



Authorities collect used cooking oil for bio-diesel production

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On the directives of higher-ups District Food and Safety department is conducting a survey in hotels and restaurants in Bokaro Steel City to collect used cooking oil (UCO), which would be used in making bio-diesels.

“Under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India’s (FSSAI) the project, ‘RUCO’ (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) we have conducted the survey in over 25-30 big hotels and restaurants across the city. We are identifying such establishments from where we can collect UCO on a daily basis,” said Apoorva Minz, Food and Safety officer Bokaro.

“We have kept a target to collect 2500 litres of UCO from hotels and restaurants on a daily basis so that it can be utilized in making bio-diesels. The aim behind this initiative is to prevent repeated use of cooking oil and to convert it into bio-fuel,” said Minz.

“We have observed that UCO finds its way to small food vendors and households at cheap prices as well. It is hazardous not only for health, but also for the environment. UCO, when discarded without any treatment, clogs drainage systems as well,” said Minz.

Last year FSSAI has released a detailed guidance note on the handling and disposal of UCO by small and big food business operators and household-level users. According to this repeated use of cooking oil is banned as it can have serious repercussions on health, said Minz adding that those who do not obey the rules will have to pay a penalty of Rs. one lakh.

It has been notified the limit of total polar compounds (TPC) used in cooking at 25 per cent.

TPC is used to measure the quality of oil, and its level increases every time oil is re-heated. TPC beyond 25 per cent is considered unfit for human consumption, she said. FSSAI in association with the Biodiesel Association of India (BDAI) has recently launched ‘RUCO’ project, short for repurposing used cooking oil, said an official. RUCO is a project that plans to convert vegetable oils, animal fats or restaurant grease that has already been used in cooking into biodiesel for running diesel vehicles, or any other equipment that uses diesel.

RUCO enables the collection of inedible cooking oil by authorised agencies from institutional and individual users, which is then transferred to a plant to make bio-diesel.

This fuel is then proposed to be blended with vehicle fuel produced by oil marketing companies for distribution at the pump, said the official.

According to the official records, about 2,700 crore litres of cooking oil is used in our country, out of which 140 crores UCO can be collected from the consumer such as hotels, restaurants and canteens for conversion, which will give around 110 crore litres of biodiesel every year. While about 850 crore litres of diesel is consumed every month in India at present.

The government aims to blend five per cent of biodiesel in diesel in the next ten years. Thus, 500 crore litres of biodiesel is required in a year, he said.