

THE HINDU BusinessLine

FSSAI to clamp down on artificial ripening of fruits using banned substances

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E-Paper

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed food safety commissioners in all States and UTs to undertake “effective surveillance and enforcement activities” to prevent the use of banned substances - calcium carbide or acetylene gas -- for artificial ripening of fruits.

The regulator said that artificial ripening of fruits using prohibited substances poses a serious threat to the health of consumers. Keeping in mind the rampant use of banned calcium carbide and non-availability of alternative ripening agent, FSSAI had instead permitted the use of ethylene gas for ripening of fruits in 2016.



“Despite prohibition on sale of artificially ripened fruits by using calcium carbide, the prevalence of such ripened fruits in the market is a serious cause for concern and needs to be tackled effectively,” the food safety regulator said in an order.

“Commissioners of Food Safety of all States and UTs are hereby directed to initiate effective surveillance and enforcement activities to rule out any possibility of ripening of fruits with the aid of harmful and banned substances calcium carbide or acetylene gas. They are also advised to do similar exercise for vegetables to check the level of pesticides,” it added.

It has also asked commissioners to conduct awareness programmes at Mandi level targeted at vendors and food business operators. It also recommended use of electronic and print media to educate consumers and food businesses regarding this issue.

FSSAI has set a maximum permissible limit for ethylene usage and specified a standard operating procedure.