

THE HINDU Business Line

Millet cultivation more viable than commercial crops

Our Bureau



Hubli, June 14:

“Millet cultivation provides farmers more economic stability than commercial crops,” said Mr P.V. Satish, Convenor, Millet Network of India (MNI).

Speaking at the millet food festival at Dharwad, he said, “It is a mere myth that commercial crops benefit the farmers monetarily. Instead, it is found that farmers who committed suicides due to agrarian crisis were the ones who went for commercial crops and not traditional crops like millet.”

Citing statistics to prove a point, Mr Satish said that the maximum yield per acre for commercial crops such as the Bt cotton was 5-6 quintals and the gross income was Rs 10,000-12,000 an acre.

The net income for an acre would be around Rs 5,000 after deducting the expenses. Whereas millet ensured minimum five quintals of yield/acre and there was no investment required.

The gross income per acre was between Rs 16,000 and Rs 18,000 and the farmer's net income would be around Rs 13,000-15,000 an acre after deducting expenses which would not cross Rs 3,000-4,000 an acre.

Millet, which once formed the staple diet of the people in parts of Karnataka, has gradually disappeared from the menu.

Although rich in nutrients, the cultivation of millets had gone down following the problems after harvesting.

The food festivals act as a platform in sensitising farmers on the profitable cultivation of millet.

Govt incentives

Keeping all this in mind, the government should provide an incentive of Rs 5,000/acre to the farmers cultivating millet, said Mr Satish.

It is time for the government to take steps to promote the millet cultivation. Millet is nutritious and is gaining popularity among the urban people.

Millet is grown in 10-20 million acres of land in India and the total amount required to provide incentives would not be more than Rs 1,000 crore.

The fertiliser subsidy provided by the Government was Rs 1.40 lakh crore last year, he further said.

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