

Mysuru to host 8th International Food Convention in December

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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The 8th International **Food** Convention (#IFCON-2018), a mega event of the Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (I) in association with the CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) and DRDO-Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL), will be held here in December.

The once-in-five-year international event that brings together all the stakeholders in **food** science and technology, academia, industry, researchers and entrepreneurs from India and abroad, has been scheduled from December 12 to 15 on the CFTRI campus.

The theme this year is ‘Holistic approaches for Start-ups, Human Resource Training for Agriculture and Food Industry Gemmation (HASTAG). This year, the event has been supported by the Union Ministry of Food Processing and FSSAI, the country’s top food regulatory body. In connection with the mega convention, a curtain raiser event was organised at CFTRI’s IFTTC auditorium on Monday.

CFTRI Director Jitendra J. Jadhav; new DFRL Director and #IFCON2018 co-chairman Anil D. Semwal; outgoing DFRL Director G.K. Sharma; #IFCON2018 Adviser Subramanian; Organising Secretary Aashitosh A. Inamdar; Publicity Committee chairperson Sridevi Annapurna Singh; and Convener Suresh D. Sakhare were present.

On the occasion, #IFCON2018 mobile app, website, Facebook page and Twitter handle were launched.

FSSAI will display its mobile food testing van at the convention. The Food Expo as part of the convention will have about 80 industries exhibiting their produce and services. Special pavilions of CFTRI and DFRL will be displayed.

There will be dedicated sessions for education and training, food safety and security, funding for setting up of the start-ups and research ethics in research publication, and start-up success stories. A risk and swat analysis have been planned.

Dr. Jadhav said IFCON helps food scientists and technologists connect with the industry and academia and come up with ideas for the good of food processing sector. “It’s a golden opportunity for our scientists to network with foreign delegates.” More than 2,000 registrations were expected, he said, and added that a single window system be introduced for aiding solutions to the problems faced by food industry.

Can Mysuru be a start-up hub in the food sector?

More than 4,200 start-ups in the food industry have employed around 85,000 people in the country. Dr. Semwal, said 11,500 start-ups were expected by 2020 and employment in the food start-ups would rise significantly by then. A dedicated pavilion on start-ups will be established at the convention to encourage entrepreneurs.

Dr. Jadhav said the institute has developed an incubation centre to encourage start-ups in the food sector. There are around 15 cubicles in our facility that has PhD holders as resource persons to help entrepreneurs establish businesses. This is a State government-funded incubation centre and there are plans to expand the facility to accommodate more space for entrepreneurs to boost start-up ideas. Around 15-20 start-ups have taken birth at the centre.