

## **FSSAI notifies draft regulations amending mandatory BIS certification**

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has notified the draft Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Amendment Regulations, 2019 and the draft Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Regulations, 2019, amending the requirement of mandatory certification of Agmark and Bureau of Indian standards (BIS) in respect of certain food products.

“Taking note of the performance audit observations done by the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) and the views of the stakeholders (industry associations, boards, consumer organisations and individuals), it is now proposed in the above-mentioned draft amendment regulations that the the mandatory certification of Agmark for Carbia callosa, honey dew, Kangra tea, til oil (sesame oil) and light black pepper be delighted,” said the country’s apex food regulator in a statement.

It added, “Furthermore, in case of other food products listed in the regulation for mandatory BIS or Agmark certification, as the case may be, it is further proposed that FSSAI may dispense with the requirement of BIS certification for imported food products based on any bilateral or multilateral agreements and/or if the imported products are covered under any equivalent certification scheme in the country of origin/export taking into consideration the principle of equivalence as envisaged in Agreement on Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO (World Trade Organization).”

The regulatory provisions regarding mandatory certification of BIS and Agmark on certain products were taken from the erstwhile Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act, 1954, and included as such in the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.

It is pertinent to mention here that during the performance audit of the FSSAI by CAG, it was observed that food businesses have to deal with more than one authority or entity, which is not in consonance with the spirit of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Consequently, FSSAI invited comments from all stakeholders as a step towards reviewing these provisions and understanding whether such provisions are serving any benefit to the industry and consumers and are required or not.