

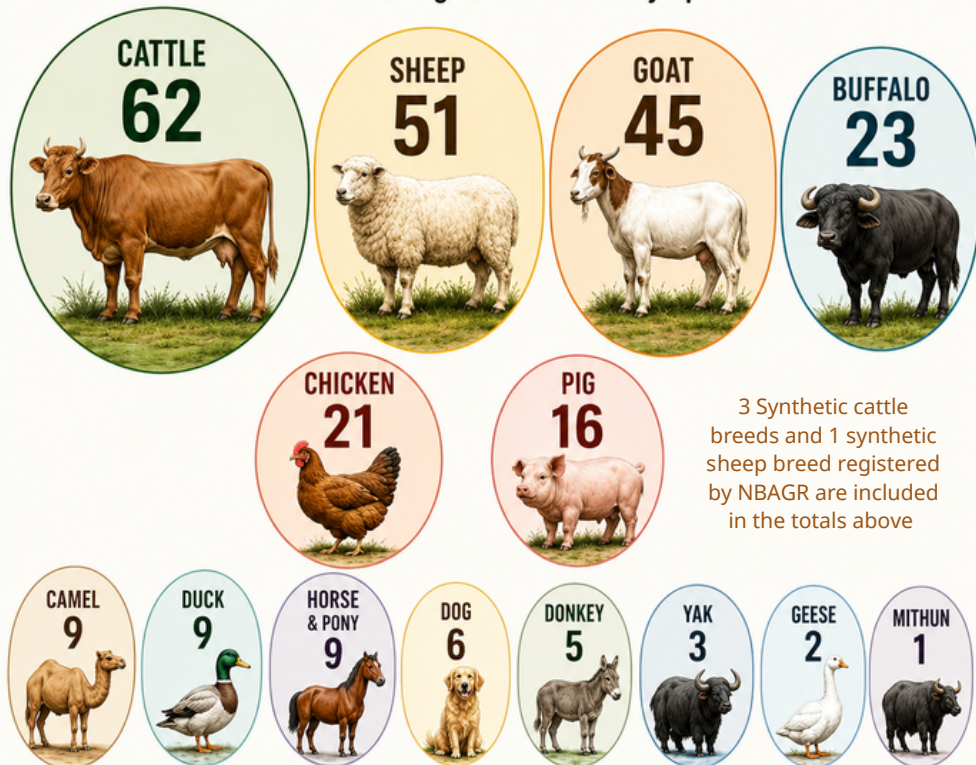
Just 6 of 14 Species Hold 83% of India's Breed Diversity

India has registered 262 distinct livestock and poultry breeds - but that genetic wealth is sharply concentrated. Cattle, Buffalo, Sheep, Goat, Pig and Chicken account for 218 of them.

				
262	110	83.2%	400	30-40 LAKH
REGISTERED BREEDS Across 14 species groups, Aug 2026	BREEDS REGISTERED In Last 12 Yrs (2015-16 to 2026-27)	HELD BY TOP 6 SPECIES Cattle, Buffaloes, Sheep, Goat, Pig and Chicken	DISTRICTS COVERED Across 24 States & 3 UTs	FARMERS INVOLVED Tied to 170 Lakh registered breed animals

THE GENETIC DIVERSITY LANDSCAPE

Number of Registered Breeds by Species



ON THE WORLD STAGE



FAO's global registry (DAD-IS) records over 8,800 distinct livestock breeds of 38 different species across 182 countries - placing India's 262 breeds at roughly 3% of the world's documented diversity. Globally, over 2,400 breeds are already at risk of extinction, and 600 are gone entirely - the backdrop Data Story # 05 examines next, for India specifically.

Source: ICAR-NBAGR, registered breeds as of August 2026; Domestic Animal Diversity Information System (DAD-IS) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)



India's Livestock Diversity Is a Genetic Asset

Data Story # 02 found India's economic stability concentrated in a handful of states. This story finds the same underlying pattern in a completely different domain — genetic diversity concentrated in a handful of species.

Cattle alone account for nearly a quarter of India's entire breed registry — 62 of 262 breeds (23.7%), more than double the next largest group (sheep, 51 breeds). This single species carries a disproportionate share of the country's documented genetic heritage.

Small ruminants form the largest combined pool after cattle — sheep (51) and goat (45) together contribute 96 breeds, 36.6% of the total, reflecting centuries of localized adaptation to India's most climate-diverse, resource-constrained regions.

This is the same concentration pattern Data Story #02 found in economic stability, applied to genetics — just as a handful of states carried India's aggregate stability, just six species (cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, chicken, pig) carry 83.2% of all registered breed diversity. Concentration, it turns out, is a recurring structural feature of this sector, not a one-off finding.

The remaining eight species each hold genuinely irreplaceable genetic material, despite tiny counts — Mithun (1 breed), Geese (2) and Yak (3) are not statistical noise; each represents a unique lineage adapted to specific regions (Northeast India's Mithun, Himalayan Yak) with no substitute if lost.

110 of these 262 breeds were registered in just the last 12 years — meaning documentation itself is accelerating, not static. This matters directly for Data Story #05, on conservation risk: a breed cannot be protected until it is first formally recognised and counted.

Data Table



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Rank	Species	Registered Breeds	% Share of Total
1	Cattle	62	23.7
2	Sheep	51	19.5
3	Goat	45	17.2
4	Buffaloe	23	8.8
5	Poultry (Chicken)	21	8.0
6	Pig	16	6.1
7	Horse/Pony	9	3.4
8	Camel	9	3.4
9	Duck	9	3.4
10	Dog	6	2.3
11	Donkey	5	1.9
12	Yak	3	1.1
13	Geese	2	0.8
14	Mithun	1	0.4
	Total	262	100.0

Source: ICAR-NBAGR, registered breeds as of August 2026

