



Allocation and Procurement of Food

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For food security of the people, the Government is implementing the National Food Security Act which provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural and upto 50% of the urban population at the all India level to receive foodgrain at highly subsidized prices. Under the Act, allocation of foodgrains to States/UTs is made on the basis of State/UT-wise coverage of population and the foodgrain entitlements prescribed in the Act. There is no proposal to change the allocation norms. NFSA is being implemented in all 36 States/UTs.

On the basis of peak stock requirement during procurement season, the overall storage capacity required in the country is about 600 Lakh MT. Against this, the total capacity available with Food Corporation of India and State Agencies for storage of foodgrains as on 30.06.2017 was 794.48 Lakh MT. Thus on the overall, there is sufficient capacity for storage of foodgrains in the country. Beside this, Government of India is implementing three schemes to augment and modernize the storage facilities.

(a) Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme under which storage capacity is created by private parties, Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Agencies for guaranteed hiring by FCI. A capacity of 138.51 lakh MT has already been completed as on 30.06.2017; (b) Central Sector Scheme with special focus on the North Eastern States. During 12th Five Year Plan, a capacity of 1,17,680 MT in North Eastern (NE) States and 20,000 MT in other than NE States has been created by FCI. Further, a capacity of 46,495 MT has been created by State Governments; and (c) Construction of steel silos under which Government of India has also an action plan for construction of steel silos in the country for a capacity of 100 LMT in 3 phases.

Before the commencement of Rabi and Kharif Marketing Seasons, Department of Food & Public Distribution issues uniform specifications for procurement of foodgrains for the Central Pool. These uniform specifications are circulated to F.C.I. and all State Govts./Agencies with instructions to ensure that foodgrains are procured strictly in accordance with the uniform specifications. Foodgrains procured by F.C.I. and State Govts/Agencies are stored in covered godowns as well as in CAP (cover and plinth). During storage, the following steps are taken for safe storage and preservations of foodgrains:

- (1) All godowns are constructed as per specifications.
- (2) Foodgrains are stored by adopting proper scientific code of storage practices.
- (3) Adequate dunnage materials such as wooden crates, bamboo mats, polythene sheets are used to check migration of moisture from the floor to the foodgrains.
- (4) Fumigation covers, nylon ropes, nets and insecticides for control of stored grain insect pests are provided in all the godowns.
- (5) Prophylactic (spraying of insecticides) and curative treatments (fumigation) are carried out regularly and timely in godowns for the control of stored grain insect pests.
- (6) Effective rat control measures, both in covered godowns as well as in CAP storage are used.
- (7) Foodgrains in 'Cover and Plinth' (CAP) storage are stored on elevated plinths and wooden crates are used as dunnage material. Stacks are properly covered with specifically fabricated low-density black polythene water -proof covers and tied with nylon ropes/nets.
- (8) Regular periodic inspections of the stocks/godowns are undertaken by qualified and trained staff and all senior officers. The health of the foodgrains is monitored at regular intervals by a system of checks and super checks at different levels. Following Checks and Super checks are conducted in the godowns by FCI to ensure proper preservation of foodgrains in the storage.
 - I. Fortnightly inspection of stocks on 100% basis by Technical Assistant.
 - II. Monthly inspection by Manager(QC)
 - III. Quarterly inspection by AGM(QC)
 - IV. Super Checks by Regional, Zonal and FCI Hqrs Squads.
- (9) The principle of "First in First Out" (FIFO) is followed to the extent possible so as to avoid longer storage of foodgrains in godowns.
- (10) Only covered rail wagons are used for movement of foodgrains so as to avoid damage during transit.
- (11) Damage Monitoring Cells have been set up at District, Regional and Zonal levels to regularly monitor quality of stocks and reduce damages.

The steps taken to ensure remunerative price to farmers are:

- 1) The minimum support prices (MSP) are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) which determines the MSP based on the input costs and margin to farmers. MSP (Minimum Support Price) operations are given wide publicity through pamphlets, banners, sign boards radio, TV and advertisements through print & electronic media.
- 2) Procurement centres are opened by respective State Govt. Agencies/ FCI taking into account the production, marketable surplus, convenience of farmers and availability of other logistics / infrastructure such as storage and transportation etc. Large number of temporary purchase centres in addition to the existing Mandis and depots/godowns are also established at key points for the convenience of the farmers.
- 3) For further strengthening the system that the farmers directly get the MSP announced by GOI, the GOI decided to do away with the levy system of procurement of rice with effect from KMS 2015-16, allowing the entire procurement of paddy to be done only by the State Agencies/FCI and payment to farmers is done largely through electronic mode or account payee cheque by State Agencies/FCI other than in Punjab & Haryana where it is routed through the Arthiyas as per APMC Act of the State.
- 4) The agricultural produce brought by a farmer is procured by Govt. agencies and payments are made through RTGS/electronic mode/ account payee cheque within 48 hours of purchase of his produce.

Department of Food & Public Distribution is implementing a Scheme on 'End-to-end Computerization of TPDS Operations' with the aim to improve the efficiency of the current system and to address various challenges such as leakages and diversion of foodgrains, elimination of fake and bogus ration cards etc. The scheme comprises digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, online allocation, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portal and grievance redressal mechanism.

This information was given by Shri C. R. Chaudhary, the Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha, today.

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