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## **FSSAI looking at comprehensive regulation for nutrient-fortified food**



Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI

The regulator will release a logo to identify such products

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) could next look at setting standards for fortification of packaged foods products such as biscuits and breakfast cereals, with essential micro-nutrients.

Earlier this month, the regulator released draft standards for fortification of staples that includes milk, edible oil, vansapati, atta and maida, rice and salt, and plans to make them operational soon.

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Fortification means increasing content of essential micro-nutrient in a food product to improve its nutritional quality to provide public health.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said that several states such as Karnataka are keen to include fortified food in their public schemes such as mid-day meal programmes, and therefore, the regulator will operationalise these draft standards soon to facilitate the same.

He said that the regulators will continue to engage with stakeholders to gain feedback and make changes in the standards, if required before finalising these standards.

Asked about other categories that may be added for food fortification, Agarwal said that the regulator will look at setting standards for food fortification for packaged food in the future.

FSSAI, which is organising a two-day national summit on food fortification over the weekend, will also release a logo which food manufacturers will need to use to indicate their products are fortified with micro-nutrients.

Agarwal said this will encourage food manufacturers to come out with products that have micro-nutrients and help consumers make better choices.

He said, “This is just the beginning. We are looking to come out with a comprehensive regulation that will help universal adoption of fortified food. We have started with setting standards for these five staples. Hunger is not just about lack of food but also lack of nutritional food.”

With the establishing of these standards many States are likely to make induction of fortified food mandatory in public schemes. Recommendations have also come for making these standards mandatory for food producers for milk, edible oil, atta and maida, rice and vansapati to come out with fortified products.

Agarwal said, “For any such intervention, we will need to ensure that the suppliers are able to implement these fortification standards, which cannot happen immediately. We will need to give a transition time to the industry before we can make these standards mandatory.”

The draft standards prescribe the minimum and maximum limits of essential nutrients that can be put in these five category of products.

The regulator will now focus on their compliance of these standards to address the challenges of malnutrition in the country.

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At the same time, these standards will also ensure consumers are not misled with false claims.