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Govt urged to promote millet cultivation

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DHARWAD: P V Satish, convener of Millet Network of India (MNI), urged the government to provide an incentive of Rs 5,000 per acre to farmers cultivating millet.

Speaking to reporters here on Tuesday, he said the government should take steps to promote cultivation of millets, which are rich in nutrition content and becoming popular among the people.

Millet is grown on 10-20 million acres of land in India and the total amount required to provide incentives will not be more than Rs 1,000 crore. "The fertilizer subsidy provided by the government is Rs 1.40 lakh crore last year," he said.

Satish maintained that millet cultivation will provide farmers economic stability and it is a myth that only commercial crops benefit them in monetary terms. "It is revealed that majority of farmers who committed suicide are those who suffered financial losses in commercial crops," he asserted.

Satish pointed out that maximum yield per acre for commercial crops like Bt cotton is 5-6 quintals and it gives the gross income of Rs 10,000-12,000 per acre. The net income per acre will be around Rs 5,000 after deducting the expenses. Whereas, millet ensured minimum five quintals of yield per acre and there is no investment. The gross income per acre was between Rs 16,000 to Rs 18,000 and farmers could get a per-acre income in Rs 13,000-Rs 15,000 range after deducting other expenses, which would not cross Rs 3,000-Rs 4,000 an acre.

Satish said the government had been urged to include millet in the list of foodgrains supplied under Public Distribution System (PDS). National Advisory Council had accepted the proposal and asked the government to take steps in this direction. Besides, 250 MPs have signed the memorandum submitted in this regard, he said.

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