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FSSAI standardises list of 11,000 food additives

The move will allow companies manufacturing food products to use additives allowed on the list without approval and would significantly ease approvals.

In a new development, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has finalized a new list of 11,000 permissible food additives. This will allow companies manufacturing food products to use additives allowed on the list without approval and would significantly ease approvals. Earlier, companies needed to obtain product-wise approval for launching food products. Speaking to CNBC-TV18, FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said the food regulator has removed two additives from the list, one of which is potassium bromate, which was in the news recently for its supposed carcinogenic properties. On the other carcinogen of the two named in bread fiasco, FSSAI's scientific panel is still studying the impact of potassium iodate, Agarwal said.

Below is the transcript of Pawan Kumar Agarwal's with CNBC-TV18's Shereen Bhan

Q: Help us understand what the FSSAI has operationalised today? I know that there are 11000 additives on your list of additives but potassium bromate I believe has now been done away with. It has been banned by the food regulator, is that right?

A: Today we have operationalised the final list of additives, around 11000. This work was going on for the past three years by the FSSAI scientific panel and scientific committee and was approved by the authority in January this year. Now after it has been approved by the ministry of health and family welfare this would be finally notified after it is translated into Hindi. However in view of the public

interest involved we are operationalised the final list of 11000 additive provisions in the food in various food categories.

Q: The last chat that you and I had, you said that companies may get some transition time to do away with the use of potassium bromate but now that it stands banned from today, will there be any transition time or starting today companies will not be allowed to use potassium bromate?

A: This final list removes potassium bromate which is normally used in bread and bakery products and also another additive which is cyclamate normally used in jams, jelly and dairy based products, these two additives cannot be used in any food item in the country from now on.

Q: Is there a possibility that potassium iodate may also be banned because that was something that you said your committee was studying. Does potassium iodate stay or will this also be banned?

A: Very difficult to say anything on this at this stage. Scientific panel and the scientific committee will have to apply its mind based on evidence that may be available to them including the evidence that the reports from the studies from the studies from the centre for science and environment has provided.

Q: Do you think most companies will be able to make the transition immediately? You have obviously held stake holder consultations. Is industry prepared to drop potassium bromate?

A: When we had consultations primarily with the bread manufacturers, we were told that this transition can be done almost immediately. Most of the companies had voluntarily agreed not to use potassium bromate with immediate effect. I do believe that many companies or many of these businesses are not using potassium bromate at all. Therefore there is no reason for giving them any transition time.
