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## FSSAI to determine safety standards of veggies, oil, spices

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**PANJIM:** After national milk quality survey, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will take samples of vegetables, oil and spices to determine their food safety standards.

FSSAI chairperson Rita Teotia said that as per food safety standards around 3-4 per cent food is unsafe for consumption. "There is more food, which will not meet the standards but they are not unsafe. Our efforts are to be more targeted," she said.

Teotia said that the focus is on "surveillance of high priority items and under that area, the government had done national milk survey last year."

"We are working on vegetables, oils and in future we will do spices. So our effort is to see that high risk products are getting more rigorous inspection," she said.

Teotia was speaking to reporters at the sidelines of a session of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCA-IA).

In 2018, FSSAI had conducted the Milk Quality survey, wherein it noted

that only 10 percent of milk in India is unsafe for consumption.

Earlier, lamenting that organic food production in the country is "very low"; the Chairperson said that the Union Ministry of Agriculture's participatory guarantee scheme will help in improving the production by bringing in more farmers.

"The certified organic food production is still very low; it is just a few percent. The participatory guarantee scheme for certification by Agriculture Ministry is expected to raise its level," Teotia said. She said the scheme brings together peer group of farmers and the costs are low. We are going to popularise it and it is increasing day by day.

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a process of certifying organic products which ensures the agriculture production process is in accordance with the standards laid down and that desired quality has been maintained.

She said many parts of India are naturally organic but they are yet to be certified. "Like farmers in the North Eastern hilly States don't use pesticides or fertilisers. So they are naturally organic," she added.