

Merck hands over new microbiological testing lab at Ghaziabad to FSSAI

Tuesday, 30 April, 2019

Nandita Vijay, Bengaluru

Merck, a leading science and technology company, has handed over a fully equipped microbiological testing laboratory to FSSAI. The company set up the Center for Microbiological Analysis Training (C-MAT) lab at National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad, as part of its corporate social responsibility after it chipped in around Rs 2.5 crore for the facility as per the global standards in food testing.

The company, as part of the lab, will offer a complete food pathogen testing platform to the food and beverage safety testing market and is advancing global food and beverage safety and quality through lab testing efficiency and regulatory expertise.

C-MAT will provide training to food safety scientists from government laboratories and FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) ratified private laboratories on the latest technology in microbiological testing.

The lab covers an area of 2,000 sq ft and houses the latest technology in microbiological food testing. It is equipped with GDS-IMS, Transia Platforms, MVP-ICON, that will overcome many of the challenges faced by food safety scientists in pathogen testing and HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point) audit management. It is designed to meet BSL-II (Bio Safety Level) standard for microbial testing.

“The collaboration with FSSAI, the top most food authority in the country is our way of sharing this expertise in food safety, improve technology awareness and thereby enhance the skills of our food safety scientists. C-MAT is a definite step towards supporting the growing food testing needs and is a one of its kind facility for microbiological analysis training in India,” informed Sunil Punjabi, country speaker - Merck India & head, research business, Life Science, in an email interaction with FnB News.

“This is a joint effort towards developing the skills of the food safety scientists. Merck being fully capable of addressing food testing needs and developed C-MAT in the FSSAI premises as part of our CSR initiative to support industry and innovation,” he added.

In fact, the company with acquisition of BioControl is fully geared up to address food testing. It has full range of testing options from traditional to semi-quantitative and most advanced IMS-PCR-based most advanced platforms.

Further, this is the first time in India that the company has tied up with FSSAI to develop a laboratory primarily to train food safety scientists associated with the FSSAI. “We will be catering to scientists from government labs under the FSSAI as well as FSSAI notified private labs. Globally, Merck has many initiatives where we have partnered with industry bodies and academic institutions in building capacities in science and technology,” stated Punjabi.

“The importance of food safety in India has grown, given the increasing level of processing and overall food production. Keeping up with this change Indian food industry has to develop skills to implement new technologies available in effective food testing and to adapt to technologies that address global quality demands. Through this collaboration with FSSAI, Merck expects to improve technology and develop global standard expertise in food testing here, he added.

Two persons will manage the lab. For the training, experts in the subject matter will be brought in as per the training schedule.

Meanwhile, Udit Batra, member, Merck Executive Board and CEO, Life Science, stated, “The importance of food safety in India has grown, given the increasing level of processing and overall food production. We will continue to provide skills training, implement new technologies for food testing to address quality requirements and advance food safety for India, as well as the global market.”

According to Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, the microbiological centre is going to be a world-class training centre for food analysts and other technical staff from laboratories across the country.