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Fortified milk to take over state's dairy market

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Thiruvananthapuram: The recent rise in number of vitamin deficiency cases in the state has prompted milk product manufacturers to venture into production of fortified milk. After Muralya Dairy Products, leading milk product manufacturer Milma launched its first fortified milk product last week. Muralya launched fortified milk on April 8 and the product was received well in city markets. Sasikumar Menon, CEO of Kattakada-based Muralya Dairy Products, said, "Our fortified milk provides required supplementation of vitamin A and D".

Fortified milk is a value-added variant of milk with increased vitamin A and D content. The product is made as per food safety and standards authority of India (FSSAI) norms.

Deficiency of vitamin A and D leads to rickets and osteoporosis. The Union government has launched a food fortification scheme to take on this issue. Kerala co-operative milk marketing federation (KCMMF) chairman P A Balan said that the production of the unfortified version will be stopped once the new fortified version reaches across all markets. Balan also said that though the milk is made more nutritious, the price will remain the same. "We give dairy farmers Rs 34 for one litre of milk and the same produced in Tamil Nadu is sourced by private agencies at Rs 22 and sold in Kerala by giving a high commission to agents. Basically Milma agents receive a commission of Rs 1.68 whereas private agents get around Rs 4-5 per litre. This is resulting in an unhealthy competition," he said.

Milma also announced a home delivery scheme called 'AMneeds'. Thiruvananthapuram regional milk producers' union (TRCMPU) chairman Kallada Ramesh said that the AM in AMneeds implies 'the morning hours'. Our services will be available in the morning contrary to the 24-hour service offered by many food delivery chains. Customers can download the AMneeds app from Playstore and register their orders. Initially, a service charge will be applicable but we will minimize it to the lowest possible amount once the system becomes popular," he said.