

# MILLETS AS SUPERFOOD

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Major Crops, Cropping Patterns and various Agricultural Revolutions

Millets are food grains having high nutritional features and health benefits and are cultivated with minimal water & inputs. They are cultivated across the country in various agro-ecological regions, having less infestation of pest and diseases and thus can be grown easily as organic crops. Consequent to the initiative of the Government of India, the United Nations has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYOM). This will create both domestic and global demand and enhance exports from India. To give impetus to the export of potential products as well as to remove the bottlenecks in the supply chain of nutri cereals, the Government, through Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has created Nutri Cereals Export Promotion Forum.

The production of millets has increased from 17.26 million tonne during 2019-20 to 18.02 million tonne in 2020-21. Under National Food Security Mission (NFSM) programme, the NFSM-Nutri Cereals is being implemented in 212 districts of 14 states. Under NFSM, assistance is given through state governments to farmers for interventions like cluster demonstrations on improved package of practices, demonstrations on cropping system, distribution of seeds of High Yielding Varieties (HYVs)/hybrids, improved farm machineries/resource conservation machineries/tools, efficient water application tools, plant protection measures, nutrient management/soil ameliorants, processing & post-harvest equipments, cropping system based trainings to the farmers etc.

The mission also provides support to Indian Council of Agricultural research (ICAR) & State Agricultural Universities (SAUs)/Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) for technology back stopping and transfer of technology to the farmer under supervision of Subject Matter Specialists/Scientists. The research organizations are supported for undertaking research projects that can help enhancing production and productivity of food crops. The State Governments can also promote cultivation of millets under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana –Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture & Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY- RAFTAAR) with the approval of the State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) constituted under the chairmanship of the chief secretary of the State.

To improve acreage, production and productivity of millets across the country, the ICAR through its nodal research institute on millets, Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad is giving emphasis on development of high yielding climate resilient new varieties/hybrids which are tolerant to biotic and abiotic stresses with enhanced quality. The Government is popularizing nutri-cereals through Research & Development support and has established 3 Centres of Excellence (CoE). Support is also given to start-ups and entrepreneurs for developing recipes & value added products that promotes consumption of millets.

In order to facilitate the movement of the millets, Government has revised the guidelines for movement of the surplus production of millets to other States. The provision of inter-state transportation of surplus millets through Food Corporation of India (FCI) is incorporated to cater for advance demand placed by consuming state before the start of procurement.

The Government is implementing Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), earlier known as 'National Programme on Mid-Day Meal in Schools' for providing one hot cooked meal in Government and Government-aided schools from 2021-22 to 2025-26, wherein millets can be used by States/UTs under the scheme.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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APS/JK

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