



## Push to Coarse Cereals

**For Prelims:** Coarse Cereals & It's Production

**For Mains:** Significance of Coarse Cereals, Uses & Features of Coarse Cereals, Government Intervention

### Why in News?

Recently, a meeting was organised by the **Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD)**, to discuss the procurement of the **Kharif produce for 2022-2023**.

- The government of India has considered pushing towards **coarse cereals as climate change affects wheat and paddy cultivation**.
- Procurement target for coarse cereals is **doubled from Kharif crop market**, more coarse grains likely to be seen in rations.

### What are Coarse Cereals?

#### ▪ About:

- Coarse cereals are traditionally **grown in resource poor agro-climatic regions** of the country.
  - Agro-climatic zone is a land unit in terms of major climates suitable for a certain range of crops and cultivars.
- Sorghum, pearl millet, maize, barley, finger millet and several small millets such as kodo millet, little millet, foxtail millet, proso millet and barnyard millet together called coarse cereals.
  - Sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, maize and small millets (barnyard millet, proso millet, kodo millet and foxtail millet) **are also called nutri-cereals**.

#### ▪ Significance:

- Coarse cereals are known for **nutria-rich content** and having characteristics like **drought tolerance, photo-insensitivity and resilient to climate change etc.**
  - These crops also offer a good potential in the **food processing industry** and as a **promising exportable commodity**.
- **Their cultivation in drought prone areas** for providing food for human consumption, feed & fodder for animal and poultry, use as fuel and industrial uses are common.
  - Their nutritious value serves as an excellent tool to **combat malnutrition**.
- It helps in **generating employment in low rainfall areas** where other alternative crops are limited and these crops are used as a contingent crop.

#### ▪ Coarse Cereals Producing States:

- Karnataka, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh etc.

#### ▪ Uses of Coarse Cereals:

##### ◦ Fodder:

- The cultivation of **Millets** like sorghum and pearl millet in some Northern States like Haryana, Punjab and Western UP is primarily done for fodder purposes.

##### ◦ Industrial Products:

- **Sorghum:** Used in Malting, high fructose syrup, starch, Jaggery, bakery etc.
- **Pearl millet:** Used in Brewing/malting, starch, bakery, poultry and animal feed.
- **Maize:** Used in Brewing, starch, bakery, poultry and animal feed, bio-fuel.
- **Source of Feed:**
  - The demand for coarse cereals for **animals and poultry feed** is on the rise.
  - In India, feed requirements are met from **waste food grains** in general and **made especially from coarse cereals**.
  - Maize is the preferred carbohydrate source in poultry feed.

## Why is the Government Shifting Focus on Coarse Cereals?

- **Climate Change:**
  - **Climate change** has affected the production of wheat and paddy in the country, indicating **a need to shift focus to coarse cereals**.
    - Cultivation of the wheat and paddy will not be enough to meet the country's food needs due to **erratic weather patterns**.
- **Monsoon:**
  - Erratic **monsoon** 2022 has increased the government's concern for the Kharif season yield.
  - The sowing of paddy and pulses was severely affected in most areas in 2022.
- **Sustainable Crop:**
  - Coarse cereals have characteristics like **drought tolerance, photo-insensitivity and resilient to climate change etc.**
- **Low Cost of cultivation:**
  - The cost of cultivation is less compared to summer paddy cultivation and also it requires lesser quantum of water for irrigation.
- **Increased Coarse Cereals Production:**
  - Coarse cereals have been sown in **17.63 million hectares in 2022** as against 16.93 million hectares in 2021.
  - About **50 million tonnes of coarse cereals** are produced in the country at present.
    - Maize and millets are grown the most.

## What Steps are Government Taking to Support Coarse Cereals?

- **Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millet Promotion (INSIMP):**
  - Government announced an allocation of **Rs. 300 crores in 2011-12** under **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** for promotion of millets as **Nutri-cereals**.
  - The scheme aimed to **demonstrate the improved production and post-harvest technologies** in an integrated manner with visible impact to catalyze increased production of millets in the country.
- **Increase in Minimum Support Price:**
  - The government has hiked the **Minimum Support Price** of Millets, which came as a big price incentive for farmers.
    - Further, to provide a steady market for the produce, the government has included millets in the **public distribution system**.
- **Input Support:**
  - The government has introduced provision of seed kits and inputs to farmers, building value chains through Farmer Producer Organisations and supporting the marketability of millets.
- **International Year of Millets:**
  - **The United Nation General Assembly** adopted an India-sponsored resolution to mark 2023 as the "**International Year of Millets**".
  - India celebrated 2018 as the "**National Year of Millets**".

### UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question

**Q. With reference to 'Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion', which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)**

1. This initiative aims to demonstrate the improved production and post-harvest technologies, and to

- demonstrate value addition techniques, in an integrated manner, with cluster approach.
2. Poor, small, marginal and tribal farmers have larger stake in this scheme.
  3. An important objective of the scheme is to encourage farmers of commercial crops to shift to millet cultivation by offering them free kits of critical inputs of nutrients and micro irrigation Equipment.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (c)**

**Explanation:**

- ‘Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion’ Scheme aims to demonstrate the improved production and post-harvest technologies in an integrated manner with visible impact to catalyse increased production of millets in the country. Besides increasing production of millets, the Scheme, through processing and value addition techniques, is expected to generate consumer demand for millet based food products. Hence, statement 1 is correct.
- Technology demonstrations in compact blocks would be organized in selected districts for four categories of millets – sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet and small millets. Poor, small, marginal and tribal farmers have a larger stake in this scheme. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- There is no such provision to encourage farmers of commercial crops to shift to millet cultivation. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

**Source: DTE**

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