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## What Are Coarse Cereals?

### Context:

Government push to coarse cereals as climate change affects wheat, paddy cultivation.

### Relevance:

GS III: Agriculture

### Dimensions of the Article:

1. What are Coarse Cereals?
2. Significance
3. Why has the Government changed its attention to Coarse Cereals?

### What are Coarse Cereals?

- The country's agroclimatic zones with limited resources have traditionally grown coarse cereals.
  - Agroclimatic zones are geographic areas with predominant climates that are ideal for a particular range of crops and cultivars.
- Sorghum, pearl millet, maize, barley, finger millet and other small millets such as kodo millet, little millet, foxtail millet, proso millet and barnyard millet together called coarse cereals.
- **Coarse Cereals Producing States:** Karnataka, Rajasthan, Puducherry, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh etc.

### Uses of Coarse Cereals:

- The cultivation of Millets like sorghum and pearl millet in some Northern States like Haryana, Punjab and Western UP is primarily done for **fodder purposes**.
- The demand for coarse cereals for animals and poultry feed is on the rise.
  - In India, feed requirements are met from waste food grains in general and made especially from coarse cereals.
  - Maize is the preferred carbohydrate source in poultry feed.



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## Significance:

- Coarse cereals are renowned for their **high nutrient content** and for having traits such as resistance to drought, climate change and photosensitivity.
- These crops also have a bright future as a **prospective exportable product** and in the food processing sector.
- Their cultivation for **human consumption, feed & fodder for livestock & poultry**, use as fuel, and industrial uses is prevalent in drought-prone locations.
- They are a **great weapon against malnutrition** because of their high nutritional value.
- It aids in **creating jobs in low-rainfall locations** when there are few other alternative crops that can be utilised as a backup crop.

## Why has the Government changed its attention to Coarse Cereals?

- The country's output of wheat and paddy has been impacted by climate change, signalling a need to shift the emphasis to coarse cereals.
  - Due to unpredictable weather patterns, the cultivation of wheat and paddy will not be sufficient to meet the country's food needs.
- The government's fear about the Kharif season production has grown due to the unpredictable monsoon of 2022.
- In the majority of areas in 2022, paddy and pulse sowing was severely impacted.
- The traits of coarse cereals include resistance to drought, climate change and photosensitivity.
- Compared to summer paddy farming, it is less expensive to cultivate, and it uses less water for irrigation.
- In 2022, 17.63 million hectares of coarse cereals were sown, compared to 16.93 million hectares in 2021.
  - The nation currently produces 50 million tonnes of coarse cereals.
  - The most common crops are millets and maize.

*-Source: Down to Earth*

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