

FARMER-FRIENDLY

Now, warehouses part of e-NAM

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IN YET ANOTHER bid to reform marketing of agricultural produce, the government has decided to give accredited warehouses the status of mandis, which will be linked with the online e-NAM platform to help farmers get better market access and realise higher returns.

The move comes at a time the e-NAM facility is making slow progress, even in states like Haryana where it has picked up more than in other states.

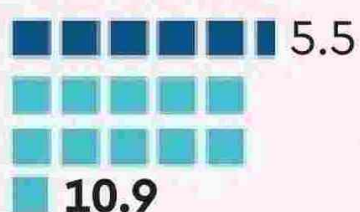
The electronic national agriculture market, or e-NAM portal, launched by PM Narendra Modi in April 2016, is managed by Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium, and Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals' iKisan division is the strategic partner to develop, operate and maintain it. "We aim to start a pilot



Transactions under e-NAM

■ 2016-17 ■ 2017-18

Trade volume
(in million tonne)



Trade value
(₹ in crore)



 Farmers registered:
1.11 crore

Traders registered:
1.14 lakh

Average number of bidders per lot:
4.54

project in some warehouses by the end of this month. Nagarjuna has been asked to select two warehouses where the pilot

scheme can be launched," a government official said.

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He added that a lot of background work needs to be completed before starting the pilot. Only those warehouses that are accredited with the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) will be allowed to facilitate trading under e-NAM. Currently, 686 warehouses are registered under WDRA across the country. A state government has to make changes in the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act for this, for which the Centre last year had circulated a draft model law.

So far, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka have amended their APMC Acts. Any accredited warehouses in these states can function as a mandi after taking permission. Farmers will get to utilise the existing cleaning and grading facilities at a warehouses and avail better storing facilities than a mandi in case they could not sell their produce. "Warehouses will bring in more traders to participate in the e-NAM platform, as this will also help them to get higher business in storage. A trader buying through e-NAM from a warehouse can be assured of quality, storage and delivery since the warehouse itself can also take care of logistics issues," the official quoted earlier said. "We are still working out the details of the scheme," he said, adding that WDRA might also be roped in to play a major role in ensuring trading through e-NAM.

The government hopes that volume of trade will further increase once warehouses supplement as mandis, as traders may prefer to buy from there instead of a mandi to save on arhtiya commission. The traded

volume of agricultural produce on e-NAM nearly doubled to 10.9 million tonne in 2017-18 from 5.5 million tonne in 2016-17. The traded value has also gone up to ₹28,255 crore in the last fiscal from ₹13,274 crore in 2016-17, according to official data.

The government has decided to integrate 415 mandis under the e-NAM platform by 2019-20 after covering 585 mandis in less than two years of its launch, agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh recently said in Parliament. This year, the government targets to add 200 mandis and next year the remaining 215 mandis will be linked with e-NAM, officials said. The concept is new and to completely shift to the digital platform will take time. At least four-five years should be given to analyse the success of this scheme. It is not compulsory, farmers and traders have to be persuaded to use the platform. The benefits will be discovered especially when inter-mandi trading takes off on e-NAM," said Ashok Dalwai, chairman of the committee on doubling farmers' income.