FSSAI comes up with food safety standards for honey and its products in a bid to curb adulteration

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As per the FSSAI notification, honey should comply with 18 parameters like that of sucrose content, glucose ratio, pollen count, foreign oligosaccharides among others. (Image Credit: Twitter)

The regulator FSSAI has come out with food safety standards for honey and its products, in a bid to curb adulteration.

The move comes in the wake of government promoting farmers to venture into the beekeeping business to increase their income. The standards will help fetch farmers better prices for their products.

At present, there are no separate quality standards for honey and its products.

"We have notified the standards for honey and its products recently. This will help address adulteration. Both domestic manufacturers and importers will have to comply with the new norms," Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) CEO Pawan Agarwal told PTI.

As per the FSSAI notification, honey should comply with 18 parameters like that of sucrose content, glucose ratio, pollen count, foreign oligosaccharides among others.

The FSSAI has fixed maximum 5 percent limit for sucrose content in the honey, while 10 percent for carviacallosa and Honeydew honey. The moisture percentage should be maximum 20 percent and pollen count should be 25,000 per gram.

With regard to by-products, the FSSAI has fixed standards for 'Beeswax' and 'royal jelly' also.

Beeswax is obtained from the honeycombs of bees of Apidae family after the honey has been removed by draining or centrifuging. The combs are melted with hot water, steam or solar heat and the melted product is filtered and cast into cakes of yellow beeswax.

White beeswax is obtained by bleaching the yellow beeswax with oxidizing agents. Beeswax consists of a mixture of esters of fatty acids and fatty alcohols, hydrocarbons, and free fatty acids. Minor amounts of free fatty alcohols are also present

Royal jelly is the mixture of secretions from hypopharyngeal and mandibular glands of worker bees, free from any additive. It is the food of larval and adult queens.

It is a raw and natural food, unprocessed except for filtration which does not undergo addition of substances. The color, taste and the chemical composition of royal jelly are determined by absorption and transformation by the beesfed with the following two types of foods during the royal jelly production time.

The regulator has defined honey as the natural sweet substance produced by honey bees from the nectar of blossoms or from secretions of plants, which honey bees collect, transform and store in honeycombs for ripening.

If a product is sold as honey then food ingredient, including food additives should not be added to it. It should not be heated or processed to such an extent that its essential composition is changed and its quality is impaired.

The FSSAI said that honey can be labeled according to floral or plant source, if it comes from any particular source, and has the organoleptic, physicochemical and microscopic properties corresponding with that origin.

In the case of 'Monofloral Honey', the regulator said the minimum pollen content of the plant species concerned should not be less than 45 percent of total pollen content.

In the case of 'Multi Floral Honey', the pollen content of any of the plant species should not exceed 45 percent of the total pollen content.

The government is promoting honey production through the mission for integrated development of horticulture (MIDH) and the National Bee Board has been formed for implementing various activities for development of scientific beekeeping under MIDH.

About 90,000 tonnes of honey of all varieties are produced annually in the country. There are about 30 lakh honey bee colonies and five lakh people are engaged in the business.