

## Govt & pvt sector can build ecosystem, says Agarwal at AOAC-India meet

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Government regulators and the private sector can join hands to build a robust analytical ecosystem in the country. This was stated by Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, at the keynote lecture during the opening session at AOAC-India's sixth annual conference, which commenced at the Park Hotel in New Delhi on Friday. He highlighted the not-for-profit partnership between FSSAI and AOAC-India.

The topic of the conference was Towards Collaborative Leadership to Ensure Food Safety. As a prominent food safety conference, it brought together nearly 300 analytical professionals, including top government food safety regulators, eminent scientists, academicians, industry partners, laboratory owners, researchers and students.

Globally, food safety issues have caused crucial crises, and this two-day event will provide a unique opportunity to assess the emerging trends in this field and discuss strategies to overcome various problems for building our planet a safer place to live.

A MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was signed between AOAC and FSSAI earlier for adopting official AOAC's methods for regulatory control purposes in India.

Agarwal, during the keynote address, also proposed that FSSAI should collaborate with AOAC India Section to jointly organise the annual conference involving more stakeholders.

He hoped to double the analysis of food products sold in country every year to improve the public perception related to food safety and security.

Agarwal also applauded and appreciated how AOAC India Section played a pivotal role in the release of the book on Key Analytical Tools in Food Analysis, authored by Lalitha Gowda. The FSSAI CEO stated that this book would help the entire analytical community, and the regulator shall procure 500 copies of this book to propagate in all the referral and notified laboratories in the country. Other distinguished speakers were SK Saxena, director, EIC; N Bhaskar, advisor, FSSAI; Palmer A Orlandi, deputy executive director and chief science officer, AOAC; Samuel Godefroy of Université Laval; Kaushik Banerjee, chairman, AOAC-India, DeAnn Benesh, past president, AOAC, and NVenkateswaran, director, NABL.

Ranjan Mitra, president, AOAC-India, said, *“We are very pleased to have held our section’s sixth annual conference. We trust that it will offer immense chance to debate on what it means to develop new food testing methodologies, and how it relates to the future of food safety.”*

The conference comprised keynote lectures, plenary presentations, poster sessions and interactive group discussions, creating a platform for information exchange and knowledge transfer.

The speakers (from India, the USA, the UK and Europe) covered various facets of food analysis, global food safety issues, quality control regulations, food authenticity and capacity-building for the running of effective global food systems within the nation.

The attendees will also have an opportunity to witness the launch of an e-learning portal which will act as FSSAI’s food analyst examination guidebook. Over 50 leading organisations from six different countries participated to converse on how to solve complex analytical problems and develop compliant solutions to ensure human health. Overall, this conference was packed with thought-provoking presentations, stimulating group discussion forums and an interactive exhibit floor.