

FSSAI stipulates terms for recently-recognised labs for 3-year period

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FSSAI has fixed the terms for the National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) which were recognised recently. An order issued by the country's apex food regulator stated that the recognised NRLs shall have a term period of three years.

"The NRLs recognised by FSSAI under Regulation 2 of the Food Safety Standards (Recognition and Notification of Laboratories) Regulations, 2018 for specific areas mentioned against each NRL for a period of three years from August 8, 2019," it added.

The NRLs include Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, Karnataka (for nutritional information and labelling); the Export Inspection Agency, Kochi, Kerala (for GMO [genetically-modified organism] testing); Punjab Biotechnology Incubator, Mohali, Punjab (for sweets and confectionery, including honey); ICAR-National Research Centre for Grapes, Pune, Maharashtra (for pesticide residue and mycotoxins); Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi (for fish and fish products); Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food, National Dairy Development Board, Anand, Gujarat (for diary and dairy products); CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (toxicological evaluation/risk assessment of nutraceuticals/functional food/novel food/emerging food/and food ingredients); Trilogy Analytical Laboratories Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad, Telangana (for mycotoxins in cereals and pulses, spices and condiments and related proficiency testing activities); Edward Food Research and Analysis Centre Limited, Kolkata, West Bengal (for veterinary drug residues/antibiotics and hormones); Vimta Labs Limited, Shameerpet, Haryana (for water, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages); Fare Labs Pvt Ltd, Gurugram, Delhi NCR (for oils and fats); and Neogen Food and Animal Security India Pvt Ltd, Kochi (for food allergens).

The order added that two of the recognised labs, including Export Inspection Agency, Chennai, and Export Inspection Agency, Kolkata, were recognised as ancillary NRLs as a support to all the NRLs again for a period of three years from August 8, 2019.

These labs would support for microbiological testing and in the area of heavy metals in all food categories.

As reported earlier, the NRLs in India shall carry out the functions, including acting as a resource centre for provision of information for certified reference materials and reference materials; developing standards for routine testing procedures and reliable testing methods; providing technical support in the area of competence; evaluating the performance of other

notified laboratories; coordinating exchange of information amongst notified food laboratories; collaborating for data generation among the network of notified food laboratories and referral food laboratories and collate the data related to their specific domain; and such other functions as may be specified by the Food Authority.

According to the order, the ancillary NRLs shall be a support facility to the NRLs as a proficiency testing provider in the specific area mentioned against each NRL and assist NRL in method validation/inter-laboratory comparison as and when requested by the NRLs and/or FSSAI.