

## Nigeria releases first biofortified hybrid pearl millet varieties

13 May 2025 | News

**These high-yielding, nutrient-rich hybrids, enhanced with iron and zinc, offer a powerful solution to tackle malnutrition and boost food security in the country's arid and semi-arid regions**



**These high-yielding, nutrient-rich hybrids, enhanced with iron and zinc, offer a powerful solution to tackle malnutrition and boost food security in the country's arid and semi-arid regions**

In a major stride toward improving nutrition and climate resilience, Nigeria has officially released its first biofortified hybrid pearl millet varieties. These high-yielding, nutrient-rich hybrids, enhanced with iron and zinc, offer a powerful solution to tackle malnutrition and boost food security in the country's arid and semi-arid regions.

The announcement was made during the 35th meeting of the National Variety Release Committee (NVRC), chaired by Prof. Olusoji Olufajo. The release marks a significant step forward in Nigeria's drive to advance agricultural innovation and improve rural livelihoods as millions of smallholder farmers who depend on millet for food and income stand to benefit.

This achievement is the result of a strategic partnership led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), in collaboration with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), HarvestPlus, and the host institute, the Lake Chad Research Institute (LCRI).

Designed to meet the dual challenges of malnutrition and climate change, these hybrids deliver early maturity, high yield potential, and enhanced micronutrient content, particularly iron and zinc, addressing critical gaps in nutrition while empowering farmers with resilient crop options.

"These hybrids offer a powerful combination of nutrition and resilience, tailored to the needs of Nigeria's drylands," said Dr Himanshu Pathak, Director General of ICRISAT. "This development is more than a scientific breakthrough—it is a lifeline for better livelihoods. As climate stress intensifies and micronutrient deficiencies persist as major public health challenges, these pearl millet hybrids offer hope, improved health, and a sustainable future."