

Chennai: 4.5 tonne mangoes seized in Koyambedu

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Three shops sealed for violation of ripening norms.

Officials of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Market Management Committee (MMC) inspecting fruit shops in Koyambedu, in a bid to stop the practice of use of ethylene sachets by vendors for ripening of fruits (Photo - DC)

Chennai: Officials from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Market Management Committee (MMC) conducted a joint inspection at fruit shops in Koyambedu and Ashok Nagar on Tuesday.

The raid was carried out at around 12:30 pm in nearly 25 shops at Koyambedu. Three shops were sealed after the raids and around 4.5 tonnes of mangoes were seized for using ethylene sachets in direct contact with the fruits. Ethylene sachets were used for artificial ripening of mangoes. The seized fruits were destroyed at the Koyambedu biomethanation plant by the FSSAI and MMC officials. The total value of goods destroyed is estimated to be Rs. 3,15,000.

The FSSAI permits the use of 100 ppm of gaseous ethylene for artificial ripening. Ethylene sachets (containing three grams of powdered ethylene) are usually used by vendors for artificial ripening. According to FSSAI guidelines, one sachet of ethylene can be used to ripen five kilograms of fruit. These ethylene sachets, however, should not be placed in direct contact with the fruits. The fruits should either be covered in paper or the ethylene sachets should be placed in containers with air holes to prevent ethylene deposition on the fruits during ripening.

"The FSSAI has conducted several awareness programmes in the past and issued food safety guidelines to fruit and vegetable vendors. Even banners to this effect have been put up in these places. But, these shop owners have violated food safety norms and put consumers' health at risk. A notice has been served to these shops under Section 55 of IPC and a case will soon be filed against the offenders," said an FSSAI official who was part of the squad.

A similar raid was conducted at Ashok Nagar, 11th Avenue and around 530 kilograms of mangoes ripened by direct use of ethylene was seized and destroyed.