

Food regulator permits small organic growers to sell produce without certification till April, 2020

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Food safety regulator FSSAI has permitted small organic producers having annual turnover of over Rs 12 lakh, to sell their produce directly to end-consumers without certification till April, 2020. Such producers, however, will not be able to use 'Jaivik Bharat logo' on their products, a latest report says.

The Jaivik Bharat logo is an identity mark to distinguish organic products from non-organic ones.

A similar relaxation has been given to 'aggregators' having an annual turnover of ₹50 lakh. However, the organic food retail firms have to comply with the certification norm.

Under the 2017 organic regulation, sale of organic produce directly to end-consumer has been allowed only with the certification of the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) and Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) India.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) in an order said the norms were relaxed after it examined several representations regarding challenges faced in the implementation of regulations by organic food business operations, including small original producers.

"One of the challenges is that there are a large number of producers and producer organisations in the country who are not certified under any of the two systems of certification. Efforts are under way for simplification of PGS-India to make it small producer friendly," it said.

To build confidence in small producers, the regulator has said that these regulations may be considered as 'enabling regulations' and not be considered for prosecution particularly for small original producers and producer organisations during initial phase of its implementation till April 2020.

The self-certification of turnover of small organic producers and aggregators will be considered, the FSSAI said. However, state food safety officers have been asked to see if the limits of contaminants and insecticide residue as per the regulations are being followed. They have also been asked to see any misuse of this provision.

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