

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1615
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2025

RELAXING MOISTURE NORMS FOR PADDY PROCUREMENT

1615. THIRU DAYANIDHI MARAN:
SHRI RAJA A:
SHRI MATHESWARAN V S:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is ready to revise Tamil Nadu's rice procurement target for Kharif 2025-26 from 16 lakh MT to the actual production and procurement levels recorded this season and if so, the status of approval and the reasons for any delay;
- (b) whether any action has been taken on the recommendation of the Union Government's moisture-assessment teams and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for the continued delay in relaxing moisture norms from 17 per cent to 22 per cent which is urgently needed due to the North-East Monsoon;
- (c) whether the Government would reconsider the State's request to relax moisture norms for paddy procurement to protect the farmers especially when such relaxation had been given in the past;
- (d) if so, the details thereof including the reaction of the Union Government thereto;
- (e) whether the Government would approve Tamil Nadu's request to increase Fortified Rice Kernel (FRK) packing size from 25 kg to 50 kg and revise the sample lot size from 10 MT to 25 MT and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the details of the immediate steps being taken by the Union Government to protect paddy farmers in Tamil Nadu from procurement losses?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a): The estimates for procurement of paddy are finalized by GoI, in consultation with the State Governments before the commencement of each marketing season, based on estimated production, marketable surplus, and crop patterns. Accordingly, the estimates of procurement of paddy for KMS 2025-26 (Kharif crop) in Tamil Nadu have been fixed at 16.00 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) (in terms of rice). The actual procurement of paddy in the state, as on 04.12.2025 is 9.95 LMT (in terms of rice).

The requests for enhancement in procurement estimates are examined with regard to the quantity and pace of procurement during the procurement period.

(b) to (d): The request of the State Government of Tamil Nadu for raising the permissible moisture content for paddy procurement from 17% to 22% has not been considered due to following facts:

- i. Paddy can be dried before milling, procurement of excessively moist paddy introduces significant operational risk, including loss of stock during storage and compromised milling recovery.
- ii. Paddy with high moisture content is susceptible to rapid deterioration, fungal growth, discoloration, and infestation.
- iii. The State Governments have been advised time and again to endeavor to develop the driage facility at procuring stages.

The relaxation in moisture content has no direct financial implication on farmers, therefore, such relaxation is no longer considered.

(e): The Government has revised the Fortified Rice Kernel (FRK) sample size from 10 Metric Ton (MT) to 21 MT and packaging size from 25 Kg to 50 Kg.

(f): As per the Government's policy of procurement of foodgrains, stocks conforming to the Government of India (GoI) specifications which are offered by the farmers at Purchase centers are procured by the Government Agencies at Minimum Support Price (MSP). However, if the farmers get prices better than MSP in open market, they are free to sell their produce.
