

Most urgent

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Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India
FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road
New Delhi-110 002

Dated: 12th October, 2011

Subject: Ad-hoc guidelines related Food Import Clearance Process by FSSAI's Authorized Officers-Reg.

Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) after due consideration of various operational issues raised by the stakeholders and to facilitate genuine trade while ensuring the mandate of safe food imports into India is issuing the following guidelines/clarifications with immediate effect till further orders in the matter:

1. In respect of Imported food items having very short Shelf-life (less than 7 days) such as fresh fruit, processed cheese etc., the Authorized Officer; after due verification of the short shelf-life of the food consignment, certificates of country of origin, Lab analysis report from internationally accredited laboratories in the countries notified by FSSAI, and having taken an undertaking from the Importer as per Annexure-A, will draw sample and issue Provisional NOC to the Customs, without waiting for the analysis report from lab. Upon the receipt of the analysis report from the lab, the same will be communicated to Customs along with NOC if products conform to the standard.

In case of failure of the sample, the Authorised Officer shall forthwith notify the Importer/CHA, while informing FSSAI headquarters, to recall that consignment immediately and submit a compliance report within 24 hours to the Authorised Officer and the FSSAI. FSSAI will issue suitable instructions with regard to the manner in which the failed consignment is to be dealt with. Authorised Officer will also initiate action as per the provisions of extant Rules & Regulations. FSSAI will alert all import points in the country regarding action to be taken with regard to maintaining vigil on imports of products manufactured by the same company or similar products imported by the same importer/CHA.

2. In case of imported food items requiring special storage conditions like -18 °C storage temperature etc., the Authorized Officer; after due verification of the true storage requirements for the food item, confirmation from the Air Cargo Operator/Custodian that such storage facilities are not available, Customs indicating a no objection to treat the importer warehouse as bonded area and the Importer providing an Undertaking as per Annexure-B to the effect that the Importer agrees to hold the consignment under controlled temperature in its storage facility. Based on Undertaking, Authorised Officer can provide a "Conditional Clearance Certificate" so that Importers can safely move the product to a well equipped storage facility for maintaining desired temperature without incurring the heavy demurrage charges.

