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FSSAI to roll out laboratory network system INFoLNET by end of May '18

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FSSAI has decided to finally roll out the implementation of the Indian Food Laboratory Network system (INFoLNET) by the end of May 2018. INFoLNET is the system that would connect all the referral, state and private labs notified by the country's apex food regulator, which has also warned the facilities failing to connect with it of action.

The country's apex food regulator, in its order, said, "Keeping in view the importance of the system, all FSSAI-notified labs are directed to do the needful for complete implementation of INFoLNET system in their respective labs by May 31, 2018, failing which necessary action may be initiated, including derecognition of the lab from the list of FSSAI-notified labs under Section 43(1) (2)."

"INFoLNET is an initiative with bringing all the stakeholders to a common platform for the establishment of a transparent food testing network," stated FSSAI. While several demonstrations and training programmes have been conducted by the apex food regulator across the country, it rued that despite these, many labs failed to connect with the system.

"The FSSAI, through its training programme, addressed the queries and resolved the difficulties encountered by the labs in registering and rolling out the INFoLNET system. A total of 123 labs participated in these programmes. It was observed that many of the labs have not started using the INFoLNET system as yet, despite the efforts made for enrollment of the notified labs by FSSAI," the order said.

Commenting on the subject, Ashwin Bhadri, chief executive officer, Equinox Labs, said, "The Indian Food Laboratory Network (INFoLNET) is a new platform deployed by FSSAI, with a view to ensure a streamlined and transparent food testing network among all the testing laboratories."

He added, "This is a fabulous initiative to get all stakeholders on one portal, be it food businesses or testing labs, all the necessary details shall be visible for an unadulterated reporting system, queries, operational process and so on."

"The benefits of the portal can be multitude. For the food businesses, all the testing laboratories shall have the same results. For the testing labs, each shall be linked by the type and number of testing services benefiting the clients, while this will be an added barrier of protection for consumers, in terms of food safety. What's better is that this is mandatory for each laboratory, like food safety training and certification (FoSTaC) is for food businesses. Together, we shall soon see the level of Indian food safety reaching a new pinnacle," Bhadri said.