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Publication	Date	Online Edition	Article
Economic Times	April 09, 2025	Worldwide	Read More

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Revolution in the barn: AI-Powered agritech tackles India's Rs 1.5-lakh crore post-harvest storage woes

By Shariq Khan, ET Online • Last Updated: Apr 09, 2025, 12:18:00 PM IST

Synopsis

India loses 10% of its total food grain production post-harvest. The Delhi-based agri-logistic firm looks to minimise it through its digital warehouse management solution—Agri Reach



Since its inception in 2009, SCLM has been revolutionising India's agricultural landscape with its cutting-edge patented technologies aimed at drastically reducing food grain losses and optimising post-harvest management.

Come January, and Amrender Singh, 43, finds himself in a state of panic, while the rest of the world is busy celebrating. His worry: 100 tonnes of wheat.

Singh, a farmer from Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, has been embracing better farming practices for the past few years to boost production. And they yield him bountiful harvests, too. Instead of throwing a harvest party, he is concerned as he wrestles with storage woes. With the mandi miles away and no nearby storage facility along with a lengthy quality-checking process for selling.

In fact, Singh's real struggle begins after the harvests. He travels miles to get the quality checked and then makes another few trips to different mandis to seek better prices. "It's a hassle and a drain on my budget. Traders at mandis insist on verifying quality. They want government certification issued by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories. For this, I used to travel long distances, spending Rs 500-700 per trip and another Rs 800 for each [NABL](#) lab test," he explains. Each lab result takes 2-3 days, ultimately leading to "missing out on better market prices," he laments.

Singh is not alone. Many farmers, especially the small and marginal ones, with less than two hectares of land, in the country grapple with the challenge of storing their produce, with some even resorting to keeping them in the open.

India, the third-largest producer of food grain, produces more than 300 million tonnes of food grain annually, shows government data. However, with a storage capacity of only 145 million tonnes, more than half of its produce faces the risk of being wasted. In 2023-24, India, as per estimates by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), lost around 10% of its total food grain production—332.29 million tonnes—post-harvest. In fact, more than 30% of our fruits & vegetables produced every year goes to waste, even before they reach the market.

All these numbers raise one profound question that Singh, along with over 150 million other farmers nationwide, confronts: how to store produce efficiently and minimise waste.

Harvest woes

Storage is a major issue in India, especially for a country that ranked as low as 105th among the 127 countries in the 2024 Global Hunger Index. A country cannot afford to let food grain go to waste when about 14% of its population, according to the Hunger Index, are undernourished. Leading agricultural economist Ashok Gulati estimates India's annual post-harvest losses at a staggering Rs 1.53-lakh crore. Due to inadequate cold chain infrastructure and poor storage facilities, the country loses 12.5 million tonnes of cereals and 49.9 million tonnes of horticultural crops.

That's not all. With one farmer/farm labourer taking their own life every hour, as per the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), mainly due to farm distress, proper management of food grain post-harvest becomes increasingly crucial. "There is a pressing need for technological advancements throughout the agricultural value chain to minimise food loss, starting from harvest to retail," Gulati says.

Agritech firm [Sohan Lal Commodity Management Limited \(SLCM\)](#) noticed an opportunity and launched its '[Agri Reach](#)' platform, aimed at reducing food grain losses and optimising post-harvest management.

"Now, with Agri Reach, I can simply take a photo of my grains, and within seconds, I receive a comprehensive, NABL-accredited quality report directly on my mobile," says a relieved Singh. The platform has spared him from all the earlier ordeals. He started using this post-harvest agri-logistics solution last year after seeing his neighbour. "This solution saves me time and money and empowers me to make instant, informed selling decisions. It reduced my operating costs by 25%. With real-time data and AI-driven analytics at my fingertips, I'm now better equipped to secure a fair price for my crops," he adds.



We understand the technological barriers for our farmers, and hence centres such as Krishi Quality Janch Kendra at major marketplaces are designed to foster a transformation in the Indian agri industry, says Sandeep Sabharwal, Group CEO of SLCM



Tech to the rescue

Launched in 2022, Agri Reach is a digital warehouse management system and is agnostic to infrastructure, location, or crops. It is very simple to use. One of its features allows users to just take a photograph of the produce, after which the app analyses it by performing quality checks using AI and ML. The user will instantly receive a comprehensive report on the mobile outlining specifications, including damaged, shrunken, shrivelled, or immature grains, foreign matter, and various physical parameters like height, length, grid, colour, and pattern of the commodity.

Results are automatically compared with pre-fed data in the back-end system, which updates itself regularly using a combination of technologies, AI, and ML with the Python programming language. The platform is engineered for instant quality checks of essential agricultural commodities, such as wheat, rice, maize, and chana.

Singh, along with more than 10 million farmers across the country, is using Agri Reach for the better management of their produce. “Mandi traders often exploited us, profiting from our situation. That is no longer the case now; we don’t have to sell at throwaway prices, says Singh. “Additionally, this platform connects me with expert guidance at SLCM’s local Krishi Quality Jaanch Kendras, enhancing my awareness about crop improvement and market opportunities,” he adds.

SLCM claims that Agri Reach is the only patented warehouse management system in Asia. The company has strengthened its Agri Reach platform with two patents: Method for Real-Time Data Management, awarded in March 2022, and Method for Real-Time Monitoring of Quality Control Data in a Warehouse Management System, granted last May. While Patent 1 optimises centralised processes for monitoring and managing crops from any location, Patent 2 focuses on monitoring the quality of commodities stored in a warehouse.

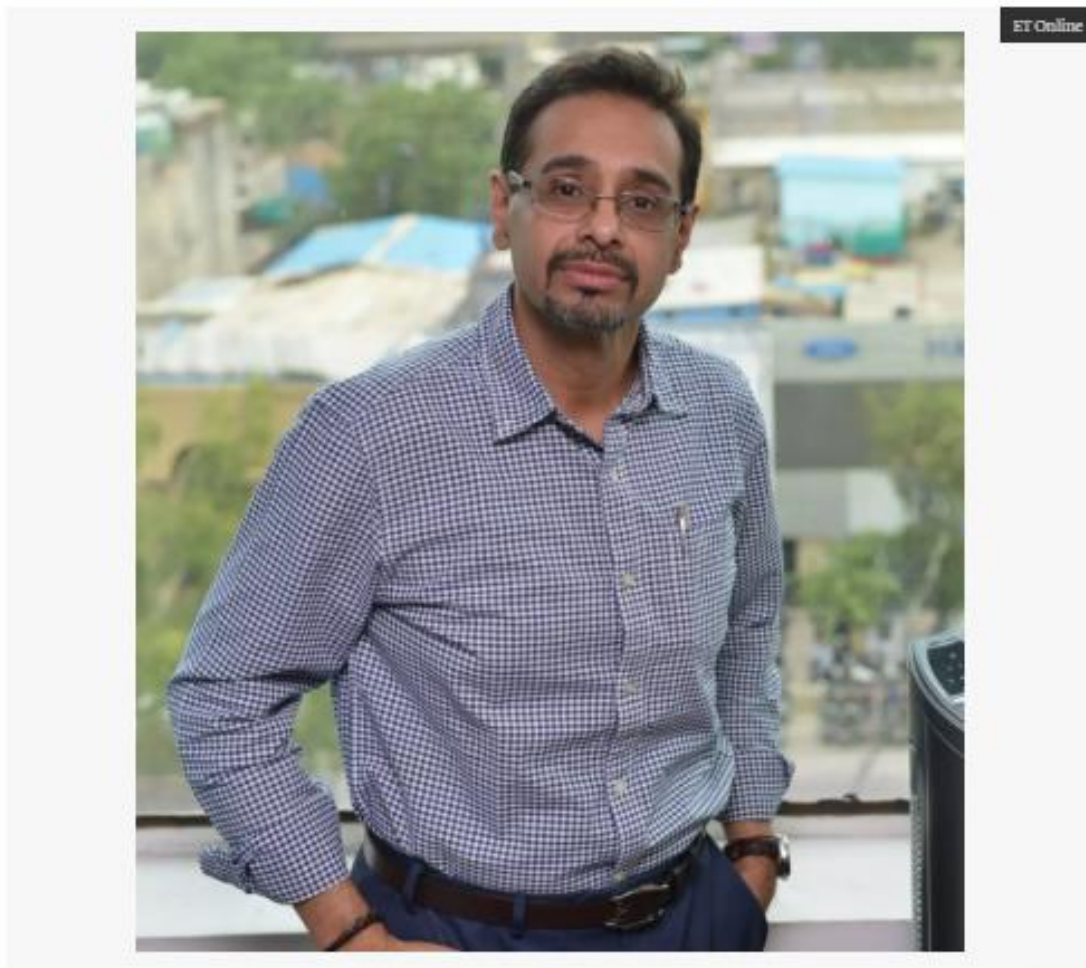
These innovations, according to [Sandeep Sabharwal](#), Group CEO of SLCM, are extremely important, especially for rural and remote areas, where traditional quality assessment facilities are limited or non-existent. “The Agri Reach platform integrates real-time monitoring with AI-driven analytics to optimise warehouse operations. Its quality control module uses AI and ML to perform instant assessments of crops based on visual inputs from a smartphone app. Farmers and operators receive detailed quality reports, enabling immediate corrective actions if needed,” he says.

Agri Reach enables customers to monitor their commodities more efficiently by consolidating data from multiple warehouses into one central location. This removes any possible gaps in warehouse management that could lead to spoilage of commodities. “SLCM’s innovative solutions have revolutionised the way we manage our commodities. Their cutting-edge technology, coupled with seamless warehousing and quality control solutions, has helped us reduce grain losses by 18%, improve efficiency across our supply chain, and maximise profitability, says Rajan Gupta, CFO of Goel International Pvt Ltd.

Managing assets

Since its inception in 2009, [SCLM](#) has been revolutionising India's agricultural landscape with its cutting-edge patented technologies aimed at drastically reducing food grain losses and optimising post-harvest management.

The company operates a network of 17,000 warehouses across India, managing assets worth Rs 12,000 crores daily. Through its NBFC arm, Kissandhan, SLCM has disbursed Rs 3,100 crore in loans to more than 700,000 farmers, including women entrepreneurs and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), ensuring financial inclusion in remote areas.



Beyond India, SCLM has expanded into the Myanmar market, making it the sole Indian Agri-logistics player with an overseas presence, says Sandeep Sabharwal_Group CEO SCLM.



SLCM also offers end-to-end solutions for corporates, including customised warehousing, procurement, and collateral management services. The firm has tied up with more than 20 leading banks in India and Myanmar, which underscores its reliability as a trusted player in the agricultural supply chain. The company offers solutions such as commodity warehousing, agri-financing, procurement, collateral management, and risk mitigation, among others.

The post-harvest supply chain pioneer has successfully conducted 257,385 inspections across 22 states, covering 551 locations as of Feb 28, 2025. The company has inspected 93 different commodities, managing a total tonnage of 12.15 million tonnes.

The success of Agri Reach reflected on SLCM's numbers. Its assets under management doubled since FY22—from Rs 5,519 to Rs 11,160 crore in FY24. A year after the Agri Reach launch, the company also turned profitable. Its profit after tax (PAT) increased to Rs 17.65 crore from -Rs 4.25 crore in FY22. Its net revenue increased from Rs 471.09 crore in FY22 to Rs 482.35 crore.

While the agri space has its share of challenges for both farmers and firms, for the latter it presents a big opportunity and the chance to make a big impact.