

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Label 'maida' as 'refined wheat flour', food cos told

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E-Paper

FSSAI also directs firms to label 'atta' as whole wheat flour within three months

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed packaged- food companies to ensure that they label 'atta' as whole wheat flour and 'maida' as refined wheat flour.

This direction came after the regulator observed that food business operators were using wheat flour as a general English nomenclature for both atta and maida on food product labels.

With many companies — especially in the packaged atta, bread and biscuits sectors — now making health claims regarding their products, this directive on labelling will help consumers make informed choices.

The food safety regulator noted that, “using the term wheat flour for maida on the label of the food products does not convey the exact nature of the ingredient used for manufacturing various food items to the consumers as well as enforcement officials.” The regulator had also received representations earlier from the food processing industry seeking clarity on whether the common name for “maida” in English for labelling purposes should be wheat flour or refined wheat flour.

In its order, the regulator said it has taken this decision after examining in detail the usage of the terms wheat flour/whole wheat flour and refined flour.

“Atta should be labelled as whole wheat flour wherever it is used singly or as an ingredient in a food item,” the regulator said, adding that maida should be labelled as refined wheat flour wherever the same is used singly or as an ingredient in a product.

Time frame

The regulator has given the food processing companies three months to ensure that the labels of their products are in line with this directive.

“Food business operators are directed to comply with these requirements by April 30,” the regulator said in its order.

The FSSAI has also directed the food safety commissioners to ensure that companies are in compliance with this order.