



CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS

by
Small Millets Team at TCA, Dholi, RPCAU



Field Day/ Awareness Programme/ Millet Exhibition/ Seed Distribution



India occupies an important place in International market. In order to revive the glory of small millets, on the proposal of India, the United Nations has declared the year 2023 as International year of Millets. This will increase the demand of millets in domestic and international market. Millets are also called nutricereals, smart food and super good as they are rich in minerals and fiber content. Some mineral contents like Calcium, iron, zinc, phosphorus and magnesium are 3 to 4 times more in millets than in rice, wheat and maize. By including millets in our food basket, we can prevent many lifestyle diseases like, hypertension, diabetes, anemia, osteoporosis, etc. Millets can also be grown on marginal land with very less water requirement; they can tolerate high temperatures and drought. They are the most suitable crops for the changing climate. If we look at the consumption pattern, Bihar is one of the biggest consumer of millets still the area under millet cultivation is very low. In order to increase the acreage, improve the production and establish a value chain the Indian government has started many programs in millets. Accordingly, ICAR -AICRP in small millets through its different centers is organizing many awareness programs.

The ICAR-AICRP on small millets at TCA Dholi, RPCAU organized a field day/ awareness program/ millet exhibition/ seed distribution to celebrate the International Year of Millets at the Dholi center on October 14th, 2022. The beneficiaries of this event were farmers of Bihar, students and scientists. The event saw:

- Farmer-scientists interface
- Field visit and scientific talks
- Demonstration of value added products in small millets
- Quality discussions with farmers about their problems and apprehensions to grow millets – discussed solutions and formulation of need based research
- Encouraged farmers to grow finger millet as a summer crop also to increase production
- Distribution of quality seed of small millets and biofertilizers among farmers.

Through this event the farmers, students and scientists were shown different types of small millets crops in the field in flowering and maturity condition and were deliberated about the following by Dr Sweta Mishra, Principal Investigator and Breeder, Dr Kaushal Kishor, Agronomist and Dr G S Giri, Entomologist, ICAR-AICRP-Small millets:

- different high yielding varieties of small millets,
- their nutritional content and benefits of including millets in the food basket,
- scientific cultivation practices,
- processing and
- value addition to increase their income
- the benefits of millet cultivation,
- various government schemes facilitating millet production, etc.

The honb'le Vice Chancellor, Dr P S Pandey presided over the program and was accompanied by the Director Research, Dr P S Brahmanand, Dean TCA, Dholi Dr A K Singh, Director Seed and farms Dr P P Singh.

The Principal Investigator of AICRP Small Millets Dr Sweta Mishra, team members Dr Kaushal Kishor, Dr G S Giri, Dr Sangita Sahni and Dr Bishun Deo Prasad showed them the millet field that is spread in about 5.5 acre land. They were informed about:

- The various trials that are being conducted at the small millets center, including breeding, agronomical and entomological trails. A total of 19 trials with several treatments are being conducted in the small millets center on different small millet crops.

- There are 7 different types of millets on which the center is working like finger millet, foxtail millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, little millet, kodo millet and browntop millet.
- A huge amount of breeding material is being maintained in the center primarily those of finger millet, foxtail millet, proso millet and barnyard millet.
- 143 germplasm resource of finger millet and 60 of proso millet are being maintained at the small millets center.
- Various new breeding activities have been initiated by the center.
- This year, prior to this event, two 3-day training programmes have already been conducted in which 50 SC farmers were benefitted. Farm implements and seeds of finger millet and proso millet were also distributed to the farmers.
- The center has taken many initiatives to develop high yielding varieties with improved quality and earliness.
- Many varieties of small millets have been released by the small millets center since 1972 of which the major ones are: Finger millet – RAU 8, RAU 3, BR 407; Foxtail millet – RAU 2; Proso millet – BR 7; Barnyard millet – RAU 1, RAU 4, RAU 5, RAU 6, RAU 9, RAU 11, Dholi sama – 1, Dholi sama – 2, Dholi sama 3, Dholi sama 4.
- Breeder seeds production of all the above-mentioned varieties is being done.
- The PI, Dr Sweta Mishra also conveyed about the encouraging results of growing finger millet as a summer crop with irrigation and exhorted the need to encourage cultivation of finger millet short duration variety RAU 3 in summer for expansion of area and production in Bihar
- The Director Seed and Farm, Dr P P Singh urged to make provisions to introduce RAU 3 into the seed chain.
- Two technologies have been released from agronomy in coordination with other AICRP centers.
- The center also displayed many value added products like Madua halwa, madua laddoo, madua thekua, madua mathri, madua malted atta and multigrain atta, prepared by Dr Gitanjali Chaudhary, Food and Nutrition department, Community Science College, RPCAU.
- The Honb'le Vice Chancellor, Dr P S Pandey distributed quality seed of small millets to the farmers

The Honb'le Vice Chancellor praised the efforts made by the small millets center and was happy to see the trials and good maintenance of the breeding material. He was impressed by the number of varieties released by the center and asked to further the work. In his address he stressed upon the farmers to grow the millets in their fields and include them in their daily diet. He also suggested that development of need based and area specific varieties and technologies are bound to yield benefits to the farmers. He also encouraged that the youth should be motivated to take up agriculture as business model for more and sustainable profit and said that cooperative farming has the potential to solve the marketing issues in the villages. The Director of Research deliberated that millets are the crops of future and reflected about the need to diversify agriculture and include millets in inter-cropping systems. Concluding the program the Dean, TCA, Dholi, Dr A K Singh thanked the dignitaries, the participants and congratulated the Small Millets team for successful organization of events and celebration of International Year of Millets.