Thanks to U.S. Quinoa Craze, Latinos Can’t Afford Their Own Crops

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Quinoa, a staple grain in many traditional Latino diets, may be a healthier alternative to rice, pasta and even meat. But a new report from the Guardian has revealed that the food’s growing popularity in the west is driving up the grain’s price, making it too expensive for the Latino farmers who grow it.

South America’s low-fat, protein-rich, amino-acid-packed grain has recently garnered a huge following in the United States, thanks to an increasing interest in veganism and alternative health food movements.

As a result of this demand, the price of the South American staple has nearly tripled since 2006. Locals in Bolivia and Peru, where the grain is commonly grown, say that poor people in the region can no longer afford to eat it.

In fact, South Americans are now finding that imported junk food is actually cheaper than their local crops. And the region’s farmland, which once yielded a diverse array of fruits and vegetables for the surrounding communities, is now moving toward a strict quinoa monoculture in order to keep up with western demand.

Food advocates say the report strengthens the argument that health-conscious, ethically minded consumers should instead focus more on locally produced products rather than international imports of “trendy” health foods.

To read the Guardian report, click here.

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