

## Millets Fair-cum-Exhibition organized at the ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur

Millets Fair-cum-Exhibition was organized at the ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur, Rajasthan from 20-21 April 2023 under the aegis of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India as a part of sensitization of all stakeholders engaged in production, marketing, value-addition and consumption of millets in which three cabinet ministers viz., Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State, Food Processing Industries & Jal Shakti, and Shri Kailash Choudhary, Minister of State of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare participated to interact with the Millet-based food processors, Entrepreneurs and farmers who showed a lot of enthusiasm in diverse range of millet-based products at the exhibition. The event was attended by more than 300 stakeholders including industry experts, micro food processing enterprises, SHGs, FPOs etc.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Guest, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat talked about the changing pattern of food consumption around the world with the introduction of Ready-to-Eat and Ready-to-Cook food products. He stated that such a changing scenario offers vast opportunities for the next generation of farmers who should be sensitized and trained in processing, value addition and marketing of millets.



Shri Prahlad Singh Patel stated how with the declaration of the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets by the United Nations, the country has come a long way on the journey to restore the glory of millets under the leadership of Prime Minister. He touched upon the importance of food processing as an important link to bridge the gap and benefit farmers directly. He narrated the government's focus on

the creation of food testing laboratories to better the quality parameters which in turn would provide immense market scope for value-added products.

Shri Kailash Choudhary highlighted about the efforts of Prime Minister in branding Millets as “Shree Anna” to the global scale. He mentioned that India is the leading producer of Millets and so as Rajasthan and the farmers of the country should be encouraged to set up their own food processing units. He applauded the various schemes by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India that have been designed to support and empower farmers and aspiring entrepreneurs of the country. He also lauded the research efforts of ICAR and CAZRI and praised the value added products prepared by the institute to promote Pearl millets. He urged participants to take a pledge to use Millets as part of their household meals. Smt. Simi Chaudhary, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Food processing industries, Government of India also spoke on this occasion. Dr. O. P. Yadav, Director, CAZRI presented an overview of deliberations of interactive sessions and talked about need of policy to enhance production and popularization of millet crops similar to that of rice and wheat.

Earlier, the two-days Summit was inaugurated on 20 April Ms Vanita Seth, the Mayor of the Jodhpur Nagar Nigam in the presence of Mr. Bharat Patel, General Secretary, Knowledge Chamber of Commerce and Industries and , Dr. O.P. Yadav, Director, CAZRI, Jodhpur. The Mayor applauded the role of CAZRI in the production of pearl millet crop using minimum irrigation water in a hot arid climate of desert region. She urged the Ministry to organize similar big summits and to spread the message on the usefulness of millet based products, their nutritious value to the farmers of this region. Mr. Bharat Patel stated that on the International Year of Millets 2023, this program is held as a part of initiative spearheaded under the vision of the Hon’ble Prime Minister and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India for organizing Millet Mahotsav in 20 states and 30 districts this year.