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To
The Editor,

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Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

Small millets a potential crop to address the nutritional insecurity

Producing “Nutri-foods” is the need of the hour and small millets have the potential to address the nutritional issues” says the Honorable Vice Chancellor Dr. K. Ramasamy, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore while inaugurating the National Consultation meeting on ‘Promotion of Small Millets’, held at TNAU, Coimbatore. A two day consultation workshop was jointly organized by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore DHAN Foundation, Madurai on 5th -6th August, 2014 at Golden Jubilee Hall, TNAU Coimbatore, under the aegis of Revalorizing Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia Project. He had spelt out the missing links must be setright of. At a time when the country is confronting the problem of child malnutrition, diabetes and other life style diseases, Clinging to small millets which are rich in minerals, vitamins, fibre would increase the composition of flavored to reduce antioxidants and for better release of carbohydrates. He also stressed that apart from productivity quality crops are important for food security.

Th. M. Kathikeyan, Principal Investigator of the Revalorizing Small Millets project said that the project was initiated in 2011 in an effort to increasing the cultivation, production, distribution, and daily consumption of nutritious small millets and associated crops in rainfed regions in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Funded by Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF) of IDRC-CIDA, this multi country- multi partner action research project covered wider canvas, including on-farm conservation, varietal improvement, addressing production and post-harvest constraints, development of food products, promoting consumption of small millets, making the products available through private and public channels, and informing policy and practices. Three years brought out that

interest on small millets has increased; however lot of work is still needed in terms of he stressed the need for rural area development which generate wealth and recycle wealth to avoid siphoning off to urban research, demand creation and local market development to further carry out the process, he added.

In his keynote address, Mr. M.P. Vasimalai, Executive Director, DHAN Foundation expressed that focusing on consumption, cultivation, conservation and commercialization of small millets is crucial for having an integrated approach in promoting small millets. Setting up of effective mechanisms for collaborating with various stakeholders, including TNAU and the government, is needed to achieve the above. Bringing small millets into mainstream diet is the challenge ahead and the stakeholders meeting can be held once in three months, to ensure increased production and consumption of small millets, he added

Dr. Kirit Patel, Professor, Canadian Mennonite University, Canada in his Special address delineated that five Canadian universities are involved in this action research project, apart from the partners in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal to address the food and nutritional security needs of the people. The current production level of Finger millet and Kodo millet is abysmally low, which can provide only 175 g/individual/month in Tamil Nadu. The project has laid a foundation for future course of action and he hoped that the next phase of the project will help in a great way to address the production, productivity, consumption and marketing issues.

The meet of more than 100 stakeholders involved in production and marketing of small millets ranging from farmers, seed companies, aggregators, small and large scale processors, food companies, small millet related machinery manufacturers, development and extension agencies, research scientists and policy makers. This consultation among stakeholders created a platform to bring out the current status in production, productivity, post harvest technology, processing, marketing and consumption of small millet, issues and future opportunities. The aim is to create a win-win situation for all the stakeholders, which will greatly contribute to increase in consumption of small millets. An exhibition of millet products, machineries and research activities done on small millets was also held in the venue.

Earlier Dr. D. Malathi, Professor, Post Harvest Technology centre, TNAU, delivered the welcomed the gathering and Mr. M. Palanisamy, Program Leader, DHAN Foundation proposed a formal vote of thanks.

Public Relations Officer

