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Millet: History of millet, types, health benefits, schemes for millet production

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Abstract

Millets are one of the oldest food known to Humans and possibly the first cereal grain to be used for domestic purpose. Millets have been main staples of the people of semi arid tropics of Asia and Africa for centuries where other crops do not grow well. Since ancient times, millet has been widely consumed in Asia and India as well. The tiny “grains” is gluten - free and packed with vitamins and mineral. Millets grains is highly nutritious with good quality protein, rich in minerals, dietary fiber, phytochemical and vitamins. Millets are found to be helpful with the reduction of weight, BMI and high blood pressure.

Keywords: Millets, history, health benefits, schemes for production

Introduction

Millet are a whole grain that’s packed with protein, antioxidants, and nutrients. They may have numerous health benefits, such as helping your blood sugar and cholesterol levels and they are gluten free, making them an excellent choice for people who have celiac disease or follow a gluten free diet.

History of Millet

Millet, any of several species of cereal grasses in the family Poaceae, cultivated for their small edible seeds. Millet were cultivated in Asia and Africa more than 5000 year ago, and that they eventually become a staple food worldwide. There are about 6000 varieties of Millet found across the world.

Types of Millets in India

The Millets commonly grown in india include Jowar (Sorghum), Bajra (Pearl Millet), Barnyard millet (Jhangora), Proso or common millet (Barri Millet), Kangni (Foxtail/ Itallian Millet), Kodo Millet (Kodra). Let us know about them detail and also know about their regional names.

Barnyard millet: Barnyard Millet is a high source of iron and fiber. It is also known as Kuthirvali in Tamil, Oodhalu in kannada, Odalu in Telugu, Kavadapullu in Malayalam and Sanwa in Hindi.

Finger Millet: Finger Millet is a staple that is a very good substitute for oats and cereals. It is known as Ragi in Kannada and Ragulu in Telugu, Koovarugu in Malayalam and Mudua in Hindi.

Foxtail Millet: Foxtail Millet is rich in minerals and vitamins. It is Known as in Telugu Kirra, Thinai in Tamil, Thinna in Malayalam, Navane in Kannada and Kangani in Hindi.

Little Millet: Little Millet is also loaded with iron and fiber, The regional name are Chama in Malayalam, Same in Kannada, Samai in Tamil, Sama in Telugu and Kutki in Hindi.

Proso Millet: Proso Millet is known as chenna in Hindi, Panivaragu in Tamil and Malayalam, in kannada it is called Baragu and Varigalu in Telugu.

Pearl Millet: Pearl millet is a high source of proteins, it is in Hindi known as Bajara, Sajje in Kannada, Sajjalu in Telugu, Kambu in Tamil and Kambam in Malayalam.

Jowar Millet: Jowar millet known as Shorghum in English, jowar is globally being touted as “new quinoa.”

Kodo Millet: Kodo Millet is called kodrava in sanskrit, Arikelu in Telugu. Varagu in

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Tamil, Varak in Malayalam, Arka in Kannada, Kodo in Hindi and in Punjabi Kodra.



Fig: Eight types of Millets picture

Health Benefits of Millet: There are some points that highlight the importance of Millets.

- Most of the Millets are non – acid forming, non – glutinous, highly nutritious, and easily digestible foods. Due to low glycemic index (GI) being gluten free, it helps in a slower release of glucose over a longer period of time thus reducing the risk of diabetes Mellitus. Some people suffering from celiac disease can easily incorporate various Millets in their diets.
- Millets rich source of minerals like calcium, iron, zinc, phosphorous, It is also contains appreciable amounts of dietary fiber and vitamins such as folic acid, vitamin B6, Beta – carotene, and niacin. The availability of high amounts of lecithin is useful for strengthening the nervous system and regular consumption of Millets can help to overcome malnutrition.
- Millets are rich in phytochemicals like tannins, phytosterols, they do contain some anti – nutritional factors which can be reduced by certain processing treatment.
- Millets are found to be helpful with the reduction of weight, BMI, and blood pressure.
- Millets has a beneficial effect on the management and prevention of hyperlipidemia and risk of CVD.

Scheme for Millet Production

Government has recognized the role of millets in the food chain. Under the National Food Security Mission. The Indian policymakers refocused their attention towards Millets farming systems and enacted policies to create an enabling

environment for the farmers. With respect to millets production. Some of the existing schemes by the Government of India include.

1. Integrated cereals development programmes in coars cereals ICDP-CC based cropping systems areas.
2. Initiative for Nutritional security through Millet Promotion – INSIMP a part of “Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana” - RKKVY which is the only comprehensive initiative to support Millet production.

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