

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2631
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2010
AREA UNDER MILLETS
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether millets like bajra, jowar, ragi etc. are more nutritious than rice and wheat;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether millets can be grown in harsh environment with little inputs like chemical fertilisers and pesticides;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether millets are more drought resistant having a wide range of area specific varieties and the nutritional value of millets has now been recognized by urban elite;
- (f) if so, whether the Government proposes to encourage production and consumption of millets and to provide incentives to farmers;
- (g) if so, the details thereof; and
- (h) the details of decline in area under millet cultivation as compared to wheat and rice during the last three years?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Millets contain more protein, fiber, minerals, vitamins, etc. which are normally deficient in Indian diet. Compared to rice, Jowar has 8 times more fiber; ragi has 40 times more calcium; bajra has 8 times more iron and 5 times more riboflavin and folic acid.

(c) to (h): Yes, Madam. Millet crops are largely grown in arid and semi-arid areas with low rainfall (200-600 mm) under rainfed condition with low input consumption.

These crops have more tolerance to dry spells rather than high water consuming crops and also have ability to escape the drought. During last 15 years, more than 80 hybrids of millets and more than 100 high yielding varieties of millets have been released. A Variety of products like multi grain flour, multi –grain roasted snacks, bakery, barnyard rice are available in retail chains for urbanites. In order to increase the production and productivity of Millets, Government of India has been implementing schemes like Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals (excluding Maize) Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP- Coarse Cereals) under Macro Management of Agriculture Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). Besides, Minimum Support Price of Millets have been announced every year by the Government before commencement of kharif season to attract the farmer towards cultivation of millets.

The details of area under millets as compared to rice and wheat during last three years is given below:-

Crop Area in Lakh ha

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Millets	197.61	185.7	186.43
Rice	439.14	455.37	418.70
Wheat	280.38	277.52	283.42