

# Agri e-trading platforms turn to AI to ensure quality

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As online auction and trading platforms in agriculture commodities gain traction, ensuring quality when neither buyer nor seller is physically present has become a challenge.

With artificial intelligence-enabled tracking and traceable systems to ensure the presence of personnel in *mandis* to developing mobile applications to check quality, companies are exploring ways to overcome the problem.

"You need technology to determine and standardise the quality of fresh produce, which will create trust in the market for digital selling platforms," Milan Sharma, chief executive officer (CEO), and co-founder, Intello Labs, told Business Standard.

Intello Labs, a start-up in agritech, has launched Praman (Hindi for proof), a technology-driven commodities e-auction platform.

"Praman has been in stealth mode over the past few months and has achieved a monthly gross



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transaction value (GTV) of \$40 million. It aims to clock a GTV of almost \$100 million in the next two quarters, making it one of the largest agri-tech platforms in India," Sharma said.

What will distinguish Praman from similar platforms, according to Sharma, is artificial intelligence-based quality assessment, which will make it digital and data-driven.

He said experience showed technology-driven systems ensured 95 per cent accuracy in quality

grading of cardamom, while manually it is around 70 per cent.

Milan said the firm underwrote a certain portion if the buyer felt there was a divergence from what had been promised or shown through the platform. The portion is then recovered from the seller.

Praman facilitates spot trading and e-auction in cardamom, onion, garlic, pomegranate, apples, potatoes, and tomatoes.

The platform is active mainly in Maharashtra, Kerala, Bihar, and

Jammu and Kashmir, where laws on agricultural produce marketing committees are relatively flexible and out-of-mandi transactions are easily facilitated. The e-auction platform for fresh produce promises to replicate a physical mandi but on a much wider scale, and feels farmers on an aggregate level can earn almost 20 per cent more if they sell their produce through their platform than what they would at a traditional *mandi*.

Praman is working on a tech-based system to ensure buyers get quality produce through e-auction platforms for commodities.

Gram Vyapar, an e-trading and e-auction platform launched by Indore-based start-up Gramophone, has deputed partners in almost 100 mandis in the country to do physical quality assessments and checks of the produce through its platform.

"We reduce the ratings of sellers and do all primary checks to ensure that buyers get the same quality of produce as shown in the platform but sometimes guaranteeing the same quality as shown on the platform is a challenge," Tauseef Khan, co-

founder and CEO of Gramophone, the parent company of Gram Vyapar, told Business Standard.

Gram Vyapar was launched in March 2021.

"We initially had 5-10 listings of farm produce per day, which has crossed over 500 listings in one single day," Khan said.

He said he planned to expand in other states like UP, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra.

Though not strictly an agri-tech firm but a prominent player in commodities trading, SLCM Group has launched a mobile application to check the quality of agricultural commodities.

The app, which had been initially introduced for wheat, will be extended to include other food grains and pulses like chana (chickpea), maize, rice, guar (cluster bean), moong, and tur (pigeon pea) over time, a statement said.

The app allows a user to get an on-the-spot assessment of a sample of the commodity within minutes, without having to use equipment like a sieve or a weighing scale, or to take it to a lab for testing.