisk pace on Wednesday. Established in 1889, the Bowenpally dairy farm is one of the 39 military dairy farms to be closed by MoD. The decision to close century-old dairy farms is being implemented now in various Cantonments though the final orders to close them came in May 2017 itself, sources said.

The military authorities said 500 to 800 litres of milk is extracted from these Jersey cows and supplied to defence personnel and jawans every day. The issue of shutting down these dairy farms cropped up first in 1992-93 when the defence ministry had claimed that rearing cattle was not the core responsibility of the Army and that the Army should provide packaged milk to its soldiers. “With packed pasteurised milk freely available in the market, there is no point in running these military dairy farms,” a former Army official told TOI.

Sources said the defence officials are strictly maintaining a register and noting down details like vehicle numbers, the number of cows transported, name of the owner/driver of the vehicle and licences that have national permit while shifting the cows.

Officials of Telangana State Dairy Development Cooperative Federation Ltd (TSDDCFL), who came to know about the cows being shifted out of the dairy farm, approached senior defence officials with an intent to buy them. “Two weeks ago, we made a plea to the defence authorities to buy the high-yielding cows, but we did not receive any communication from them,” said deputy director (procurement), TSDDCFL, Praveen Kumar.

Meanwhile, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) tried to milk the issue to its advantage.

“Defence authorities must clarify as to where the cows are being transported. They must ensure that care is taken while shifting the cows in vehicles instead of cramming them,” said an office-bearer. Representatives of a city-based NGO, Sarva Jeevan Society, also joined the issue by appealing to the defence authorities to transport the cows safely. The Bowenpally dairy farm is spread over 1,000 acres.
SHUTTERS DOWN: Established in 1889, the Bowenpally dairy farm is one of the 39 military dairy farms to be closed by MoD