



AYURVEDIC DIETETICS

Session 3: Core Principles

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What we've learned so far

- Session 1

- History of Ayurveda
- Definition of health and disease according to Ayurveda
- Fundamentals of dosha

- Session 2

- Role of Agni as a key indicator of health
- The rules of eating – how, when, what to eat
- The science of Rasa (taste) property of food
- How to eat for the season

Today's session

- Properties of food
- Food groups in Ayurveda
- Grains deep dive

Principles of Ayurvedic dietetics

To keep the doshas in balance

1. Follow the rules for eating → how, what, when
2. Adjust food for “time”- variations in Agni
 - diurnal
 - seasonal
3. Plan your diet based on properties of food
4. Combine appropriate food groups for optimal digestion
5. Process food to suit one’s agni
6. Environmental factors ex. place of origin and conditions where food is grown must be considered
7. Eat proper quantity
8. Eat according to your Prakrti

Adjust food for “time” – variations in Agni

Diurnal variation of Agni

Our metabolism follows the the intensity of the sun

- Heaviest meal at lunch
- Lightest meal at breakfast
- Light meal at dinner
- Three hours between eating and sleeping
- 2-3 meals per day

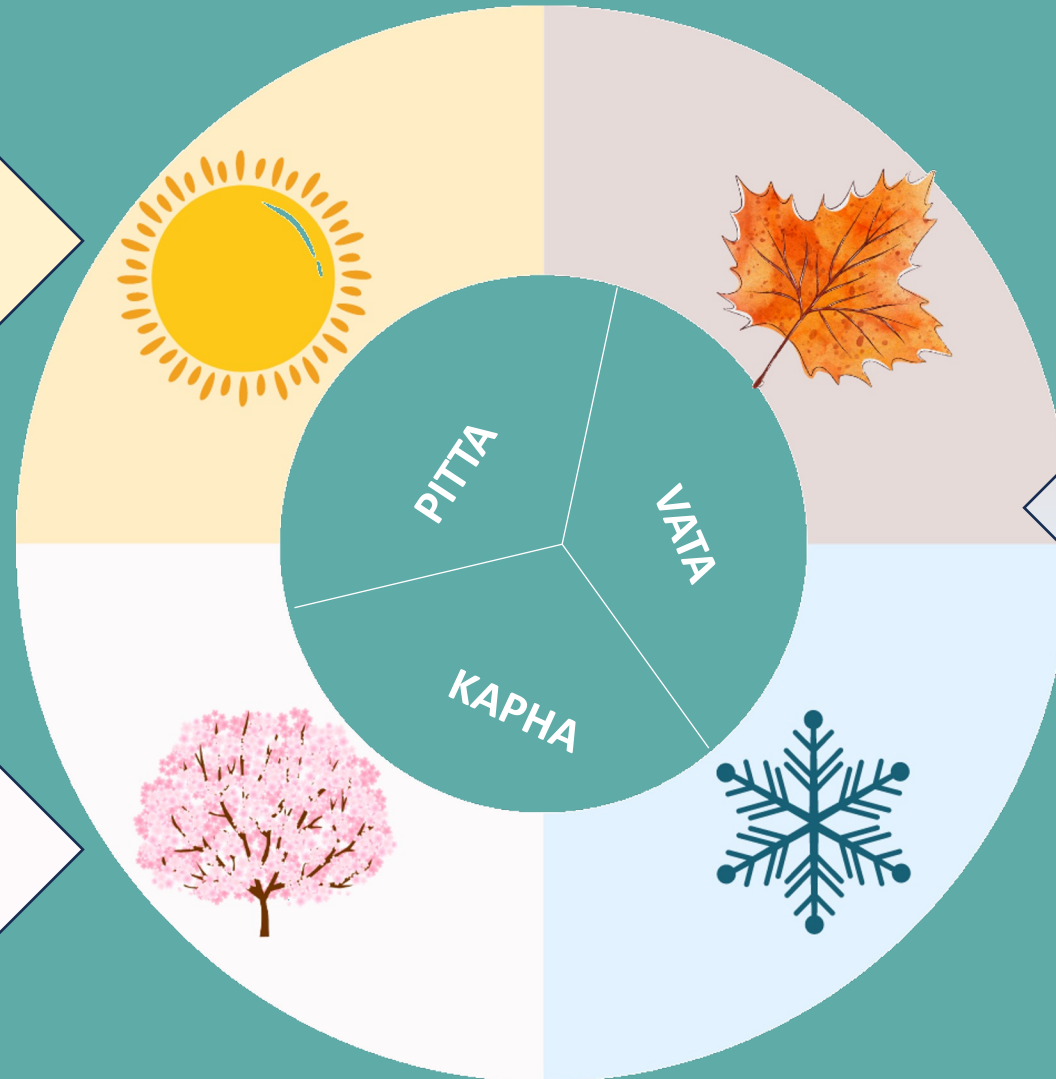
Seasonal variation of Agni

- Low digestive power
- Lower energy levels
- Body tends to heat

- ✓ COOL, MOIST and LIGHT foods
- ✓ Sweet; Bitter and Astringent in moderation

- Low digestive power
- Sensitivity to pollen
- Mucus activity

- ✓ DRY and LIGHT foods
- ✓ Bitter, Astringent, Pungent



- Strong digestion
- Viral infections
- Body tends to get dry

- ✓ HOT, MOIST and HEAVY foods
- ✓ Sour, Salty, Sweet

Plan your diet based on properties of food

Properties of food



TASTE (RASA)

HEAVY/LIGHT (GUNA)

HEATING/COOLING (VIRYA)

POST DIGESTION EFFECT (VIPAKA)

Properties of some common foods

HEAVY

- Dairy – milk, yogurt, ghee, cheese
- Meat
- New grains aged less than a year
- Most lentils
- Fruit like banana, avocado, mango, melons, coconut
- Root vegetables
- Salads (raw vegetables)
- Oils
- Nuts

LIGHT

- Buttermilk
- Roasted rice, barley, millets
- Green moong
- Cooked vegetables, esp green leafy veggies
- Quinoa
- Fruit like apples, pears, berries, pomegranate, persimmon
- Fruit juices
- Spices like turmeric, dry ginger etc.

Properties of some common foods

HOT

- Fermented foods like yogurt, idli, dosa, bread, cheese, pickles, soy
- Spicy foods – all chili peppers
- Sour foods like tamarind, tomato, vinegar, all sour and citrus fruit
- Some grains like millets, buckwheat, brown rice
- Root vegetables like radish, garlic, turnips, onion
- Jaggery
- Kidney beans, black gram (urad), yellow beans (tur)
- Most nuts other than almonds
- Red meat

COLD

- Buttermilk
- Basmati rice, white rice, wheat, oats
- Ghee
- Vegetables like squashes, beans, green leafy vegetables, bell peppers
- Fruit like melons, persimmons, pear, grapes, sweet mango
- Milk
- Maple syrup
- Green and yellow mung, red lentils (masur)
- Coconut
- Almond
- White meat

Examples of diet planning

- Optimize for your agni
 - Digestive issues – always pick food with light qualities
 - Lighten heavy foods – add spices, use grain flour, liquid form
- Optimize for health condition
 - Acidity – pick cooling foods
 - Tend to put on weight – hot and light foods

Combine appropriate food groups for optimal digestion

Food groups in Ayurveda

Grains



Lentils



Meat



Vegetables



Salads & Garnishes



Fruit



Food groups in Ayurveda

Alcohol



Water



Dairy



Sweeteners



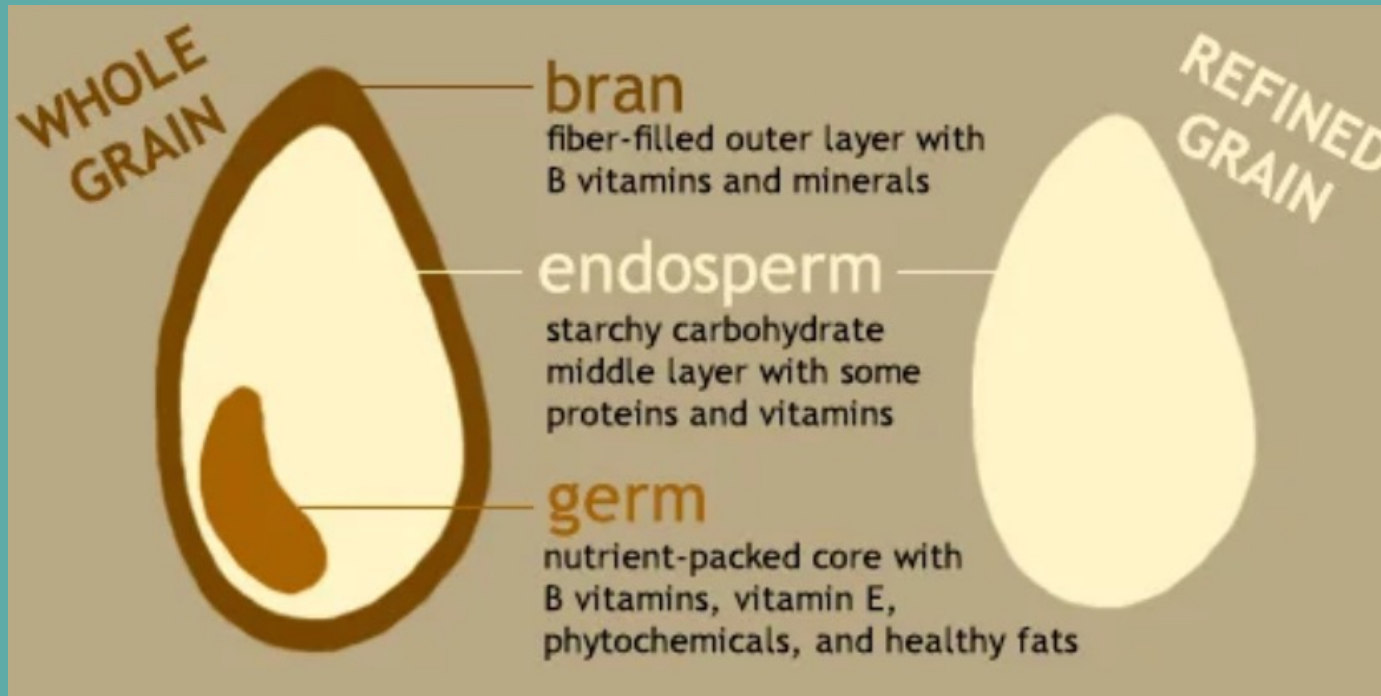
Cooked foods



Oils, nuts and spices



What is a whole grain?



Source: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/whole-grains/>

Which foods have whole grain?

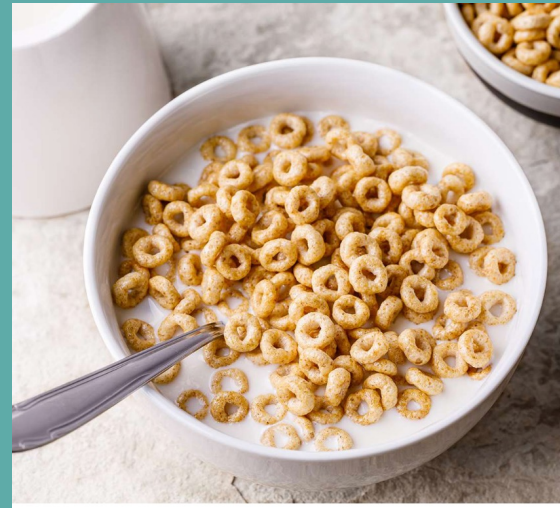
Rolled oats



Brown rice



Cheerios cereal

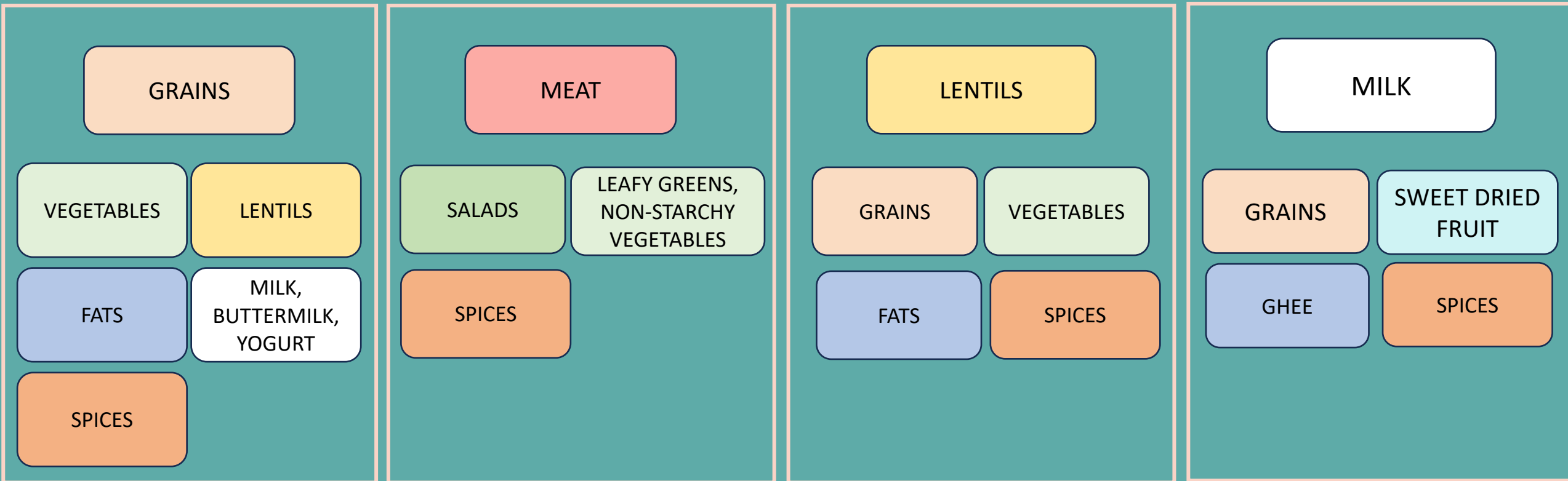


Rava idli



Combining food groups

For optimal digestion, eat foods that are compatible in energetics, post digestive effect, and taste



EAT FRUIT ALONE

Process food to suit one's agni

Modern vs. Ayurvedic view

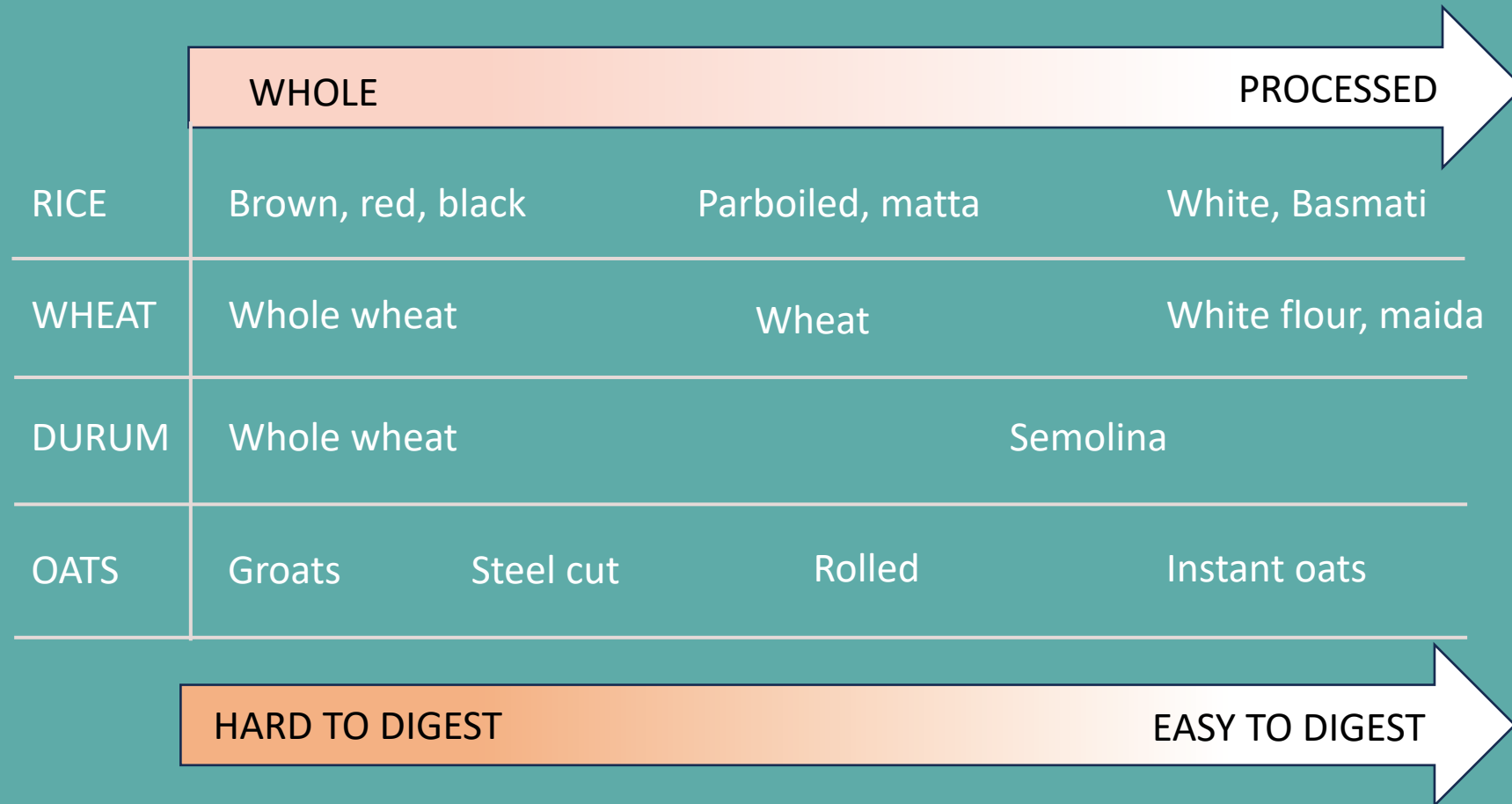
MODERN VIEW

- ✓ Maximize whole grains – more nutrition
- ✓ Minimize processed or refined grains – less nutrition, leads to insulin resistance, obesity

AYUREVDIC VIEW

- ✓ Eat aged grains
- ✓ Choose grains per season and agni
- ✓ Process grains to suit your digestion
- ✓ Minimize contaminated and overly refined grains

Ayurvedic view: balancing nutrition and digestibility



Eat according to your Prakrti

Grains for season and Prakrti

Grain	Properties	Best season	Best prakrti
White/Basmati Rice	Cold, sweet, medium heavy	Summer	Pitta/Vata
Oats	Cold, sweet, heavy	Summer, fall, winter	Vata, Pitta
Wheat	Cold, sweet, heavy	Fall, winter	Vata, Pitta
Brown rice	Hot, sweet, heavy	Fall, winter	Vata
Barley	Cold, astringent, light	Summer, spring	Pitta, Kapha
Buckwheat	Hot, astringent, light	Spring	Kapha
Millet	Hot/Cold, astringent, light	Spring/Summer	Kapha, Pitta
Rye	Hot, astringent, light	Spring	Kapha
Corn	Hot, astringent, light	Spring	Kapha

Environmental considerations

- ✓ Eat locally grown food (perishables)
- ✓ that is free of contamination
- ✓ in its natural state

Grains and pesticides, insecticides, herbicides

- Grains and lentils are subject to heavy use of pesticides
- Pesticide residues are present in food that we consume
- Strategies to minimize:
 - ✓ Buying organic
 - ✓ Washing
 - ✓ Processing like milling and dehusking, and parboiling
 - ✓ Rinsing, soaking, cooking



Dirtiest grains

1. Oats – heavily sprayed with glyphosate (Roundup)
2. Corn – most corn grown in the US is genetically modified to be resistant to glyphosate
3. Soy – most soybeans are GMO to be resistant to glyphosate
4. Wheat
5. Rice

Next session

- Strategies for strengthening agni