

Millets and Organics International Trade Fair - 2024

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SUMMARY

The fifth edition of the Millets and Organics International Trade Fair, organized by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka, serves as a significant platform for stakeholders in the organic and millet sectors to connect and explore opportunities in agriculture, horticulture, processing, machinery and Agri-technology. India, particularly Karnataka, has witnessed a surge in organic farming, with the state leading in the promotion of millets through initiatives like the Raithasiri scheme. The state emphasizes the triple benefits of millets as "Smart Foods" for farmers, consumers, and the environment. Efforts include incentives for millet farmers, establishment of a Millet Centre of Excellence and market linkages for organic produce. Consumer awareness campaigns, workshops and exhibitions further contribute to the promotion of millets and organics, showcasing Karnataka's two-decade journey in sustainable agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

The fifth edition of Millets and Organics International Trade Fair is organized by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka. It will be a platform for farmers, farmer groups, domestic and international companies, central and state institutions in the organic and millet sector to connect and explore opportunities in Agri-horticulture, processing, machinery and Agri-technology. The organic farming and food industry has seen a major boost in the post-pandemic world. Despite the disrupted supply chains and distress to farmers worldwide during the pandemic, India registered the highest growth by adding about 360,000 hectares of organic land. The Government of Karnataka has been a leader in the promotion of organics and millets with the First Organics and Millets trade Fair being held in 2017, and subsequently the second, third and fourth editions in 2018, 2019 and 2023 respectively in Bengaluru.



Organic Agriculture

- India stands 1st with 44,30,000 organic producers. (Source: Economic survey, (2022-23))
- India is 6th in World's organic agricultural land i.e. 26.60 lakh hectares. (Source: Economic survey, 2022-23)
- India's organic land increased by 18.77 lakh hectares in the last decade. (FAOSTAT)
- Total area under organic certification process in India is 101.70 lakh hectares. (APEDA Statistics)

Let's Millet

- India produces over 50.9 million tonnes (as per fourth advance estimate) of millet which accounts for 80 per cent of Asia's and 20 per cent of global production.
- On an average, India's yield of millet is 1239 kg/ha, compared to the global average yield of 1229 kg/ha.
- Millets are the traditional foods for more than half a billion people in Asia and Africa.

Natural Farming

- India has 1 million hectare cultivated land under natural farming as of 2022 (Source: NMNF).
- The total number of farmers practising natural farming is estimated to be 16.78 lakhs.
- India aims to bring 10 million farmers to adopt natural farming over the next three years. (Source: NMNF)

Karnataka's Journey

Govt of Karnataka initiated promotion of organic farming as a sound and viable alternative way back 2 decades ago. An exclusive organic policy was brought out way back in 2004 to address self-reliance, rural development and nature conservation. • Various Organic farming promotional programmes were initiated under the policy in the State. Frequent droughts during later part of the last decade compelled the state government to look out for alternative crops. A revised organic policy was brought out in 2017, emphasizing on millets. Since then, the State government has been promoting traditionally & organically grown millets as the "Smart Foods" as they cater to the most important three objectives;

- Good for the farmer as they have multiple uses (food, fodder, fuel) and as a good risk management strategy in times of drought.
- Good for the consumer to overcome some of the biggest nutritional and health problems (iron, zinc, folic acid, calcium, diabetes and more).
- Good for the environment as they have a low water footprint, arable to survive in the hottest driest climates and will be important in coping with climate change and more.

“Presently, *Karnataka ranks eighth* in the country in terms of certified organic area (82015.56 hectares) and fourth in terms of total certified organic annual production (237091.43 MT)”.

Encouragement to Millet Farmers:

To enhance area under Minor Millets/nutri-cereals viz., Foxtail millet, Little millet, Indian barnyard millet, Kodo millet, Brown top millet and Proso millet in the state, Raithasiri scheme was initiated during 2019-20 which has benefitted a total number of 100604 farmers with financial expenditure of Rs.81.54 crores since inception.

Production incentive of Rs: 10,000/- per hectare based on the crop survey data to encourage millet growing farmers through DBT

Distribution of 21840.92 Qtls of Ragi, 998.24 qtls of Bajra, 132.33 Qtls of sorghum and 53.53 Qtls of Fox Tail seeds to farmers during Kharif 2023.

Promotion for Millet Processing:

Processing of millets is still a challenge & processed millets have poor shelf life. Hence, encouragement is being given at Farm gate level.

- An assistance of 50% or maximum of Rs. 10.00 lakhs subsidy provided end to end millet processing machineries (Processing, Grading, Value addition, Packing and Branding from interested. machineries) by inviting applications from interested.
- Millet centre of excellence established in the University of Agriculture Sciences; Raichur & Bangalore provides training & incubation facilities.
- Karnataka perceives minor millets as '*Siridhanya*' or '*Rich grains*'.

Efforts to provide Market linkages to State's Millet & Organic produce:

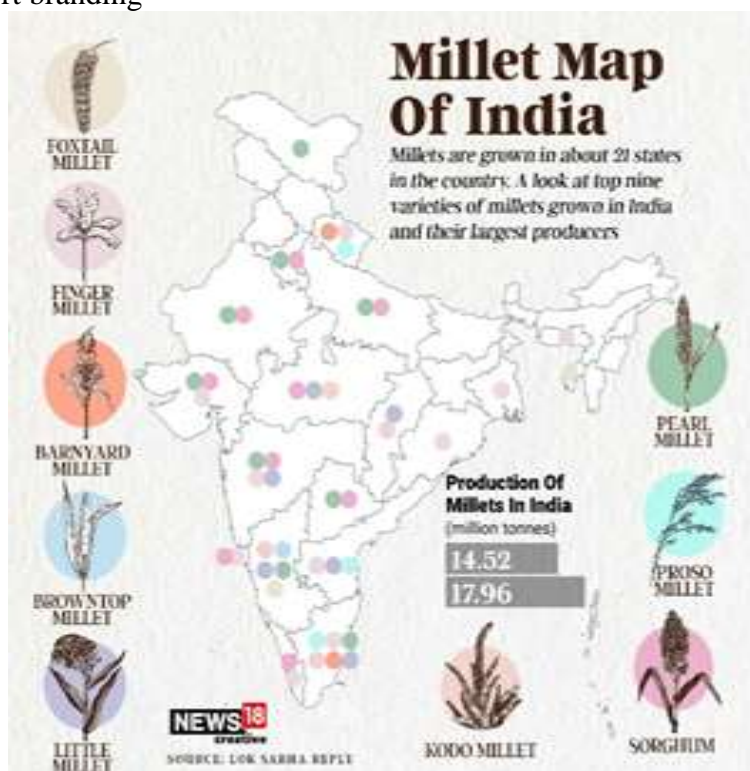
Organic farmers associations registered for organic certification were federated to form 15 regional organic federations throughout the State.

10 regional organic federations engaged exclusively into procurement, processing & marketing of millets.

Consumer Awareness Campaigns:

- Workshops for chefs, Dieticians, Nutritionists, Fitness and Food Bloggers, Canteen Caterers
- Millet Run, Panel discussions, Recipe sharing through mass media, Recipe books, cooking
- Trainings/webinars on millet value chain technologies to millet stake holders
- Exhibitions and Food Courts
- Road shows in important cities of State/country
- Celebrity talks/Radio jingles/Hoardings /Mass Media etc

- Malls, Metro and Airport branding



Area under millets during 2022-23 Total area: 15.61 lakh ha.

- Major Millets: 15.26 lakh ha (Ragi - 8.28 lakh ha, Jowar - 5.67 lakh ha & Bajra - 1.31 lakh ha)
- Minor Millets: 0.35 lakh ha (Foxtail millet, little millet, kodo millet, prosomillet, barnyard millet & browntop millet)

CONCLUSION

The *Millets and Organics International Trade Fair*, organized by the Government of Karnataka's Department of Agriculture, stands as a pivotal event fostering connections and opportunities in the organic and millet sectors. The state's commendable journey in promoting organic farming, particularly through the emphasis on millets as "Smart Foods," showcases a commitment to addressing farmers' needs, consumer health concerns, and environmental sustainability. Karnataka's innovative initiatives, such as the Raithasiri scheme and production incentives for millet farmers, demonstrate a proactive approach to enhancing cultivation and processing. The establishment of a Millet Centre of Excellence further underscores the state's dedication to knowledge-sharing and skill development. By fostering market linkages, forming organic federations, and conducting extensive consumer awareness campaigns, Karnataka is not only supporting its agricultural community but also contributing significantly to the broader promotion of organic and millet-based practices, marking a positive stride towards sustainable and resilient agriculture.

REFERENCE

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