

# WHY vegetables? EIGHT reasons



Agriculture that works for farmers, businesses, consumers, and the environment involves more than just producing enough calories of starchy crops. Vegetables—from indigenous amaranth, cowpea leaves, and African nightshade to high beta-carotene tomatoes and flood-tolerant sweet pepper—add nutrition, health, and flavor to staple-based diets.

Policymakers have overlooked vegetable production as an income-generating nutritional improvement strategy. It is time to rectify this oversight.

## 1 Nourishing NUTRIENTS

Vegetables supply the micronutrients human bodies require for good health. Vitamins protect vision, boost immunity, protect from harmful free radicals, and aid in absorption of other nutrients. Minerals serve as electrolytes, affect the body's water balance, act as co-factors for enzyme function, are components of bones and teeth, membrane function, thyroid hormone, and hemoglobin, and are part of nucleic acids. Vital for the health and development of children and the health and well-being of adults—particularly pregnant and nursing mothers, and those with chronic diseases—**micronutrients** are most easily obtained from **vegetables**.



## 2 Valuable VARIETIES

Improved varieties make all the difference for farmers, whether they grow globally common vegetables such as tomato, cabbage and pepper, or locally important indigenous vegetables. They seek pest- and disease-resistant varieties with growth habits that require fewer inputs (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, labor) and produce high yields of vegetables to meet market demand for storage quality, color, texture and taste. In variety development, the Center's **plant breeders** strive to address local, regional and global production constraints, and aim to incorporate traits desired by farmers and consumers.



## 3 Superior SEEDS

Quality vegetables start with disease-free seed of improved varieties adapted to the local agroclimate. The Center brings farmers, researchers, seed producers and dealers together to build **better seed production and distribution** networks—and promotes sensible national seed policies to ensure quality seed is available and affordable for farmers.



## 4 Plentiful PRODUCTION

Labor + knowledge = a good vegetable crop! The Center's **technologies**, such as starter solution to enhance early seedling growth, protected cultivation to reduce pests and diseases, integrated pest management strategies, and low-cost drip irrigation help farmers increase yields. **Training courses** and **workshops** build capacity among farmers and researchers, and provide opportunities to share information and progress.



## 5 GENDER gain

Women in particular benefit when they produce vegetables. When a woman grows vegetables, it is more likely that she and her children will consume more vegetables, improving the health and nutrition of the household. Women often actively participate in vegetable marketing: Selling vegetables and postharvest processing for value addition can bring much-needed income for the family. Vegetable production empowers women.



## 6 Profitable PROCESSING



Vegetable **processing** by households, small-scale entrepreneurs, or commercial operations adds value to perishable crops and increases farmer incomes. The Center's research into packaging, drying, pickling, sauce-making and other value-addition activities ensures nutritious vegetable products are available year-round.

## 7 Meaningful MARKETING

Timely access to markets assures good prices for farmers and consolidators, and affordable, good quality products for consumers. The Center surveys **food value chains** to determine where vegetable marketing bottlenecks occur, and works with stakeholders to improve the flow of information and produce to benefit all.

## 8 Creative CONSUMPTION

To add diversity to diets, people need to know how to prepare different types of vegetables to preserve nutrients and produce dishes that are tasty and palatable. In training courses, our partners demonstrate **new recipes** developed at the Center to women's groups, farmers' organizations, and schools. Improved cooking methods retain micronutrients, enhance nutrition, save cooking fuel—and increase vegetable consumption, because they taste so good!



# The “*Revolution with Greens*” begins with **vegetables**

The World Vegetable Center has long recognized the value of **vegetable production** for enhancing nutrition and providing income. For more than 40 years, the Center’s adaptive, integrated research into **improved varieties and production technologies** has brought better health and brighter futures to families in developing countries.

Staple crops such as rice, maize, wheat and cassava have been the focus of much research and investment in the global effort to fight poverty and hunger—yet the abundance of these crops is leading to imbalanced diets, malnutrition, and rising rates of chronic diseases, including diabetes.

Today, what is needed is not a Green Revolution, but a ***Revolution with Greens***: A worldwide effort to support vegetable research, increase vegetable production, and promote vegetable consumption for good health.



# The Way to Grow World Vegetable Center



## VEGETABLES *for essential nutrition and economic benefit*

**Vegetables diversify and balance diets. How?**

By supplying nutrients, calories, protein and fiber, and adding color, texture and taste to meals. **Vegetables diversify and expand rural and urban economies. How?**

By providing small-scale farmers with the means to generate income and improve their livelihoods from a cornucopia of high value, fast-growing, health-promoting crops.

## *A healthier, more equitable world*



The World Vegetable Center is the principal international nonprofit institute for vegetable research and development.

Founded in 1971, the Center develops vegetable lines and sustainable technologies to increase the production and consumption of nutritious, health-promoting vegetables in developing countries, leading to more income opportunities and healthier diets for the poor. Primary target groups are small, disadvantaged landholders in Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

Headquartered in Taiwan, the World Vegetable Center has regional offices in Thailand, Tanzania, Mali and India, and staff located in many developing countries.



[worldveg.org](http://worldveg.org)