

## **Patiala village's Kulwinder Kaur breaking ground in the field of dairy entrepreneurship**

Courtesy: Anju Agnihotri Chhaba



In Punjab, which is primarily an agrarian state, women often remain behind the scenes, tending to household chores while the men manage the fields. However, Kulwinder Kaur Ghumaan, in her 40s, of Kath Mathi village in Patiala district, has defied these traditional roles and emerged as a successful woman farmer and a pillar of strength for her joint family's agricultural enterprise. With her passion and hard work, she has added lakhs of rupees to her family's monthly income, proving that women can go beyond household chores to become powerful contributors to agriculture. Kulwinder firmly believes that instead of taking a back seat, every woman should contribute along with their husbands as two heads are always better than one, and it makes agricultural occupation more profitable. Holding 11 acres of ancestral land, a matriculate Kulwinder, whose husband, Hardeep Singh Ghumaan, works as a pharmacist in Punjab government and cannot devote much time to farming, took it upon herself to be in the driving seat of the family's agricultural business. In a bold move, she decided to venture into dairy farming, a subsidiary business alongside their main agricultural occupation. Where her family once owned only a few cattle heads, today Kulwinder has transformed their dairy operation into a thriving business. Now, her family is supplying around 60 to 70 quintals milk monthly, which is worth Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 3 lakh, making them financially comfortable with no debts related to either agriculture or any other expenses. "We are gradually increasing the number of our cattle heads and may start making milk products in

future,” she said. Currently Kulwinder manages a dairy cattle that has 30 cows, including 17 milking cows at any given time. The remaining cows are either pregnant or young. She even sells the female calves she rears which also earn her a good amount of money. “I have been taking care of the dairy completely, and I ensure we grow all the necessary fodder for the cows on our own land,” Kulwinder says, adding that “we also make silage (process of fermenting and storing green fodder for cattle), which can be used throughout the year, so we are not dependent on external sources for feed”. “Our farm, spread across 11 acres, is dedicated to a mix of traditional and cash crops. Around 7-8 acres are devoted to staple crops like wheat, paddy, and basmati rice, while the remaining land grows profitable cash crops like onion, garlic, vegetables, turmeric, and fennel,” Kulwinder says, adding that “with agriculture we have to wait for some time to get income as per the duration of the crop, but with dairy business we earn daily which is a huge financial support”. Not just dairy business, she is equally active in the fields. “I am deeply involved in the agricultural activities in the fields which most of the women in our area do not get into. While my husband and brother-in-law (husbands’s brother) handle the marketing of milk and cash crops, I look after the crops, including harvesting when required. I also take care of day-to-day farming operations and ensure that everything runs smoothly.” Kulwinder gives family credit for being able to do this. “My family has been very supportive when I decided to run a full-fledged dairy business along with the agricultural activities. As a result, today the family income has also doubled,” she said. Before entering dairy farming, Kulwinder had been busy with stitching work. She even taught young women and girls how to stitch and do tie-dyeing work. But over time, her interest shifted towards farming and dairy farming. Eleven years ago, she took formal dairy farming training at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Patiala, and since then she hasn’t looked back, with her family’s dairy business expanding rapidly. Not only does she grow fodder for the cows but Kulwinder also utilises the land efficiently by cultivating other crops that benefit the dairy business. “We have multiple crops that work in tandem, and everything from onions and garlic to vegetables gives us significant profits,” she says. “Through her dedication, Kulwinder has helped her family achieve financial independence and success, balancing both dairy farming and crop cultivation. Her story is a shining example of how women in rural farming communities are breaking barriers and leading their families to prosperity. Her contribution did not go unnoticed as she was presented ‘Sardarni Jagbir Kaur Grewal Memorial Award’ for being a progressive entrepreneur by Panjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana,” Dr

Hardeep Singh Sabikhi, Deputy Director (Training), KVK, Patiala, said, adding that she has also acquired training in milk production, phulkari embroidery, and tie-dyeing from KVK, Patiala, and is contributing to the economic growth of her family. "If every woman from farming families joins the fields, they can make significant contributions through various subsidiary occupations and cultivation of cash crops, enhancing family income and making Punjab's farmers debt-free," said Kulwinder.

\*\*\*\*\*