

FCI to install AI-based grain analysers

**Bid to eliminate
human interface in
rice procurement**

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TO BRING IN automation in the procurement system, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will be installing 50 artificial intelligence (AI)-based automatic grain analysers at its foodgrain depots assessing quality of rice received from the millers by the end of the month.

This is aimed at minimising the discretionary decision-making power at the ground level officials of the corporation in grain handling. Sources told FE that performance evaluation of such machines at a few locations has been encouraging and the corporation will install such analysers across all its 2,000 depots across the country in a phased manner.

The corporation is also in the process of initiating digitization of quality control laboratories at depot level for providing real time data on grain testing reports by March this year. This comes after a nationwide crackdown undertaken recently against a few officials of the FCI by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after alleged malpractices in procurement, storage and dis-



tribution of foodgrains.

Rice millers say that because of the testing of samples in the manual laboratories, the local level officials have a key stay in the process of procurement. To eliminate human interface in the whole process of rice procurement, FCI is aiming to install grain analysers across depots.

"Gradually we will roll out analysers across all procurement centres after observing its efficacy. The idea is to ensure that discretion of the field level officials is brought down to minimal," an official said. Meanwhile, the FCI has decided to set up a quick response team to visit the spot where there is a dispute over the quality of rice brought in by the millers or if a sample "fails" to meet the fair and average (FAQ) standard.

After paddy is procured from the farmers by the corporation and state agencies, it is handed over to millers for conversion into rice. The government agencies had procured close to 60 million tonne of rice in the 2021-22 season (October-September).