



North American Millets Alliance (NAMA) – FAQ

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1. What is NAMA? North American Millets Alliance is a social-benefit (non-profit) initiative. It is dedicated to promoting millets as resilient crops and nutritious foods in the US and its neighbors, through public education and networking. At this time, NAMA is in the process of incorporating.

NAMA has been described as a “neutral” party, as it advocates for millets in general, as well as the range of sectors and organizations working on or with one or more of them.

2. Who is NAMA? The initiative is managed collaboratively by Joni Kindwall-Moore, Don Osborn, and Gary Wietgreffe. They are currently contributing their time on a volunteer / *pro-bono* basis, and are joined by other millets advocates in periodic online meetings.

3. When was NAMA created? The first discussions that led to the founding of NAMA date back to autumn 2021. The current initiative was created in January 2022 by Ms. Kindwall-Moore, Dr. Osborn, and Dr. Jonathon Landeck. The declaration by the UN General Assembly in March 2021 of the International Year of Millets (IYM) for the year 2023 was the impetus for developing this initiative.

4. Why North America? NAMA was initially conceived of as a continental effort to complement the globally oriented IYM, which naturally focused on the major millets-producing regions in Asia and Africa. Secondly, there are clear similarities in how millets are grown and used between Canada and the US, especially; and together with Mexico, they form a common trade market.

Millets are still relatively minor crops in North America. However, the configurations of which millets are grown for what is somewhat particular to the region, and there is potential to build on that. Also, this region – especially the US – represents a small but significant import market for millets grown and processed elsewhere as food. Add to that the fact that there is some significant research being done here on millets, and one can argue that North America has a unique role to play in promotion of these grains now and into the future.

5. Why "alliance"? The word alliance is used in the names of a range of organizations and associations of organizations dealing with grains, for example: [Common Grain Alliance](#), [Northeast Grainshed Alliance](#), [Maine Grain Alliance](#), [Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance](#), [Kansas Wheat Alliance](#), and [Manitoba Crop Alliance](#). While these tend to focus on value chains and marketing, we find the alliance concept appropriate for our current focus on networking among people and organizations that work in one way or another with millets, with the object of cooperation on raising broader awareness and interest in millets as crops and food.

6. Why "millets" and not just "millet"? Without getting into the etymology, the singular form "millet" in English plays a double role - as a singular (some particular millet), or as an uncountable or "mass" noun (millets in general). However, we find that the plural "millets" clearly and unambiguously communicates the fact that we are talking about a number of different species of crops, domesticated in different regions, that we group together because of some shared

characteristics (notably that most have small round grains). Also, the plural form is increasingly used in communications about these grains, such as in the name, International Year of Millets.

13. What has NAMA accomplished so far? Some past and ongoing efforts are listed below:

- NAMA’s main project during the IYM in 2023 was a monthly Millets Webinar Series, hosted by the FEAST Lab at the University of Missouri, with additional support from the Center for Regenerative Agriculture at the University of Missouri. Webinars are open to all, and also recorded for long-term access [online](#). The topics were:
 - Jan. - Intro and tour of the millets
 - Feb. - Really Ancient Grains: Millets from the dawn of agriculture
 - Mar. - Modern history of millets: Trends in agriculture and food preferences
 - Apr. - Are millets the ideal crops for Anthropocene conditions?
 - May - Processing millets: From the field to the kitchen
 - Jun. - Tasty grains: What millets bring to the table
 - Jul. - Millets as nutrition powerhouses
 - Aug. - On and off the shelf: Millet products in markets today
 - Sep. - Drink up! Millet beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic
 - Oct. - More than small change: Millets in community and economic development
 - Nov. - Not just for the birds: Millets and animal farming
 - Dec. - Innovations in millets: A food systems approach
- New monthly Millets Webinar series begun in 2025, with recordings posted on NAMA’s [YouTube channel](#).
- Development and promotion of a proposal for proso millet grain standards in the US
- Partner on the International Millets Conference, 2023 (1-3 Aug. 2023, Gering, Nebraska)
- Millet-of-the-month calendar, spotlighting one (or a few, closely related) millet(s) each month – now in its third year.
- Joined the Indo-US Millets Initiative (with the India Millets Initiative, Sorghum United, and the Dougherty Water for Food Institute at University of Nebraska)
- Social media presence, and a specialized [email list](#)
- Periodic online meetings concerning activities, including organization of topical groups
- Communication with other entities on various potential initiatives
- Millets “[triangle](#)” diagram for better understanding millets as a group across contexts

14. How is NAMA financed? NAMA is currently functioning without external funding. To sustain and develop our programs, we are seeking funding opportunities.

DO, EL, MI, US
don@milletsalliance.org

(A separate FAQ treats questions about millets in North America.)