



## CAN BUDGET 2025–26 BE A TURNING POINT FOR NORTHEAST INDIA'S PIG ECONOMY?

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Pig rearing remains one of the most culturally embedded and economically vital livestock activities in Northeast India. Across tribal and rural households, pigs serve as a dual asset assuring nutrition and functioning as a dependable form of cash savings. Despite its significance, the sector is often informal, fragmented, and acutely vulnerable to disease outbreaks and market fluctuations.

Against this backdrop, the Union Budget 2025–26 stands out as a potentially transformative moment. With a 27% increase in the allocation for the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) rising from ₹4,840.40 crores in 2024–25 to ₹6,153.46 crore this year the government has signalled a clear intent: livestock, including piggery, is now central to its rural economic growth mandate.

### **Budget Signals: A Strong Push for Livestock-Led Growth**

A number of flagship programmes under DAHD are poised for expansion:

#### **National Livestock Mission (NLM): Boosting Piggery Entrepreneurship**

Piggery has been explicitly recognised as an entrepreneurial sub-mission under NLM. With this, rural youth, SHGs, FPOs, and cooperatives gain an enabling platform to scale piggery enterprises particularly in hilly and tribal areas where pig farming is a livelihood cornerstone. The Budget's emphasis on forming FPOs, FIGs, and cooperatives is especially promising for the Northeast, where collective action models can significantly reduce production costs and improve market access.

#### **Strengthened Animal Health Systems**

The increased DAHD allocation will also support Livestock Health and Disease Control programmes critical in a region repeatedly shaken by African Swine Fever (ASF), classical swine fever and other transboundary diseases. The recent ASF outbreaks devastated thousands of tribal households, altering both livelihood security and dietary practices. Strengthening surveillance, disease diagnostics, and field response mechanisms could help rebuild confidence in piggery as a viable enterprise.

#### **Credit-Linked Subsidy: Expanding Access to Finance**

The Budget reinforces credit-linked subsidy programmes and aims to deepen their reach across livestock value chains. With better integration of Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) and MSME schemes, pig farmers may find it easier to access working capital and invest in scientific, commercially-oriented farming.

#### **Infrastructure Push through AHIDF**

The Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) is set to play a pivotal role in improving the pork value chain. Investments in processing plants, chilling units, cold chains, and storage infrastructure can drastically reduce post-harvest losses and enable small-scale entrepreneurs to tap high-value markets. Furthermore, the introduction of loan-linked capital subsidies for establishing private veterinary colleges, hospitals, diagnostic facilities, and breeding centres is expected to address the longstanding shortage of veterinary professionals an issue disproportionately affecting the Northeast.

### **What These Budgetary Shifts Mean for Pig Farmers in the Northeast**

If implemented well, the Budget can reshape the operational landscape of piggery in the region. Some potential on-ground implications include:

#### **Disease Control Integration at District Level**

State departments may now integrate piggery into district disease control plans by strengthening mobile veterinary units, rapid response teams, and farmer-led biosecurity programmes.

#### **Genetic Upgradation Through AI Networks**

Budgetary support can modernize Artificial Insemination (AI) and boar semen distribution systems, improving the productivity of indigenous breeds and enhancing market competitiveness.

#### **Cluster-Based FPO Models**

Forming cluster-based piggery FPOs covering 5–10 villages per cluster can reduce transaction costs, improve aggregation, and enhance the collective bargaining power of small farmers.

#### **Easing Access to Credit**

Cooperative banks, RRBs, and other institutions could expand collateral-free credit to pig farmers, supported by extension advisories and technical handholding.

#### **Strengthened Extension for Enterprise Development**

Extension agencies will be crucial in training SHGs, FIGs, and FPOs to prepare feasible and financially robust project proposals aligned with NLM norms.

#### **Micro-Processing Units for Pork**

Small-scale pork processing units, supported by AHIDF and NLM, can emerge as viable rural enterprises especially around urban catchments such as Guwahati, Dimapur, Aizawl, Shillong and Imphal.

### **Towards a Resilient Pig Economy**

To capitalise on the Budget's momentum, a coherent, region-specific strategy is essential. A promising approach could include:

#### **Developing High-Potential Tribal Piggery Clusters**

Target districts with strong production and consumption patterns, and support them through FPO-style structures to streamline marketing, procurement, and service delivery.

#### **Strengthening Farmer Capacities**

Technical assistance in breed improvement, record keeping, feeding management, and financial literacy will ensure that FPOs and SHGs can meet NLM guidelines and manage credit responsibly.

#### **Expanding Crossbreeding and AI Adoption**

Promoting scientifically managed crossbreeds and strengthening AI infrastructure will help improve growth rates and feed conversion efficiency.

#### **Mainstreaming Biosecurity**

Regular training on quarantine, sanitation, vaccination, and disease monitoring is essential to reduce the risk of devastating outbreaks.

#### **Building Market Linkages**

Forward linkages with processors, retailers, and restaurants will stabilise prices, while backward linkages with feed producers, equipment suppliers, and veterinary services will enhance production efficiency.

### **Conclusion: Will This Be the Turning Point?**

For the Northeast, the 2025–26 Budget provides more than just fiscal support; it offers a strategic framework for reimagining the pig economy. With increased funding, targeted schemes, and a renewed thrust on infrastructure and disease control, the region now has the opportunity to formalize, professionalize, and upscale pig farming.

The potential for real change exists, but turning it into reality depends on seamless collaboration among states, institutions, and farmer bodies in executing the budget's directives. For a region where pigs are not merely livestock but a cultural and economic lifeline, the Budget represents hope, possibility, and the promise of a more resilient future.

## References

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