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Online meat sellers Licious, BigBasket and Zappfresh to face mandatory audit from FSSAI

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E-Website

To ensure the availability of clean and safe meat products to consumers, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched a 'Clean and safe meat' initiative.

Under the initiative, FSSAI will conduct mandatory third-party audits of supply chains of e-commerce companies that sell meat and meat products. The majority of consumers now in India are eating fish, beef (Buffalo meat), mutton, pork, and poultry. But there is a lack of trust in consumers on the quality and safety of meat products available to them, said FSSAI in a statement.



To speed up the process, third-party food safety audits of meat units and municipal slaughterhouses will also be conducted in 40 cities in the next three months. FSSAI has recognized 22 audit agencies in accordance with Draft Food Safety and Standard (Food Safety Auditing) Regulation, 2017. Earlier, foodtech companies including Zomato and Swiggy had faced FSSAI guideline to delist uncertified restaurant partners.

To comply, Zomato already had started delisting unverified restaurant partners this month. These third-party agencies will be working in close coordination with the government food safety department. They will be conducting audits to ascertain the compliance with standards of food safety and hygiene prescribed under Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Regulation, 2011.

FSSAI will also plan a study on the overall ecosystem in sectors of meat, fish, poultry and feed to identify the gaps and food safety concerns and the ways to address them. The decision was taken after meeting attended by government officials, poultry meat industry representatives, animal feed companies as well as e-commerce companies on Tuesday.

The initiative is aimed to mark food safety issues and bolstering quality and safety of the entire ecosystem beginning with animal feed till the level it reaches consumers through offline retail stores and e-commerce platforms. In India, the meat industry is pegged at over Rs 100,000 crore and is growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of close to 20 per cent every year in the past four years. The platforms such as Bigbasket, Easymeat, Licious, and Zappfresh operate in the segment.