

‘Processed food companies must follow FSSAI standards’

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FDA commissioner says large number of eateries on e-commerce apps found to be flouting guidelines

Food and Drugs Administration commissioner Dr. Pallavi Darade on Monday stressed on the need for processed food companies to follow the standards laid down by the **Food Safety** and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Dr. Darade was speaking at a conclave organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on refrigerated and frozen foods, in Mumbai on Monday.

The conclave also witnessed attendance by major players in the processed and frozen **food** market, and discussions on the challenges and opportunities in the industry.

“The FDA along with FSSAI is working towards the growth of the refrigerated and frozen foods market in India, but FSSAI standards need to be followed and cold storage chains need to be registered with the FDA. Consumer and food safety is the prime focus of FDA,” Dr. Darade said.

She added that in the last few months, a shockingly large number of eateries screened by the FDA were found to have violated various guidelines. “In the last few months, we have checked more than 350 food outlets which delivered food through e-commerce applications. Around 110 of these outlets were unregistered and around 200 outlets violated the hygiene policies,” she said.

The FDA has also launched a drive to ensure hygienic street food at sea faces like the Girgaum Chowpatty and Juhu Beach.

The Indian frozen foods market has reached a value of around ₹74 billion in 2018. It is further projected to reach a value of ₹188 billion by 2024, expanding at a compound annual growth rate of 17%, whereas the global frozen and refrigerated food market is growing 5-6% annually.

Frozen foods market

Kashmira Mewawala, chairman of CII Maharashtra State Council, said, “The demand for frozen and refrigerated food has increased, but the retail market just contributes 24% to 26% of the total business, which is expected to grow soon. The agriculture sector plays huge part in the government’s target of a five trillion dollar economy. With the expansion of the frozen food market, farmers will get enough value for their product without any waste.”

Arabind Das, chairman of the CII national committee on allied sectors in agriculture, said, “To fulfil the demand for frozen food, cold storage chains must be developed further. We look forward to use Railways and waterways for efficient transport of such food products.”