

# Introduce millets in PDS, demand growers

## Support bonus of Rs. 10,000 per hectare of millets sought

Staff Correspondent

**DHARWAD:** The two-day national convention of millet growers held at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) Dharwad here on Sunday and Monday has come up with 'Dharwad Declaration' for consideration of the policy makers, administrators, scientists, farmers and civil society groups in India and abroad.

The declaration demanded introduction of millets in the Public Distribution System besides encouraging production, storage and distribution of millets at the local level. Lack of encouragement for farmers to take up millet cultivation could facilitate capture of millet production by large industrial houses and corporations.

Besides introducing millets in the PDS, the Government should ensure the use of millets in Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), school meal programmes, welfare hostels, government canteens, and state celebrations. This will not only ensure a large market for millets but also recapture for millets their just position in the food culture in the country. This will also enhance the nutritional status of the population, the declaration said.

The Government should withdraw the Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion



**'POPULARISE ITS USE':** Millet growers want the Government to create awareness among schoolchildren on the nutritional value of millets.

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(INSIMP) as it destroys the millet cultivation environment by insisting on hybridisation, mono-cropping and use of chemicals for cultivation of millets. The declarations suggested that the Government should adopt a new policy to promote cultivation of millets using traditional methods besides providing support bonus of Rs. 10,000 per hectare to farmers growing millets.

Use of millets can be popularised only if awareness on its nutritional value is created among schoolchildren. So, the Government should take steps to introduce informa-

tion on importance of cultivating and consuming millets in school syllabus.

Besides that, the Government should promote manufacture and supply of manual machines to process millets.

Besides, the Government should encourage research on millets and farmers should be involved in research-related activities.

The declaration expressed concern over the promotion of industrial maize, policies on land acquisition, and demanded rightful emphasis of millets' role in safeguarding human health and their recognition as health food.