

Maha & Guj crack down on food adulteration, ace food safety initiatives

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Maharashtra and Gujarat food authorities have made massive crackdown on food adulteration malpractices in their respective states in recent times apart from acing in different initiatives taken up to ensure food safety.

Action by Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on food adulteration

Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) intelligence team raided a factory producing adulterated cheese. After confirming this information, on April 8, 2021, through the intelligence branch of Thane division, New Om Sainath Dairy in Vasai East District, while conducting a raid at Palghar, it was found that Ashok Dubey was engaged in the business of producing cheese in this place in an unlicensed, unhygienic and dirty environment.

The cheese was found to be adulterated. Samples of cheese, skim milk powder, palm oil, adulterated (white flakes) were taken from this place for analysis. On suspicion of adulteration, the remaining stock of paneer, costing around Rs 59 per kg. worth Rs 17,700 was immediately destroyed. The place has been sealed for public health.

Taking into account the responsibility for the health of the people of the state, the following five star hotel establishments in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai were inspected by the Maharashtra FDA on March 8, 2021, and March 9, 2021, in Mumbai.

Names of the hotels are The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai, Vile Parle, Prorenance Land Pvt. Ltd. (Four Seasons Hotel), Worli, Hotel Grand Hyatt, Santa Cruz East, Lalit Mumbai, Andheri East, The Fern, Goregaon East, The Park Pvt. Ltd., CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai, Fortune Select Exotica, Vashi, Navi Mumbai, BD&P Hotels Pvt. Ltd., Unit of (Hilton Mumbai International Airport), Andheri East, Sahara Hotel, Vile Parle East, Associate Hospitality and Developers Pvt. Ltd., (Radisson's Hotel), Goregaon West, JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu, Chalets Hotels Pvt. Ltd. (JW Marriott) Sahar Village, Andheri East, The Lila Hotel, Andheri East, ITC Grand Central (ITC Maratha), Parel, The Orchid Hotel Mumbai, Vile Parle. As per Appendix 4 of the Security Standards (FSS) Act 2006 Rules and Regulations 2011, errors were found on some issues.

The error has been acknowledged by the concerned hoteliers and the administration has ensured that the hoteliers have been informed that the errors have been rectified under the provisions of the FSS Act.

The campaign was carried out under the guidance of Joint Commissioner (Food) Shashikant Kekare Brihanmumbai and Joint Commissioner (Food) Headquarters Shailesh Adhav. Maharashtra FDA has said it will continue to conduct regular inspections of such hotels.

The vigilance team also conducted raids on factory adulterating oil based on the confidential information received. It raided two edible oil packing establishments namely Pani, Samatwali, Vasai (East). It was found that there was adulteration of edible oils in the area. It was also found to be a recyclable source of old tin for edible oil packaging. It was found that the weight of the edible oil was more than the weight indicated on the foot of the edible oil.

Edible oil worth Rs 32, 50, 568 was seized from these two establishments.

Gujarat FDCA at the forefront in many initiatives Gujarat was able to secure and maintain first rank in State Food Safety Index of India during the year 2019 and 2020. The Gujarat Food and Drug Control Administration (FDCA) is working to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

Under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Eat Right India Movement, Gujarat FDCA has initiated programmes like Clean Street Food Hub, Eat Right Campuses, Hygiene Ratings, Blissful and Hygienic Offering to God (BHOG), Clean and fresh fruits and vegetable markets, Eat Right Schools, FoSTaC Trainings and Clean Street Food Hub.

FSSAI has initiated the Eat Right India Movement based on three key themes viz. Safe Food, Healthy Diets and Sustainable diets.

From Gujarat 28 Participants - 23 Districts and 5 Corporations have registered for District Level Eat Right Challenge with grant of Rs 5 lakh provided by FSSAI as seed funds.

Gujarat has received "Clean Street Food Hub" award for Kankaria Street in Ahmedabad which is the first clean food street in the country. Currently 22 Clean Street Food Hubs are in Gujarat out of which 17 are certified and 5 are in pipeline. Out of 28 Clean Street Food Hubs across the country, 17 are in Gujarat only.

The 'Eat Right Campus' initiative led by FSSAI aims to promote safe, healthy and sustainable food in campuses such as schools, universities, colleges, workplaces, hospitals, tea estates etc. across the country. The objective is to improve the health of people and the planet and promote social and economic development of the nation.

Gujarat is the leading state in India with 32 Eat Right Campuses including 5 Jails and 1 Jail Staff Training centre as Eat Right Campus.

The Hygiene rating concept is new in India, but has parallels in many countries across the globe. Every country has its own terminologies, which explain the idea of ensuring safe and hygienic food in all catering businesses to the general public.

More than 1,000 Hygiene Ratings have been done till now across the Gujarat State. Some 50 Sweet shops and 50 Meat shops are audited by third party for the same. In addition 145 schools have been covered under SNF@Schools initiatives.

Places of Worship (PoW) are a very important part of Indian society and food served in these places is regarded as pure and sacred. BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) is a part of the Eat Right initiative to encourage PoW to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene while preparing prasad/food and includes training the food handlers and vendors in and around the premises of the PoW. Some 34 religious places have been inspected under BHOG initiative, out of which 20 of it got certified.

Mobility Surveillance and IEC by Food Safety on Wheels (FSW) FDCA, Gujarat, has received modified Food Safety on Wheels (FSW). Currently FDCA, Gujarat, has 4 FSWs which are equipped with various instruments and chemicals for the checking of chemical parameters and microbiological parameters as well.

FDCA, Gujarat, has been part of pan-India Survey by FSSAI and 3 surveys have been conducted and concluded - Edible Oil Quality Survey, Detection of Adulteration in Khoya, Milk Product Survey (MPS-2020) and Eat Smart City.

Gujarat has participated in Eat Smart City targeting 6 Cities of Gujarat for the development of it as Smart City in context of food and related habits and practices. Following cities are participating under Eat Smart City - Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat, Gandhinagar, Vadodara and Dahod.

Gujarat was the first state in the country to develop a “primary testing kit for detection of adulteration in food”, in 2008.