

FSSAI encourages States/ UTs to step up surveillance, inspections and sampling of food products to curb the spike in food poisoning and adulteration cases during season of festivals, weddings and other events.

Press Release

New Delhi, March 10, 2023: Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Shri G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, IAS, encouraged States/UTs to increase the regular surveillance, monitoring, inspections and random sampling of food products and their compliance with the laid down standards at the 39th Meeting of Central Advisory Committee (CAC) held under his chairmanship on 9th -10th March, 2023, at Panaji, Goa.

As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the Food Authority constitutes the CAC for close cooperation between the Authority and enforcement agencies/organisations operating in the field of food. The committee meets 3-4 times a year and advises the Authority on various matters including prioritisation of work, identifying potential risks, pooling of knowledge etc.

More than 60 officials including Commissioners of Food Safety (CFS), representatives from States/UTs, senior officials from FSSAI and nodal Ministries, and the members representing the Food Industry, Consumers, Agriculture, laboratories and research bodies attended the meeting. Key discussion points of the meeting included the increase in the quarterly targets of surveillance sampling from 15 to 30 and increase in quarterly inspection from 15 to 20, per Food Safety Officer (FSO). States/UTs have also been directed to ensure testing of 10 samples of milk per day by Food Safety on Wheel (FSW) available with them. A total of 168 FSW vans are available across the country for on-the-spot food testing.

The States/UTs have been advised to plan their special surveillance drive considering the rise of food poisoning and adulteration cases of commonly consumed food products during the seasons like festivals, marriages, events etc. CEO also advised the States/UTs and Regional Offices to lift about 5 Lakh Samples by March 2024. To ensure the quality and safety of milk and milk products, State/UT FDAs have been advised to coordinate with Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying of their respective States/UTs for effective surveillance drive.

Other key agenda items discussed in the meeting included the quarterly performance of States/UTs on various food safety parameters, Regulatory Compliance, Eat Right Initiatives and Consumer awareness, training and capacity building, Testing infrastructures and effective surveillance.

Shri Rao also emphasised that in cases where the food samples are found to be non-conforming, the immediate measures are required to be taken.

To strengthen the testing infrastructures in the country States/UTs have been advised to send proposals for setting up of labs and their upgradation to FSSAI for technical and financial assistance. States/ UTs have also been advised to create posts for recruitment of Designated Officers and FSOs and fill vacant posts, if any, to strengthen the enforcement machinery in the country.

With the year 2023 being celebrated as the International Year of Millets, Shri Rao stressed on the need to publicize and promote the consumption and production of millets. As part of the celebrations in the country and to create awareness and sensitize consumers towards the importance of including millets in their regular diet, FSSAI encouraged States/UTs to organize Millet Melas and walkathons/cyclothons so that a target of 200 such events is reached by 31st March, 2024.

CEO informed that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will coordinate with the Ministry of Education in setting up Health clubs in schools under CBSE across the country, like Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodya Vidyalayas. He also asked State/UT FDAs to coordinate with municipal bodies in identifying areas that can be developed as clean and hygienic street food hubs.

At the conclusion of the meeting, CEO, FSSAI appreciated the efforts of States/UTs along with the Food Safety team at HQ in improving the quality of review mechanism with time. He acknowledged that the inputs and advices received during these review meetings with increased engagement of the States/UTs, have helped in learning key areas of importance at ground level, which in turn helped the Authority in taking policy decisions, creating new systems, and setting standards.

Shri Rao also met Dr. Pramod Sawant, Honourable Chief Minister of Goa, and briefed him about the food safety ecosystem and the actions being taken towards Country's Food Safety System.
