India Millet Mission campaign to begin in September

India, the largest producer of millets in the world, will launch an intensive campaign to promote the ‘nutri-cereal’ across the country starting from September 28, in Pune.

At a meeting held at the Indian Institute of Millets Research in Hyderabad to prepare a roadmap for the national millet mission, Dr Ashok Dalwai, CEO of the National Rainfed Area Authority, announced the campaign.

It was aid that the Union agriculture minister will formally flag off the campaign for the National Year of Millets, which will be followed by a number of activities over the next few months.

Calling it a ‘historic’ day, Dr Dalwai said “The mission will include focus on resource-poor farmers and the nutrition status of the country. However, we should ensure that the national campaign retains the advantages of millets as climate-smart and environment-friendly crop. Our decisions can lead to a new Green Revolution.”

Announcing plans for seed hubs for all millets, with Dr. B Rajender, Joint Secretary National Food Security Mission, said “The state governments will be involved in a big way, both for nutrition security, not just income security. Also there will be communication plans rolled out at the district and the local level to scale up this campaign.”

Dr Vilas A Tonapi, Director of Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), shared data on how the productivity of millets has shown good increase across the country, in spite of pressure on land.

The activities through the year would be spearheaded by IIMR in partnership with International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), State Agricultural Universities (SAU), National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and many other non-governmental, private and international organizations.

Dr B Dayakar Rao, Principal Scientist at IIMR, has prepared details of the roadmap for India’s Year of Millets.