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FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said the regulator would first forward the complaint to the restaurant or the company and follow up by sending a food inspector. Photo: Pradeep Gaur/Mint

New Delhi: Upset after finding an insect in your packed food? Or may be the absence of labelling to indicate whether the food is vegetarian or non-vegetarian?

You can do something about it—complain on the website of the food safety regulator, which will ensure swift action.

FSSAI IN NEWS

With a message that safe packed food is every consumer's right, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched a section, "Food Safety Concern," on its website to receive complaints related to packed food or even food outlets including roadside eateries.

Under this section, a consumer can complain about a product if she finds that its shelf-life had expired, or that it had been adulterated, or didn't contain vegetarian/non-vegetarian labelling. The presence of dust particles, insects or fungus can be grounds for a complaint too. Consumers can even post a picture of the product with the grievance.

Last week, FSSAI announced a "10@10" programme to promote safe food at all places including homes, schools, offices, eateries and even religious places while commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006.

It announced that it will launch 10 new initiatives that seek to connect people of all age groups for ensuring safe food. Giving citizens a voice and a transparent system to register their complaints is part of that programme.

"This is among one of the 10 initiatives that we launched last week and herein our focus is consumer outreach. It's a big step towards involving public at large and it is the first time that such a step is being taken," said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer (CEO) at FSSAI.

Agarwal said the regulator would first forward the complaint to the restaurant or the company named in it and follow up by sending a food inspector to the premises of the alleged offender.

"Over the time with a large number of complaints, a database would be created and we would get a general trend about a particular place or kind of food. That trend will also help us in carrying out inspections. We will also note how restaurants and companies are responding to consumers' concerns," Agarwal added.

FSSAI has been actively trying to enforce food safety regulations in the past year or so. It started with a ban on Nestle India Ltd's Maggi noodles in June 2015. It also said it was examining the possibility of **regulating** quality of water piped to household taps to hold municipal authorities and agencies such as state water supply boards accountable for the quality of water they supply.

FSSAI IN NEWS

In May, the food regulator **banned** a potentially cancer-causing chemical, potassium bromate, used widely as an additive in brands of packaged breads and the bread used in ready-to-eat burgers and pizzas. The FSSAI decision came after a study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) named it as one of two chemicals that could cause cancer.
