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FSSAI directs removal of Boudoiun, Halphen tests for blended edible oil

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Shraddha Joshi, Mumbai

FSSAI has decided to remove the Boudouin and Halphen tests, which are required for blended edible vegetable oils. The country's apex food regulator has also issued a draft notification, inviting comments and suggestions from stakeholders for the revision of special provisions relating to the sale of vegetable oils and fats. Members have to respond within a period of one month.

As per the revised regulation, under the clause titled special provisions relating to sale of vegetable oil and fat, the following has been substituted - "Vanaspati, interesterified vegetable oil or fat, bakery shortening, bakery and industrial margarine, table margarine and fat spreads shall be prepared from any of the edible vegetable oils whose standards are specified under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011, or from any other edible vegetable oil with the prior approval of the Food Authority."

Giving details on the edible oils and various methods available for testing, Abhishek Saareen, executive director, Trident F&B Consultants Pvt Ltd, informed, "Edible oils are among the most abundant cooking ingredients in the world. They are extracted from plants, seeds, nuts and fruits. Depending on the type of oil, they are used in baking and frying food and for non-cooking products, such as salad dressing, margarine spreads and dips."

He added, "In recent years, food analysis has improved dramatically and many types of adulterated food are now unlikely to escape detection. Extensive research has been done in the field of vegetable oil analysis to test for authenticity and chemical properties."

According to the draft notification, revised regulations would pave the way for the food business operators (FBOs) to prepare Vanaspati easily, as it will not restrict the preparation for the list specified earlier. Further, as various suitable tests are available for blending of edible oils, Boudouin and Halphen test have been removed.

Citing an example, Saareen said, “For example, gas chromatography (GC) and high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) have frequently been used to evaluate triglyceride content in vegetable oil samples.”

“The physical and chemical properties of vegetable oils are closely related to the type and relative amount of each constituent triglyceride in the sample,” he added.

“Supercritical fluid chromatography (SFC), in combination with evaporative light scattering detection (ELSD) is a valuable technique for the determination of triglyceride composition of vegetable oils,” Saareen said.

“Compared to GC, SFC separates triglycerides at much lower temperatures; compared to HPLC, SFC permits greater selectivity with shorter analysis times,” he added.

Saareen stated that the above-mentioned tests were also done to detect the presence of animal body fat in vegetable fat.

“There are tests like the Holde’s test and the TLC test to detect mineral oils in edible oils, while the Kries test and ultra-violet absorption test are conducted to check the presence of rancidity,” he added.

The notice added that the issue concerning the adulteration of blended edible vegetable oil will be addressed once the notification of the fatty acid profiles of different vegetable oils get notified.