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Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh addresses Consultative Committee of the Ministry on Millets - Coarse Cereals

Government decides to declare Year 2018 as “National Year of Millets” Production of Millets will definitely help in providing nutritional security & preventing malnutrition, especially to the poor: Shri Radha Mohan Singh

The joint efforts of the Central and State Governments and the hard work of farmers will not only increase the production of millets but also help prevent illnesses caused due to the lack of nutritious elements in diet. This was stated by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh while addressing the members of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare today on Millets - 'Coarse Cereals.'

The Minister informed that millets include Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, little millets include Kutki, Kodo, Sawa, Kangni and Cheena. Highlighting the importance of Millets, Shri Singh said that Millets are known for their nutrients. They are tolerant to drought, are photo insensitive and are resistant to climate change. The cultivation of millets requires less water than the cultivation of rice and wheat.

Millets are cultivated in low-fertile land, mountainous, tribal and rain-fed areas. These areas include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. In the pre-Green Revolution era, in 1965-66, millets were cultivated in 36.90 million hectares. In 2016-17, the area under millet cultivation declined to 14.72 million hectares (60% less coverage area) due to change in consumption pattern, dietary habits, unavailability of millets, low yield, less demand and conversion of irrigated area for cultivation of rice and wheat. As a result of this, nutrients like protein, Vitamin-A, iron and Iodine levels fell in women and children. Production of millets will definitely help in providing nutritional value, especially to the poor. Besides providing nutritional security, it also helps in preventing malnutrition.

Hon'ble Prime Minister in the meeting held on July 18, 2017, had decided to start distributing millets under Public Distribution System (PDS) to improve nutritional security, the Minister informed. Subsequently, a meeting of the committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Ayog was held on October 13, 2017 wherein it was decided to promote millets viz. Jowar, Bajra, Ragi through PDS across the country to improve nutritional content in the diet of people. On the basis of the recommendations of NITI Ayog, it has been decided to create a sub mission on Nutri cereals instead of the existing NFSM-Coarse Cereals. National Food Security Mission (NFSM) -Coarse Cereals are divided into two components: NFSM (Makka and Jau) and Sub Mission on Nutri-Cereals covering Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and little millets like Kutki, Kodo, Sawa, Kangni and Cheena.

The Government has also decided to declare 2018 as “National Year of Millets”. In case of an emergency, the cultivation of millets is very suitable for small and marginal farmers. In order to promote millets, their prescribed purchases in MSP and inclusion in Mid-day Meal are being done.
