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India's No.1 Financial Portal

Dated: 05-10-2016

FSSAI issues draft regulation on food fortification

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has sought suggestions from stakeholders within a period of 60 days on the draft Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016.

Food safety regulator FSSAI has issued a draft regulation to allow fortification of food to improve the nutritional value for public health benefit. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has sought suggestions from stakeholders within a period of 60 days on the draft Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016.

In the draft regulations, the regulator has defined fortification means "deliberately increasing the content of essential micro-nutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health".

It has proposed that essential nutrients may be appropriately added to foods for preventing or reducing the risk of, or correcting, a demonstrated deficiency of one or more essential nutrients in the population or specific population group. Fortification can also be done for "reducing the risk of, or correcting, inadequate nutritional status of one or more essential nutrients in the population or specific population group".

Food fortification could be done to meet requirements or recommended intake of one or more essential nutrients; maintain or improve health; maintain or improve the nutritional quality of foods. "Any manufacturer who fortifies any food shall ensure that the level of micro-nutrient in such fortified food does not fall below the minimum level specified in the schedule," the FSSAI said.

FSSAI IN NEWS

Every manufacturer should ensure that the level of micrometeorite in such fortified food does not exceed the highest amount of micro-nutrient that can safely be added to such food, having regard to recognised international standards, the draft added.

FSSAI has also proposed that when fortification of a food is made mandatory, it should be based on severity and extent of public health need as demonstrated by generally accepted scientific evidence. "The Food Authority may, specify mandatory fortification of any staple food on the directions of the government," the draft said.

All fortified food, whether voluntarily fortified or mandatory, should be manufactured, packed, labeled, handled, distributed and sold, whether for profit or under a Government-funded programme, only in compliance with the standards specified under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and regulations made thereunder. In the draft, FSSAI has also prescribed packaging and labelling norms for fortified food.