



FSSAI appoints Vimta Labs for nationwide surveillance of milk quality

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FSSAI has now communicated to the all state food commissioners across India that the Hyderabad-based Vimta Labs has been assigned to conduct this year's nationwide milk quality surveillance.

The move by the country's apex food regulator to establish a robust nationwide system to monitor the quality of milk has come at the right time. The Karnataka Food Safety Commissionerate has reported the highest number of cases of adulteration in milk, followed by tea powder and spices used to prepare cauliflower Manchurian.

FSSAI has stated that it is the best way to ensure optimal utilisation of the Food Safety on Wheels to instill confidence in consumers that food is safe. Also Food Safety on Wheels is a critical component of the food safety ecosystem across the country.

While the common adulterants detected in milk are detergents, sugar, salt and urea, these are sold in fake packs bearing the names of major dairy brands, such as Arokya, Thirumala Milk and Adityaa Milk, to con consumers.

"The package cover duplication is rampant, and the concern now is the need to keep a watch over culprits who are seen to be experts in adulteration," said Dr Harshavardan B, deputy commissioner, food safety squad, Office of the Karnataka Food Safety Commissionerate, told F&B News.

"We have found more than often that in all of these fabricated milk, the contents are sub-standard and not-of-quality standard. This is a major issue, and we are closely scrutinising the violations and taking the law-breakers to task," he added.

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“The recent violation reported for milk has come in from Erode in Tamil Nadu, which is raided from a milk vendor and found to be sub-standard for which the investigation reports are being compiled,” Dr Harshavardan said.

Another issue that our inspectors have detected is that tea powder seized from beverage outlets are found to contain additives and colouring to enhance the taste of the hot drink,” he added.

Even the mixed spices used in food preparations are found to contain chemicals. The spices containing chilli powder, among other taste enhancers, are known to result in food poisoning and allergies.

“The food inspectors have also found food outlets vending dum biryani using spoilt meat and vegetables, apart from contents of adulterated spices. In addition, the juice joints are being examined not just for water purity, but also for the quality of fruits used to pulp,” Dr Harshavardan said.

“The need of the hour is to ensure safe food is available across outlets. For this, there is need for qualified inspectors, testing facilities and a massive awareness to be created among the public to keep away from unhygienic food service surroundings and report the same to the Commissionerate,” he added