

FSSAI extends ban on Chinese milk products by six months to December 23

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The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, has further extended the ban on import of milk and milk products from China, including chocolate and chocolate products, which expired on June 23, 2018, by six months, i e till December 23, 2018.

At a recent meeting which took place at the FSSAI headquarters in New Delhi, it was recommended by the concerned department and ministries of the Government of India to extend the ban by six months.

According to the letter, “The ban on import of milk and milk products, including chocolates and chocolate products and candies/confectionery/food preparation with milk and milk solids as ingredients from China, may be extended for a period of six months, i e until December 23, 2018 or until their safety is established on the basis of credible reports and supporting data, whichever is earlier.”

According to an official from the country’s apex food regulator, “The ban has been extended keeping in mind the food and milk safety. Representatives from the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), the animal husbandry department, the Department of Customs and the commerce ministry were present during the meeting. They were of the opinion that the milk that came from China was contaminated with melamine content.”

“Earlier, a one-year extension was imposed, but we have not received any representation from our Chinese counterparts. We are reconsidering the issue, so the ban has been extended by six months. Based on the scientific evidence, a decision will be taken,” the official added.

Supporting FSSAI’s move, B K Gurbani, president, Indian Confectionery Manufacturers’ Association (ICMA), said, “The DGFT move on banning the import of milk and milk products from China is viewed positively by the confectionery industry, as Chinese milk and milk products are sub-standard in quality, and it has an adverse effect on the health of those who have consumed these products. Traces of melamine have been found in milk products from China in the past. The confectionery and chocolate products produced in India are far more superior than those made in China.”

“India is the one of the largest milk-producing countries and the allied products made from the

milk. Therefore, chocolate industries, which use milk/milk products like skimmed milk powder (SMP) and whole milk powder are available abundantly within the country. And as milk products, are perishable commodities, the shelf life of the product is larger than the use of imported milk products. It does not only encourage producers of milk and allied products, but consumers will also get superior products," he added.

"While China has made a remarkable dent in the global market in different product categories, including plastic toys, garments, furniture, machinery etc., but it never made impact on the category of chocolate produced by that country. Even in some European countries, China-made chocolate and milk products are banned," Gurbani said.

"Therefore, ICMA is of the opinion that milk and its products made in China can be banned and FSSAI must impose stringent norms for the import of this category from other countries. This will encourage the local manufacturers and generate direct and indirect employment related to this industry," he added.

DGFT, in September 2008, had, for the very first time, imposed a ban on the import of milk and milk products from China. The imposed ban was an interim step taken to enable departments to put in place suitable measures to restrict the import of contaminated milk products in the country.

An additional six-month extension was imposed till June 2009. The ban also included the import of chocolate and chocolate products and candies, confectionery and food prepared with milk and milk solids as an ingredient.

The ban was extended from time to time through various notifications, the last being between June 22, 2017 and June 23, 2018.