

Finger Millet (ML-365) – Gaining momentum among Tribes

Rationale

Millets are the major staple food of hill dwellers of Western Ghats of Erode District. Among the millets grown in this region, the Finger Millet (Ragi) is the major crop cultivated over 5000 ha and the remaining millets cultivated in small pockets for their own consumption. Generally the harvested grains are reserves as seed materials for the subsequent season. There was a steady decrease in finger millet area was noticed in Erode district over a decade of time due to introduction of high value crops and crop diversification. The problem is compounded by the fact that the majority of the farmers in the rainfed regions are lack of awareness on new and high yielding ragi varieties. Keeping this view, KVK demonstrated the short duration (100 days) finger millet variety ML-365 for sustainable finger millet production in Erode district.



KVK Intervention

- KVK organized frontline demonstrations on short duration finger millet variety ML-365 in Bargur and Talavadi hills of Erode district. The demonstrations conducted in 65 farmers field in the last three years for its wider dissemination.
- Training programmes organized on production and value addition in finger millet covering 250 farmers in the district.
- With the support of TNSFAC, KVK promoted 2 Farmer Producers Organizations in the district and established 3 decentralized millet processing and value addition units for the benefit of farming community.
- The success of the technology paved way for wider adoption of ML-365 a variety among the millet growers in the Western Ghats of Erode district.
- Seed production activities were taken up in the progressive farmers field with the support of Department of Agriculture to ensure the timely availability of seeds for the farmers.

Millet Processing Unit

To enhance and sustain the income from millet crops, KVK established 3 decentralized millet processing units in Gobichettipalayam, Bargur and Arepalayam areas. KVK promoted peoples institutions and FPOs maintaining the processing units and the farmers in this regions are effectively utilizing this units for value addition. 14 millet based value added products were developed with the technical support of KVK. On an average, monthly 2 to 3 ton of millets were processed and pulverized from each units and 750 kg of millet based value added products produced by entrepreneurs and marketed through (AESC) Agri Entrepreneurs Service Centre promoted by KVK in the district.

Outcome and Impact

- 19.62 percent yield increase was noticed by adoption of ML-365 with ICM practices
- KVK and Department of agriculture jointly produced 8.6 ton seeds and distributed to the farmers through FPO and CMRC
- 613 farmers covered 1790 acres under ML-365 finger millet cultivation in the past 3 years
- 20 percent of the finger millet area
- On an average 15 to 20 ton of millet per year.
- The sustainable market arrangement Producers organization for farmers
- The hill products now marketed to


