

# From dairy farming to dairy processing:

## A story of rural entrepreneurship

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*Dairy farming plays a vital role in strengthening the rural economy by providing farmers with a steady and reliable source of additional income. Along with crop cultivation, dairy has become an important livelihood activity that ensures daily cash flow and financial stability for farming families. By taking a step further into dairy processing, farmers can transform raw milk into value-added products such as curd, paneer and ghee for much higher returns compared to selling liquid milk alone. Processing not only helps in extending shelf-life and reducing spoilage but also enables farmers to build their own brands in local markets. With proper training, technical support, and entrepreneurship development, farmers can acquire skills in processing, packaging, and marketing, becoming self-reliant entrepreneurs. Thus, dairy farming and processing together create a sustainable model that enhances income, employment opportunities, and rural prosperity, making it a powerful tool for empowering the farming community. S. Jasveer Singh, from village Hamidi, district Barnala, is such an exemplary to illustrate how scientific guidance, training, and entrepreneurship can transform rural livelihoods.*

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**D**AIRY farming is a cornerstone of rural livelihoods, providing farmers with a reliable source of income, nutritional security, and daily cash flow. Beyond traditional milk production, value addition through dairy processing enables farmers to transform raw milk into products such as curd, paneer, ghee, and sweets, significantly increasing profitability. By integrating modern processing techniques, packaging, and marketing strategies, farmers can establish sustainable enterprises that generate employment and strengthen household economies. The ICAR–Farmer FIRST Programme, implemented by Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), Ludhiana, has been instrumental in promoting such entrepreneurial initiatives. The journey of S. Jasveer Singh from Hamidi village exemplifies how training, technical guidance, and entrepreneurial support can convert conventional dairy farming into a thriving value-added business, empowering rural households both economically and socially.

### **Success story of Shri Jasveer Singh: Beneficiary farmer under Farmer FIRST Programme**

The story outlines the initial adoption of Shri Jasveer

Singh's village, Hamidi, under the ICAR–Farmer FIRST Project, implemented by Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU), Ludhiana. During the early camps and demonstrations organized by the Farmer FIRST team at Hamidi, Shri Jasveer Singh came into close contact with GADVASU scientists and developed an interest in modern dairy processing and value addition techniques. A former army man, he used to run a small dairy shop in his village and owned a small farm of buffaloes. His interest deepened with time, his curiosity turned into passion, and he finally voiced his ideas to become an entrepreneur.

Motivated by these exposure visits from the Farmer FIRST Project team, he decided to upgrade from traditional liquid milk selling to value-added dairy entrepreneurship. In January 2025, Shri Jasveer Singh attended a five-day value addition training programme at the College of Dairy and Food Science Technology, GADVASU, where he received hands-on training in milk processing, product diversification, packaging, hygiene, and marketing.

Inspired by the training, he established his own dairy processing unit in his village after numerous consultations offered by the Department of Dairy



Shri Jasveer Singh working at his milk plant



Family of Shri Jasveer Singh packing milk-based sweets together



Shri Jasveer Singh receiving 'Progressive Entrepreneur' award at Pashu Palan Mela 2025 at GADVASU

Engineering for commissioning of the plant. At his plant, Shri Jasveer Singh now produces and markets Dahi (curd) in 5 kg and 15 kg packs, and desi ghee. His focus on maintaining quality, cleanliness, and consistency has earned him a strong local customer base. As a result, his profit margins have multiplied. From selling cow milk for ₹45/L and buffalo milk for ₹60/L, he now sells ghee for ₹900/kg, curd for ₹66/kg, paneer for ₹350/kg, and butter for ₹600/kg, which truly shows the importance of value addition of milk in doubling his income. Due to the surge in demand, he now also prepares sweets like khoya barfi, milk cake, khoya pinni, kalakand, etc. Furthermore, several dealers regularly visit his plant to procure his products owing to their purity and quality.

Recognizing the importance of modern marketing, Shri Jasveer Singh has also stepped into the digital space. He is active on social media and has started advertising his products on Instagram, expanding his reach to urban consumers and nearby towns. His use of digital platforms for branding and sales reflects his progressive mindset and entrepreneurial spirit.

The establishment of Shri Jasveer Singh's dairy processing unit has not only augmented his income but also created meaningful employment opportunities for his entire family. Every family member now contributes actively to different stages of milk processing, packaging, and marketing. Both men and women work together with equal dedication from handling milk

and preparing dahi to managing sales and customer relations. The involvement of women in the enterprise has boosted their confidence, decision-making ability, and financial independence. Shri Jasveer Singh's mother proudly shares that both brothers and their families now work hand in hand, turning the unit into a true family-based entrepreneurship model. This collective effort has strengthened family bonds, enhanced profitability, and set a shining example of how value addition in dairy can empower rural households both economically and socially.

#### SUMMARY

Shri Jasveer Singh's journey truly represents the spirit of "Farm to Market" entrepreneurship. With the support of the ICAR-Farmer FIRST Programme and training from GADVASU, he has transformed himself from a visionary dairy farmer into a successful dairy processor and marketer. His story highlights how entrepreneurship development, training in value addition, and digital promotion can empower rural youth to create sustainable and profitable enterprises in the dairy sector. Shri Jasveer continues to work closely with GADVASU experts, motivating other farmers in his village to adopt value addition and scientific dairy management for better income and livelihood security.

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