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ICAR-NBAGR Registers 16 New Indigenous Breeds, Taking the National Total to 262

26 August 2026 ·

ENVIRONMENT

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ICAR-NBAGR Registers 16 New Indigenous Breeds, Taking the National Total to 262

26 August 2026 · 5 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

The ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) registered 16 new indigenous livestock and dog breeds, taking India's national total to 262 registered breeds. The registrations were made by the Breed Registration Committee and reported on August 25, 2026.

THE REGISTRATIONS

PARAMETER	DETAIL
New breeds registered	16
Species covered by the 16 new breeds	Nine: cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, dog, pig, pony, donkey, yak
New national total	262
Composition of the total	258 indigenous and 4 synthetic
New cattle breeds	Umarda, Periyar, Koppal, Mahakaushali

Note that the registrations span far more than cattle. **Dogs, ponies, donkeys and yaks** are included, which is a frequent Prelims trap, since candidates assume breed registration concerns bovines only. Note also that the nine species describe the **16 new breeds**; the national register of 262 spans a wider set still, including camel, duck, chicken, geese and mithun breeds.

THE PERIYAR CATTLE OF KERALA

The breed attracting most attention is **Periyar**, known locally as **Periyar Kullan**, a **dwarf** cattle breed.

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Habitat	Western Ghats forest fringes and plantation tracts of central Kerala
Districts	Ernakulam and Thrissur, in riverine and plantation belts
Body weight	150 to 200 kg
Milk yield	2.5 to 4 litres per day
Milk type	A2 beta-casein

Periyar becomes Kerala's second registered cattle breed, after Vechur. Vechur is noted among the world's smallest cattle breeds and was conserved through the work of the late **Dr Sosamma Iype** at Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

THE INSTITUTION

ICAR-NBAGR is headquartered at **Karnal, Haryana**, and is the national nodal body for registration of animal genetic resources. It functions under the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research**, within the **Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.

ICAR itself was established on **July 16, 1929** as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, on the recommendation of the **Royal Commission on Agriculture**, which was appointed in 1926 and submitted its report in 1928. It is a **registered society** under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, and therefore neither statutory nor constitutional.

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

INSTRUMENT	CONTENT
Rashtriya Gokul Mission (December 2014)	Development and conservation of indigenous bovine breeds
National Livestock Mission	Livestock development across species
Gokul Grams and National Kamdhenu Breeding Centres	Institutional conservation infrastructure
Biological Diversity Act, 2002	Domestic access and benefit-sharing framework
Nagoya Protocol (2010, in force 2014)	Access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity
FAO Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources (Interlaken, 2007)	International framework
DAD-IS	FAO's Domestic Animal Diversity Information System

Context figures: India holds roughly **11 per cent** of the world's livestock, the **20th Livestock Census (2019)** counted about **53.6 crore** livestock, and India is the world's **largest milk producer**.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Breed registration is a defensive legal act as much as a scientific one. Formally documenting a breed with a defined breeding tract creates the sovereign record needed to resist **biopiracy** claims and to operate access-and-benefit-sharing under the Nagoya Protocol. This is why registration counts matter beyond **taxonomy**: an undocumented breed is legally undefended.

Indigenous breeds are a climate-adaptation asset, not a productivity liability. Dwarf and native breeds such as Periyar and Vechur are **low-input, disease-resilient and heat-tolerant**, precisely the traits that high-yield crossbred cattle lack as wet-bulb temperatures rise. Decades of judging cattle purely on litres-per-day drove the genetic erosion now being reversed. A breed yielding 2.5 to 4 litres a day on forest-fringe grazing with minimal veterinary input may be more economically rational for a smallholder than a crossbred animal requiring purchased feed and cooling.

The conservation paradox is real. Registration confers recognition but **no automatic in-situ protection and no farmer incentive**. Unless farmers in the breeding tract earn a premium, through **A2 milk branding**, **provenance** marketing or direct conservation payments, recognition will not by itself arrest the breed's decline. Recognition without economics is documentation of an extinction rather than prevention of one.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3 (Environment and Agriculture): Conservation and biodiversity; agriculture and allied sectors, including animal husbandry.

Prelims focus: NBAGR's location and parent body; the new total of 262 and its 258 indigenous plus 4 synthetic split; the nine species covered by the 16 new breeds, as distinct from the wider register; Periyar as Kerala's second registered cattle breed after Vechur; ICAR's 1929 founding and society status, on the 1928 report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture; Rashtriya Gokul Mission's launch year.

Mains angle: Frame indigenous breed conservation as **climate adaptation policy**, not heritage preservation. The strongest argument is that **resilience** traits become economically valuable precisely as climate stress rises, so the case for conservation strengthens rather than weakens over time.

Way forward: Link every new registration to a **funded in-situ conservation plan** with a designated nodal institution; extend Rashtriya Gokul Mission incentives and Gopal Ratna Awards to registered rare breeds; build cryopreserved germplasm banks at NBAGR for each newly registered breed; and pursue **GI tagging** for milk products of registered indigenous breeds so the premium reaches the breeding tract.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPIEDIA

THE REGISTRATION:

16 new breeds registered by ICAR-NBAGR, reported August 25, 2026

National total now 262: 258 indigenous and 4 synthetic

The 16 new breeds span nine species: cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, dog, pig, pony, donkey, yak. The full register of 262 covers more species still, including camel, duck, chicken, geese and mithun

New cattle breeds: Umarda, Periyar, Koppal, Mahakaushali

PERIYAR CATTLE:

Locally “Periyar Kullan”; dwarf breed of the Western Ghats fringes, Ernakulam and Thrissur districts, Kerala

Body weight 150 to 200 kg; milk yield 2.5 to 4 litres per day; A2 beta-casein milk

Kerala’s second registered cattle breed, after Vechur

INSTITUTIONS:

ICAR-NBAGR: Karnal, Haryana; nodal body for animal genetic resource registration

ICAR: established July 16, 1929 following the Royal Commission on Agriculture, appointed 1926 and reporting 1928; a registered society, not a statutory body

Parent: Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare

POLICY FRAMEWORK:

Rashtriya Gokul Mission launched December 2014, under the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying

Biological Diversity Act, 2002; Nagoya Protocol (2010, in force 2014) under the CBD

FAO Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources, Interlaken, 2007; DAD-IS database

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

India holds roughly 11 per cent of the world’s livestock

20th Livestock Census (2019): about 53.6 crore livestock

India is the world’s largest milk producer

Sources: ICAR, Down To Earth

Source: ICAR-NBAGR Registers 16 New Indigenous Breeds, Taking the National Total to 262 — Ujiyari.com | Free

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