

Modern Cream Separator Acts as a Boon to Chauri Herders in Gatlang, Rasuwa

Located in the northern part of Rasuwa, Gatlang is a village where most of the people are engaged in chauri and sheep farming. A farmer in this area rears anything between 10-20 chauris or 50-100 sheep's. With no better option for livelihood, chauri farming is analogous to traditional profession for the residents of Gatlang village. Nevertheless, it is crucial in making the farmers economically self-reliant.

DDC Cheese Production center located at the top of Gatlang village collected chauri milk every day from the farmers during peak milk production seasons (March-October), processed milk, produced butter and cheese and sold them to the market. This cycle halted when COVID and lockdown hit the area. The production center is temporarily closed since March 2020. Thus, leaving farmers in dilemma with their 500 litres of daily milk production.

This compelled the farmers to recede to the traditional practices of butter production increasing the work load to the women members involved in milk churning. In a group discussion between women farmers of Jayeshwor Chauri group, Gothyanode Chauri group and RMS team, the women farmers shared their problems and requested for the solutions if any.



Figure 1 Farmers operating cream separator machine at Gothyan, Rasuwa

After some research and market study RMS team came up with an idea of women friendly cream separator machine.

After the demonstration, these two groups were supported with a cream separator machine from ICIMOD and CEAPRED. "We use a modern machine that the RMS project bought recently. It helped us make an optimum use of milk and its products and reduced the working hours drastically", cheerfully explained Ninsomo Tamang, a chauri farmer.

"The products would be rancid in the absence of the machine," she said, "It saves us time, and we can ensure that milk does not go wasted. Hence, we earn good money out of our products". A total of 500 litres of milk is produced in the groups here daily."

Ninsomo currently has 20 chauris in her shed. Since, all her neighbours were involved in chauri farming, Ninsomo also got engaged in the profession. "There are no any source of income, therefore, we are mostly involved in chauri farming as it is easier for us," she said, "chauris give milk both in the morning and in the evening. As we have our own machines now, we don't need to worry about the milk. It's very convenient"

Chauri produces milk for nine to ten months a year. DDC collected the milk for 7-8 peak months, the milk produced rest of the lean season weren't properly utilized. Having the machine, farmers are over the moon to be able earn a good income during lean periods as well. 4-5 kg of cream is separated daily with a machine consuming 60 litres of milk. The members of the farmers group have already purchased 7 more cream separator machines.

Recently, farmers have been dispatching their products to the competitive market nearby. Ukrey Tamang, a chauri farmer said that the "demand has increased in the Goljung, Chilime, Timure, Syafrubeshi and Kerung area as the products are of better quality due to use of the equipment". She also mentioned that the hotel owners earlier used to visit the DDC farm to collect the butter, however, these days they contact the farmers directly and the farmers deliver butter to their address in case of quantity demand. There are around 600 chauris in these two groups producing 500-600 litres of milk per day during the peak season which declines to half during the lean seasons. The farmers groups with an average of 35-40 kg butter produced per day had a transaction of around 1 crore twelve lakh per year from butter only. The farmers in these two groups produced nearly 11.5 ton of butter in one year period. Few years ago, farmers only produced 2 to 3 tons of butter annually using traditional methods sufficient only for home consumption. Modern machine helped boost production. "The machine has made it easier for the farmers," Tamang added.

Through RMS farmers were not only supported with the equipment, but, also with the medicines and semi-annual animal health camp to address health problems of chauris in coordination with Livestock Development Branch under Ammachhodingmo Rural Municipality.

The farmers now seek help for diversifying their products and are looking out for machineries that could help them to produce Durkha and Churpi which also have a good market value. They are coordinating with the government agencies with the help of a technician of CEAPRED Mr. Motiman Limbu for further advancement of the equipment and market services.