

Good for you - the planet - the farmer



Smart Food is

food that **fulfills all the criteria** of being:

GOOD FOR YOU

GOOD FOR THE PLANET

GOOD FOR THE FARMER



Smart Food helps solve a number of our biggest issues in **unison**: rural poverty, malnutrition and adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation.

A major impact can be made if we not only popularize but also **mainstream** Smart Food – bringing diversity in diets and on the farm.

This must be undertaken, ensuring rural communities benefit through better health and livelihood improvements. Other global benefits will be new market development and growth and more sustainable diets.

Dryland cereals like **millets** and **sorghum**, and **grain legumes** are Smart Food.

How are they Good for You?

Smart Food is **highly nutritious** and address some of the largest micronutrient deficiencies and needs, especially of women and children. Examples:

- **Iron, zinc and folic acid** – Pearl millet has significantly high levels; bioavailability studies show that it can provide an average person’s daily requirement of iron and zinc.
- **Calcium** – Finger millet has 3 times the amount compared to milk.
- **Protein** – Grain legumes provide affordable protein.
- **Low Glycemic Index** – Diabetes can be avoided or managed by sorghum and millets as they have a low Glycemic Index.
- **Antioxidants** – Most Smart Foods are high in antioxidants that fight against heart diseases, lifestyle disorders and cancer
- **Gluten free**



How are they Good for the Planet?

These are also crops critical in the drylands that will best survive the harsh environments and are **most resilient** hence climate smart crops. Basically, millets are the **last crop standing in times of drought**. The millets, sorghum and legumes have close to the **lowest water and carbon footprints** of all the crops.

How are they Good for the Smallholder Farmer?

Smart Food crops are good for smallholder farmers because:

- Their climate resilience means that they are a good risk-management strategy.
- Legumes enrich the soil by fixing nitrogen and, when rotated with other crops, increase the water use efficiency of the entire crop rotation. Their multiple uses and untapped demand indicate a lot of potential.
- Unlike other crops, they have not yet reached a yield plateau and have great capacity for productivity increases.

Smart Food allows us to have Sustainable Diets i.e. diets that have low environmental impact and that contribute to food and nutrition security.



Aims of the Smart Food Initiative

The Smart Food initiative aims to bring Smart Food into mainstream along with the other major staples. The overall goal is to:

- Increase knowledge and awareness of the nutritional value and health benefits of Smart Food
- Change the image and perception of these traditional foods
- Create a demand by promoting utilization of Smart Food at household and market levels, thus benefiting the farmer, the consumer and the planet
- Motivate behavior change by empowering women with skills to prepare various dishes
- Mobilize community support for increased production, marketing and consumption of crops
- Promote greater public-private partnership

Thus, the initiative aims to accelerate and popularize investments and support for the research and development of value chains for smart food.

The major constraints

The major constraints that prevent these dryland cereals and grain legumes from reaching their full potential are: (a) significantly underdeveloped value chains and (b) perceived image of millets and sorghum as old fashioned.

Significantly less investment and policy support compared to other crops has led to untapped yields despite their nutritional merits, and multiple uses (food, feed, biofuels, brewing). There is a need for developing processed products and integrating farmers into the value chain.



Create a demand pull with consumers

Viral campaign to create a buzz around millets through social media, mass media (print, radio), reality shows on TV and brand ambassadors.

Facilitate modern convenience products by:

- Developing Smart Food signature products
- Raising awareness among processors
- Enhancing knowledge and upgrading equipment, grading processes and standards.

Ensure farmers and rural communities benefit

Connecting farmers to the value chain by linking farmer groups to processors and other buyers.

Ensuring Smart Food is introduced in diets to promote dietary diversity

- Working with community health volunteers to sensitize farmers on the nutritional benefits of locally available Smart Food.
- Training farmers on different ways of cooking Smart Food.

Advocating research for development through interactions with partners and funding agencies for raising awareness and increasing promotion.

Smart Food is a global initiative coordinated by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). In Kenya, with the support of Feed the Future and USAID, ICRISAT has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health to promote production and utilization of Smart Food which is good for consumers, the planet and the farmers.



Join the Smart Food Movement



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Smart Food is a global initiative founded by ICRISAT and coordinated globally by:

