

As markets open, Goa enforcement staff going as per new guidelines by FSSAI

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With markets now open, the challenges to ensure food safety remain high priority for food safety authorities across states in India. The state FDAs have taken measures to safeguard the interests of FBOs as well as consumers and in a coordinated manner.

In states like Goa, state machinery is actively planning to implement the guidelines issued by the FSSAI on how to go about enforcement and other related subjects of food safety during the lockdown.

Speaking with FnB News, Jyoti Sardesai, Commissioner, Food Safety, and Director, FDA (Food & Drugs Administration) Goa, says, "The Directorate (Food Safety) has closely worked with the District Collector's officers to ensure smooth flow of food and medicine and that there was no short fall of supplies, so that the FBOs (Food Business Operators) do not face any hardship. Further the enforcement staff of this directorate was sensitised on the new guidelines put forth by FSSAI, and instructed to inspect premises of the FBOs dealing in high risk food and to guide them on control measures."

The situation surrounding Covid-19, with regard to lockdown and quarantine, opening up of markets and trade, is at a different level in every state of India.

An FDA official from Goa, shared inputs on the current situation: "Before the enforcement of the necessary shutdown due to pandemic, we would regularly visit FBOs and do regular inspections, conduct workshops. Now due to maintaining social distancing, we are unable to do the same, so we have uploaded on our website, booklets about rules and regulations to be followed by FBOs. We have also made sure that the local government bodies in each city have been given proper training in identifying symptoms of Covid-19 and appropriate steps to be taken in the case of an emergency."

Sardesai further reveals that special online FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification) training of foodhandlers in Covid19 was organised for FBOs.

She observes, "We look forward to have more of these programmes to cover all FBOs and foodhandlers in Goa and appeal to the various associations to get in touch with us to have these trainings. Regular sampling of food grains in association with civil supplies like vegetables, fruits, and fish was conducted."

She added that Goa is also planning to implement the new FoSCoS licensing system to facilitate 100 per cent online application thus minimising physical interaction of FBOs with the office and ensure licences are issued in minimum time.

"We have not faced any major challenges till date as the FBOs are co-operative and open to FSSAI guidelines. Goa will be one of the first states in the country to switch to the FoSCoS. The new user-friendly licensing system, shortly," she said.