Procurement of Parboiled Rice

What is the issue?

The Centre has said it will stop the purchase of excess parboiled rice, of which Telangana is a major producer.

What is parboiled rice?

- Parboiled rice refers to rice that has been partially boiled at the paddy stage, before milling.
- However, there is no specific definition of parboiled rice of the Food Corporation of India or the Food Ministry.
- **Suitable varieties**- Generally, all varieties can be processed into parboiled rice, but it is ideal to use long slender varieties to prevent breakage during milling.
- However, aromatic varieties should not be parboiled because the process can make it can lose its aroma.

What are the different processes used for parboiling rice?

- All processes generally involve three stages
    1. Soaking
    2. Steaming
    3. Drying
- After passing through these stages, the paddy goes for milling.

- **Common method**- The paddy is soaked in hot water 8 hours.
- The water is then drained and the paddy steamed for 20 minutes and it is sun-dried.
- **CFTRI method**- The Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru, uses a method in which the paddy is soaked in hot water for 3 hours.
- The water is then drained and the paddy steamed for 20 minutes and it is dried in the shade.
- **PPRC method**- The Paddy Processing Research Centre (PPRC), Thanjavur follows a method known as the chromate soaking process.
- It uses chromate, a family of salt in which the anion contains both chromium and oxygen, which removes the odour from the wet rice.

> *Milling is a crucial step in post-production of rice that aims to remove the husk and the bran layers, and produce an edible, white rice kernel free of impurities.*

What are the pros and cons of parboiling?

- **Pros of parboiling**
    - Parboiling makes rice tougher.
    - It reduces the chances of the rice kernel breaking during milling.
    - It increases the nutrient value of the rice.

    - Parboiled rice has a higher resistance to insects and fungi.
- **Cons of parboiling**
    - The rice becomes darker and may smell unpleasant due to prolonged soaking.
    - Setting up a parboiling rice milling unit requires a higher investment than a raw rice milling unit.

What is the new tussle now?

- The Telangana government has been demanding that the Centre procure paddy from the State at the minimum support price (MSP).
- According to the Food Ministry, the total stock of parboiled rice is 40.58 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) as on April 1, 2022.
- Out of this, the highest stock is in Telangana, followed by Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- According to the Ministry, the demand for parboiled rice has come down in recent years.
- The Ministry said that the current stock of parboiled rice was sufficient to meet the demand for the next two years.
- So the Centre maintains that it can only procure raw rice and very less parboiled rice as per demand.
- Telangana, which is a decentralised procurement state (DCP) is demanding a uniform paddy procurement policy.

Under DCP system, the State Government/ its agencies procure, store and distribute rice /wheat/coarse grains within the state and hand over the excess stocks to FCI in Central Pool. The expenditure incurred by the State Government during the process is reimbursed by the Centre.

References

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2. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/explained-telanganas-paddy-procurement-row/article65313898.ece
3. https://fci.gov.in/procurements.php?view=86

Quick facts

FCI

- The Food Corporation of India (FCI) was setup under the Food Corporation's Act 1964.
- It was set up in 1965 with its initial headquarters at Chennai which was later moved to New Delhi.
- Objectives
    - Effective price support operations for safeguarding the interests of the farmers
    - Distribution of foodgrains throughout the country for public distribution system
    - Maintaining satisfactory level of operational and buffer stocks of foodgrains to ensure National Food Security



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