

SLCM launches mobile app to check quality of crops commercially

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After wheat, the firm plans to introduce the facility for chana, soyabean, mustard, and guarseed

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Sandeep Sabharwal, CEO, Sohan Lal Commodity Management (SLCM) Group

New Delhi-based agri-logistics firm Sohan Lal Commodity Management Pvt Ltd (SLCM), one of India's leading post-harvest management groups, has commercially launched its mobile app to check the quality of agricultural crops.

"We went commercial four months ago after launching the app's beta version last year to test the quality of wheat. We have now developed the technology to test the quality of chana and we will be launching this over the next two weeks," said Sandeep Sabharwal, Group CEO, SLCM.

The company is also developing the technology to test three more crops — soyabean, guarseed and mustard — by March 31. The app can be downloaded for free and farmers are unlikely to be charged anything for using the app.

Demonstrations for testing the quality of these four crops are being held across SLCM's 5,000 locations in the country, he said.

Currently, the quality testing app is operational in 16 States since its launch. The quality test using the app has been ascertained at about 200 locations with nearly 600 users using it. Over 16,000 inspections have been conducted and till now 4.65 lakh tonnes have been handled through the app.

The advantage of the app is that an Android phone is enough to carry out quality checks of the crop and no other hardware is required, the SLCM CEO said.

"You click the photograph of the crop and within 45 seconds you will get results of that crop on your mobile. This is equivalent to testing crops in a lab and the accuracy is 90 per cent," Sabharwal said.

Advantage

The main advantage for a farmer is that he does not need to depend on an *arthiya* (commission agent) or a processor or a laboratory to vouch for the quality of this crop. Earlier, it left him with no choice.

“This has not only ended the 24-36 hours of waiting for the farmer but also speeded up the flow of money for all concerned,” the SLCM CEO said.

For example, a bank took 2-3 days to fund wheat deposited at a warehouse in a remote place as all stakeholders had to wait for the results of the quality test to come. The app has made the quality-test process transparent while the results are populated immediately and shared with all the stakeholders.

Tech products

SLCM has begun launching a slew of technological products on the basis that technology has to be a part and parcel of agriculture. “The whole idea is that since we are spread across 9,600 locations across India and Myanmar and we are looking at a larger tonnage and asset management for us to identify a problem on the ground and then work backwards,” the company’s CEO said.

“For the app, we began tapping artificial intelligence (AI) seven years ago on the premise that if trained properly and things are put scientifically in the system, AI can recognise crops.

SLCM has developed another technology “Agri Suraksha” which allows the company to install CCTV in places where there is no light and no network to manage warehouses remotely through satellite monitoring.

“We remotely authenticate what is happening on the ground using satellite. It is an independent SIM-based application and connected to a nerve centred within the country,” Sabharwal said.

'All about management'

SLCM covers 819 of its high-value warehouses across 11 states through "Agri Suraksha". "An owner can simply log online and look at his crop using the technology. Even banks with who some commodities are pledged can monitor the warehouses and stocks in them," he said.

SLCM came into the warehousing sector 10 years ago with the mantra that it is all about management and not infrastructure. "The infrastructure might be good, bad or ugly, but you can still do warehousing in an efficient manner to give you the results that you want," Sabharwal said, adding that it has helped cut post-harvest losses by 0.5 per cent.

For this, SLCM holds a patent which it got last year. It has now applied for a patent for its app to test crop quality. The company manages silos and cold storage but does not own any

Though there is a thought in the company that it should build silos, "we would want to "see a stronger supply chain network on the ground before we devote larger capital to silos".

Also, silos do not allow the storage of multiple crops as also multiple grades. "Till the time we do not see a unified trade fraternity on the ground which will allow private consumption to do larger stocking of one particular commodity, I think SLCM would, you know, will would like to hold back," he said.

The company has trebled its asset management and will likely double it this year. "We had reached a peak output of about ₹5,500-6,000 crore last year. We believe that we will close this year with ₹11,500 plus crore of assets under management," Sabharwal said.