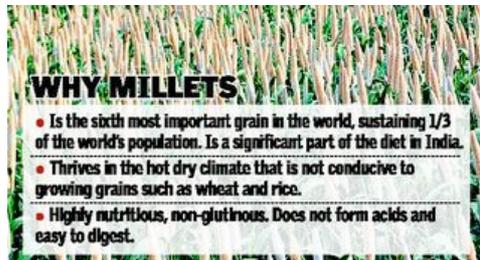


THE HINDU Business Line

Save water, include millets in PDS

Our Bureau

NUTRITION+UTILITY



Hyderabad, Feb. 1:

With water-friendly millets slowly going out of food chain, Millet Network of India, an association of non-governmental organisations and intellectuals across the country, has called for their inclusion in the public distribution system (PDS) to encourage farmers grow those crops.

A group of Millet Network associates met in Medak in Andhra Pradesh to discuss ways to promote these crops. The group has come out with a Medak Declaration urging the Centre to introduce millets in the PDS system in all millet growing areas by 2015 to start with. It cites the recommendations of the National Advisory Council. The group says the programme could be expanded to the rest of the country by 2025.

“The Government should take urgent steps to strengthen the supply side of millets to ensure this,” said .Mr P. V. Satheesh, National Convener of the Network, here in a press release. the declaration

“Millets should be encouraged as they consume less water and provide nutritious food to people. We need to introduce them in all anganwadi centres and mid-day deal programmes in Government schools,” Mr Satheesh said.

Farmers growing millets should also get financial support. Besides giving them remunerative minimum support price, they should be given a bonus of Rs 10,000 a hectare as they conserve water and the biodiversity.

Asking for a multi-pronged support to millet farmers, he said agricultural operations on millet land such as ploughing, weeding and harvesting must be included in the National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme.

Vowing to make the backward Medak country's first millet district. he said the district administration has resolved to achieve this by encouraging millet farming extensively.

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