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FSSAI: Turning a new page on food safety



Food regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is looking to widen the canvas of food safety as it rolls out several initiatives across the country.

Different initiatives, such as creating a negative list of foods served in schools that contain high fat, sugar and salt; a project to clean up street food; and ensure hygiene at corporate canteens, restaurants and religious places, are cooking up in its plate.

“As part of commemorating a decade of the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act 2006, the food regulator is set to roll out 10 key initiatives to ensure food safety and nutrition,” said Pawan Agarwal , CEO of FSSAI.

This will be done by launching a manual on safe food habits for households and formulating regulations to promote nutritious food at schools. FSSAI is also taking initiatives to improve safe food practices at workplaces, restaurants and street food vendors.

Key initiatives

“Integration of food standards to avoid ambiguity, strengthening food testing labs, training and certification as well as partnering with food companies to promote self-regulation among business are the other key initiatives the regulator is planning,” he said.

Agarwal said these initiatives are to ensure total alignment among the stakeholders and have the same vision to achieve the mammoth task of food safety.

He said some pilots will be run by States to ensure proper implementation of food safety initiatives at the State level.

As part of these initiatives, FSSAI will partner with leading companies to set up corporate training centres, embed food safety training in their entire value chain including marketing campaigns, besides participating in research, surveillance and survey activities.

Colour-coding

All food business including restaurants will be required to put up colour-coded food safety display boards on their premises, which will include FSSAI license number, instructions for food hygiene and safety practices along with a consumer feedback details, with a robust mechanism to process this feedback.

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Meanwhile, FSSAI is also going to come out with guidelines on whether companies can use its name in advertisement campaigns. This move came after some companies have been highlighting the fact that their ads had been approved by FSSAI.

Agarwal said that a mechanism to revamp the FSS Act is already in process, with a performance audit of FSSAI being undertaken and a Parliamentary Standing Committee having been set up to give its views to the Centre.

Replying to a query on gaps in the current legislation, Agarwal said: “Better co-ordination with States and various ministries; simplifying the process of setting up standards; setting up cleaning, sorting and grading mechanisms for raw products at mandis; are some of the critical issues that may be required to be built into the legislation. In the next six months, FSSAI will be able to firm up its views on the same.”

FSSAI IN NEWS
