

Transforming India Food Safety & Nutrition System

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“On one hand, FSSAI has been taking several measures towards effective implementation of various regulations, targeted enforcement and compliance efforts to ensure availability of safe food. And on the other, we are also trying to leverage partnerships across the levels to ensure safety and hygiene of food wherever it is served. FSSAI has taken a cluster-based approach to ensure that the concept of Eat Right Certification (ERC) rolls-out across the country” **Ms. Rita Teotia, Chairperson, FSSAI** P 24



“Lot of misconception is there now-a-days that coronavirus will spread through chicken and mutton. There is no data available that states that non-vegetarian food is responsible for this virus. It is not scientifically proven. I am a scientist and I will not buy this argument.” **Mr G S G Ayyangar, CEO FSSAI** P 19

Editors Note:

The month of March has brought turbulent times for everyone. The outbreak of COVID-19 has not only posed a threat to lives but also affected the world's economy- supply chains, businesses and jobs. The entire nation has joined hands together to fight with this situation. The Government is taking every possible step to prevent the spread of the pandemic and we thank our medical fraternity including doctors, nurses, medical staff, front-line workers as well as everyone associated with it. P 3

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Dear Readers,

Greetings!

The month of March has brought turbulent times for everyone. The outbreak of COVID-19 has not only posed a threat to lives but also affected the world's economy- supply chains, businesses and jobs. The entire nation has joined hands together to fight with this situation. The Government is taking every possible step to prevent the spread of the pandemic and we thank our medical fraternity including doctors, nurses, medical staff, front-line workers as well as everyone associated with it.

Looking at the situation and basis the directions issued by the Government of India, FSSAI had to announce the stringent work from home policy, amidst the lockdown. However, FSSAI has taken every possible step to ensure un-interrupted food services/supply as well as trade facilitation during the lockdown period. The Food Authority has classified the import clearance of food items and functioning of notified food testing laboratories (including National Food Labs) under Essential Services during the COVID-19. FSSAI is ensuring trade facilitation as well as smoother operation of related services across the country through its offices located across 6 regions namely Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Cochin and Tuticorin. FSSAI is keeping a close watch on the situation and will continue to assist food importers as well as ensure regular supervision and testing of food items to ensure safety of food products.

A large number of underprivileged populations in our country do not have access to basic amenities including food. We are that our food businesses are tirelessly working towards provision and distribution of food products (rations, packed foods etc.) as well as essentials including soaps, sanitizers and masks etc. I would urge you all to contribute in any capacity. FSSAI has activated various food distribution agencies in different parts of the country that are associated with our Save Food, Share Food initiative to ensure that food reaches to the needy during these difficult times. You can directly contact these food distribution agencies and assist them with the supply of food items as well as other essentials. Details of the agencies are available on our website.

On behalf of FSSAI I thank you, our patrons and supporters. Please do go through this issue to know more about our key activities and keep sharing your valuable suggestions.

Stay home, eat healthy and be safe.

Warmly,

Inoshi Sharma, Director SBCD
Food Safety & Standards Authority of India
directorfssai@gmail.com

I. Core Regulatory Functions

I.1 Compliance & Enforcement:

I.1.1 Directions Issued

- i. Direction for re-operationalization of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Amendment Regulations, 2020

A direction under Section 16 (5) of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 was issued on 02nd March 2020 containing amendments of significant sections/provisions. Since the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulation 2011 are at the final stage of comprehensive revision and may take some more time, it has been decided to re-operationalize the existing Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations in the interim period.

More details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e5cef15b7fefDirection_ReOperationalization_FSS_Licensing_Registration_02_03_2020.pdf

- ii. Notice for operationalisation of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Amendment Regulations, 2020

The Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011 is at the final stage of comprehensive revision. Since, this is likely to take some more time, a few significant provisions have been further operationalized. As per the direction issued on 27th March 2020, these draft regulations are in the process of being modified as well as being notified and enforced. To ensure food safety and fair practices in food business operations, it has been decided to make the following regulations operational with immediate effect. The Food business operators shall follow these revised regulations. The enforcement of these regulations shall commence only after the final regulations are notified in the Gazette of India, except the amendment in sub-regulation 2.1.9 which shall come into force with immediate effect.

More details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e7f45376a88aDirection_Operationalisation_License_Regulation_27_03_2020.pdf

- iii. Direction regarding Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for issuance of offline Licenses / Registration

In a direction issued on 27th March 2020, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been prepared that covers situations where there is an internet outage and thus, non availability of FLRS. The SOP would serve as guidance to concerned authorities for issuance of offline licenses / registrations or allowing food businesses to continue their businesses whose licenses /

registrations have an expiry date during the period of non-availability/ non-accessibility of online licensing system in the region.

More details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e7ec430ceb8aDirection_SOP_Issue_License_28_03_2020.pdf

- iv. Directions under Section 16(5) to ensure uninterrupted food services/supply during lockdown in the country due to COVID-19 pandemic
A direction was issued by FSSAI dated 31st March 2020, regarding allowing FBOs, **other than manufacturers**, to temporarily operate their food business on the basis of a valid receipt of FSSAI license/ registration application having 17-digit Application Reference Number (ARN) generated on Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS). FBO shall be required to inform by email to the concerned licensing/ registering authority/ Commissioner of Food Safety about commencing his/her food business.

More details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e82d8c9ea24cOrder_Direction_License_Registration_Lockdown_31_03_2020.pdf

I.1.2 Orders and measures:

- i. Processing of FSSAI License / Registration Applications during the lockdown situations by the way of e-inspections

An order was issued by FSSAI dated 31st March 2020 wherein licensing/ registering authority may be required to conduct e-inspection of FBO's premise/ unit i.e., authority may record the observations by the way of videos or images submitted by the FBO. Upon receiving satisfactory videos or images of the FBO's premise/ unit, the licensing/ registering authority shall further process the application without any delay.

More details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e82dc926ebb6Order_License_Registration_Einspection_31_03_2020.pdf

- ii. To overcome with emerging challenges like sale of counterfeit food products, non-standardized/non-approved food products, FSSAI has advised Commissioner of Food Safety of States/UTs and all Central Licensing Authorities and Authorized Officers to conduct regular market surveillance especially with regard to counterfeit food products and non-standardised/non-approved food products.

More details are available at:

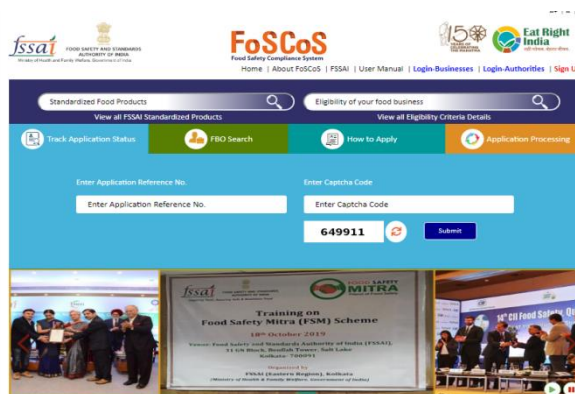
https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/03/5e68d768c5a52Letter_Ensuring_Food_Safety_11_03_2020.pdf

I.1.3 FSSAI Licensing Portal Shifting Gears- FLRS to FOSCOS:

The FSSAI's online licensing platform Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS) is the nervous system of the food safety network of India. Evolving since 2011, FLRS is the soul of the licensing ecosystem with pan-India coverage, 70 lakh licenses/ registrations issued till date, over 35 lakhs licensees/ registrants actively transacting, a complete online solution with e-submission of documents eliminating physical visits to government offices. It is the largest regulatory online platform in India with customized federal architecture.

FoSCoS: The one-stop Food Safety Compliance portal with the scope of futuristic developments

FSSAI is in process to develop its cloud based, upgraded new food safety compliance online platform called Food Safety and Compliance System (FoSCoS). It will replace the existing FLRS. FoSCoS is conceptualized to provide one point stop for all engagement of an FBO with the department for any regulatory compliance transaction.



FoSCoS will soon integrate the present IT platforms such as FoSCoRIS, INFOLNet, FoSTaC, FICS, FPIVS etc. Sample management, improvement notices, adjudications, audit management system etc activities/ modules will be enabled in phased manner in future. Technologies such as GPS location tagging, picture capture and RFID will be utilised to ensure transparent and accountable extension field services such inspections and sampling. In future it will be integrated with other platforms of Government of India such as GST, PAN, MCA etc. to ensure a 360 degree profiling and validation of businesses. A single regulatory platform will enable pan India integrated response system to any food fraud and ensure an advanced risk based, data driven regulatory approach. For the start, FoSCoS will be offering licensing, registration, inspection and annual return modules.

FoSCoS essentially has flows similar to FLRS, so that users have convenience in migrating to FoSCoS. The paradigm change is the shift of methodology of licensing for manufacturers which now shall be based on standardised product list. This will help in quicker grant of licences and eliminate the errors. The new approach is only for manufacturers of food products. For manufacturers, in case of non-specified food, supplements/nutraceuticals, proprietary food and substances added to food- the approach continues to be as in FLRS. All other Kind of Businesses such as catering, transport, storage etc the licensing/ registration shall be based on broad category approach, as earlier.

Along with FoSCoS, the module for filing online Annual Return shall also be available. Delayed returns due to postal delays, need to preserve dispatch/ receipt proofs and disputes regarding submission of returns resulting in harassment of food business operators will be eliminated. Further, mandatory documents required to apply FSSAI license have been rationalised and many paper based declarations have been replaced with tick based declaration. The central theme is to enhance the ease of doing business for the food business operators and enhances user experience for users.

Launch of FoSCoS

The FoSCoS shall be launched in phases. The details and dates of launch for each State/UT shall be announced on FLRS (<https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in>). Once the FoSCoS is launched in a State/UT, all licenses/ registrations pertaining to the State will be available on FoSCoS (<https://foscoss.fssai.gov.in>) and the FLRS data shall be disabled for taking any action. Users will not be needed to immediately do anything upon migration to FoSCoS. However, all manufacturers holding valid FSSAI license shall be needed to modify their license to choose their products from the available list of standardized products within a prescribed period.

I.2 Food Imports

i. Imported Food is Safe from Corona Virus

Food Safety & Standards Authority (FSSAI) vide press release dated 5.3.2020, informed the citizens that food imported into India including from the Corona virus affected countries is safe for human consumption. To address concerns raised regarding safety of such foods, FSSAI had constituted a Committee of experts to examine the possibilities of presence of corona virus in imported food items. The Committee in its report opined that as of now there is no conclusive evidence for the food borne transmission of Corona virus. Corona virus predominately affects the respiratory system and spread from human to human via droplets while sneezing, coughing, contaminated hands and surfaces. The Committee agreed with the advisories of global organizations that the predominant routes of transmission of Corona virus appear to be human to human. It also clarified that meat from cooked, livestock including poultry is safe to eat. As a precautionary measure, the Committee advised to avoid consumption of raw or undercooked meat as well as unprocessed food products.

Frozen food items must be consumed only after cooking them properly. Good hygienic practices must be followed before consuming raw fruits and vegetables. FSSAI is keeping a close watch on the situation. It will continue to gather and monitor evidences from international agencies and scientific

communities of any such transmission leading to Corona virus disease and will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of food products.

More details are available at:

https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/press_release/2020/03/5e60f4720d65cPress_Release_Import_Food_Corona_Virus_05_03_2020.pdf

ii. Import Clearance and Food Testing Labs classified as Essential Services by FSSAI during the COVID-19

Food Safety & Standards Authority (FSSAI) has classified the import clearance of food items and functioning of notified food testing laboratories (including National Food Labs) under Essential Services during the COVID-19. In a press release issued by FSSAI dated 31st March 2020, all personnel who are assigned the charge of above essential services are required to be available in office on all working days from Monday to Friday between 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM in order to facilitate the trade as well as ensure smoother operation of related services across the country.

More details are available at:

https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/press_release/2020/03/5e833bf076babPress_Release_Import_Lab_Service_31_03_2020.pdf

II. Transforming Food Environment

II.1 Third Party Audits & Hygiene Ratings

Eat Right Railway Station

Anand Vihar Terminal Railway station (ANVT), was declared as the 1st Eat Right Station over Northern Region with an audit score of 92 percent, highest across Pan-India during an inaugural ceremony at the station premises dated 12th March 2020.

The audit involved various parameters to assess the practices & processes followed at the Anand Vihar station. The Broad criteria involved assessment of two (2) areas namely: 1. Station Complex, and 2. Individual Food Units viz., Catering stalls, Kiosks, Quick Food Joints, Food Plazas etc.

Unilever was involved in the process as an implementation partner & RIR certification as auditors. The detailed post-audit of ANVT was undertaken by the 3rd party auditors on 15.01.2020 and ANVT was rated in the “Exemplary” category with a score of 92.08 percent with a rating of 5 star.



II.2. Training & Capacity Building

- 1) Training of Trainers (ToT) for Advanced Manufacturing by FICSI was held on 14.03.20 at Budgam, Srinagar.



- 2) Training of Trainers (ToT) for Advanced Catering by State Institute of Health and Family Welfare from 5 to 6 March, 2020 at Jaipur.

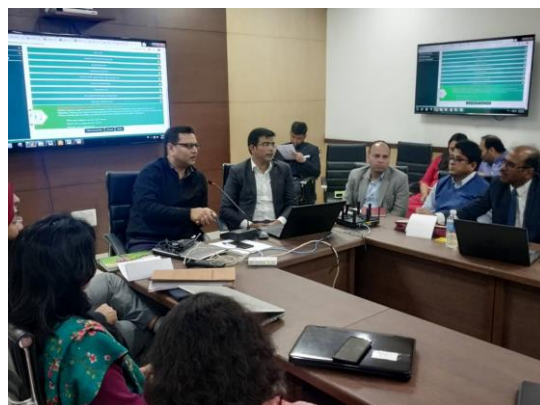


- 3) Three Training of Trainers program conducted in collaboration with FICSI and State Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Training partners, 54 trainers have been trained.
- 4) The second training of trainers, on the safe use of antibiotics in poultry value chain was held at CII office in Mumbai dated 02.03.2020. Information on antimicrobial resistance, common diseases, responsible use of antibiotics and strategies to mitigate/ minimize their use was deliberated upon during this training workshop.
- 5) 559 Food Safety Supervisors trainings have been conducted in different sectors in which 13202 trainees have trained.
- 6) **Train the trainers session for shifting towards Food Safety Compliance oriented Centralised System (FoSCoS)**

The first session of Training of Trainers (ToT) programs conducted at FSSAI HQ on 19th Feb 2020 wherein nominated officers from 22 States/UTs and FSSAI Regional Offices were trained. Regional Offices of FSSAI and State Food Safety Departments shall be holding training sessions across the country for FBOs Associations, Food Safety Mitra, FBO and other stakeholders.

A webinar session on FoSCoS was also held on 12th March 2020. The link of the recorded session has been made available on both FLRS and FoSCoS. Wide dissemination is also being done through all multiple resources like guidance document, presentation, flyer, tutorial videos, user manuals etc. All these resources are available online.

A demo version of the portal has also been made available at <https://fcstraining.fssai.gov.in> for all stakeholders to try, test and get familiar with the system before its actual launch.



III. Mass Mobilization

III.1 Guidance Notes

A guidance Note related to Metal Contaminants in Foods was uploaded on 13.3.2020 to aware consumers and Food business operators towards potential risk, exposure, pathways, regulatory provisions, lab analysis and mitigation measures of metal contaminants in food.

More details are available at:

<https://www.fssai.gov.in/cms/guidance-notes.php>

III. 2. Campaigns

Under the Arogya Bharat: Mission Poshan program, a panel discussion was organized on Doordarshan National dated 02.03.2020. The topic of the discussion was Food Safety and Adulteration and various issues related to safe food and hygiene practices were discussed.

III. 3. Events and exhibitions:

The World Bank India recently organized a Case Study competition in collaboration with Shri Ram Macromania, organized under the Shri Ram Economics Summit by the Shri Ram College of Commerce. The challenge for the contestants for final round was scaling up of the 'Eat Right India' movement by strengthening consumer empowerment initiatives and leveraging technology for the benefit of the program.

The event was in the form of a case presentation where the qualifying participants, selected from a pool of over 2,200 registrations, had to present a comprehensive case solution for amplification of the 'Eat Right India' initiatives.

Mr. Sharad Aggarwal, Director of Training & Grievances at FSSAI was one of the jury members along with Professor Anushruti, Department of Economics, Shri Ram College of Commerce and Dr. Deepika Anand, Nutrition Specialist at the World Bank.

The winning team from Shri Ram College of Commerce talked about impacting schools, colleges and homes using various engagement campaigns. They captured the essence of the program beautifully and presented practical solutions while promoting traditional techniques by nudging different age groups. It was interesting to note that they highlighted the global case studies along with the scaling-up of the budget. The Runners Up team, from Hansraj College and Kirori Mal College, suggested leveraging the Government run ICDS Anganwadi scheme with incentives and leveraging digital mediums of mobile applications and chat bots.

The event was a learning experience for all the participants, organisers and even the judges. Such events should be organized regularly to start the conversation around eating right as the youth play a crucial role in success of a movement. They are the real problem solvers and can have a positive influence on others.



Issues in Details



“FOREMOST WE ARE AIMING AT SETTING UP OUR OWN LABS”

By Ashwini Maindola | Monday, 02 March, 2020



Pawan Agarwal, in his nearly four-year stint as Chief Executive Officer, at the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has been able to make the authority visible across the country making by making it a public institution. Recently, he was transferred to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs as Secretary. As the outgoing CEO, FSSAI, Agarwal spoke to **Ashwani Maindola** on several issues pertaining to the food safety ecosystem in the country. *Excerpts:*

How have been the four years with FSSAI?

While all issues of food safety and nutrition in the country have not been addressed, there is now correct diagnosis and proper treatment regimen available to address all the safety issues in a comprehensive manner.

Over the past four years, FSSAI has embarked on an extraordinary journey to build a strong public institution from ground up with great ambitions. It has disrupted the conventional role of a regulator to enabler and adopted the food systems approach (much before the rest of the world found it out) through the ‘Eat Right India’ movement, putting citizens and consumers in the centre (“Consumer First”). The highpoint for FSSAI was when Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognised FSSAI’s transformation in his Mann Ki Baat on December 30, 2018.

Building a public institution like the food safety authority is not a sprint, it is like a marathon. At times we may appear slower than the others, but eventually we have to be ahead. To do that, FSSAI has built a solid culture of collaboration, interdisciplinary approach, diversity, excellence, empathy, social consciousness, transparency, integrity, and long-term vision over short-term rewards.

FSSAI has come under serious scrutiny in the last several years. Comment. Over the past four years, FSSAI has been under very intense scrutiny of the public, civil society, CAG and the parliamentary committees. At the same time, FSSAI has gained huge visibility. FSSAI has gained confidence of the consumers because they see in FSSAI an organisation that is fully committed to its mission, a ‘listening and

learning organisation’, not averse to taking risks. ‘Intense scrutiny, greater visibility and full commitment have helped FSSAI to become a better public institution and a model regulator that other countries around the world could emulate.

How do you see the support by the government, particularly in terms of scaling up the manpower?

The government has been generously supporting FSSAI in recent years. Its funding has been raised five times. About 500 new positions have been created. FSSAI has already initiated the process to fill up these posts. This is being done in two phases. Recruitments in the first phase are nearing completion. The process saw a huge interest from highly qualified people including those from the corporate sector drawing salaries several times compared to what FSSAI offers.

FSSAI does not have as much manpower as its peer public bodies abroad, however FSSAI today has a highly talented and passionate team, capable of delivering ‘more with less.’ FSSAI has changed many aspects of governance, dealing with businesses and consumer organisations, and earning their trust.

What changes do you see in FSSAI over the years?

In order to create a high performance culture in the organisation, FSSAI has adopted a goal-driven performance management system. This system is designed to ensure that employees and teams realise their full potential and recognise their role in contributing towards the larger goals of the organisation. The new system ensures individual accountability, rewards high performers and provides performance improvement plans to below average performers.

A major shift in the new system is the introduction of committee-based review as against appraisal by individuals. This is in line with high performing organisations. This would bring objectivity, transparency and avoid personal biases in performance assessment. All employees of the organisation will be assessed on the basis of their work output, alignment with organisational culture and personnel attributes.

Labs are one area on which FSSAI has been focussing a lot. Comment. In the performance audit report of the parliamentary standing committee and the C&AG report have pointed out gaps in our lab infrastructure and we have done a complete survey of the lab infrastructure in the country and we have found that the gaps were real.

So first and foremost we are aiming at setting up our own labs. The FSSAI should have four labs of its own so that we can do large scale surveillance in a more proper manner and masking. So that people can have confidence and we can have confidence that testing has been done properly.

We are also upgrading the lab infrastructure in the states in terms providing funds and training. Rest of the part that include staff or space, the state need to look into it.

We are also asking them to use the private lab capacities that is under-utilised.

There are challenges to push the states to do that and we are consistently working with the state governments towards achieving the goal. The response in many states was encouraging but a few states there are lacunae and till such time the states come with such infrastructure, our national labs will take care of those needs.

Ghaziabad lab is running in PPP mode, Kolkata lab is owned fully by FSSAI and for Mumbai and Chennai labs we are looking into the possibilities about the possible way of running it.

How is FSSAI making food businesses realise their responsibility of ensuring food safety?

So moving forward we are introducing the scheme of testing and inspection. This scheme is essentially that businesses do testing at the hazard control points. Wherever there is a possibility of the hazard across the process involved for manufacturing of a product, the control mechanism needs to be strengthened. The FSS Act calls for food safety across the value chain while the previous regime of Prevention of Adulteration Act was more focussed upon the final product.

So the idea is to ensure safety of the food as it moves across the value chain. So this scheme is aimed at guiding the food businesses to ensure food safety of their products to avoid any unintentional hazards that may come up during the manufacturing of a food product.

The whole purpose of ensuring safety is moving from final product verification to ensuring safety across the value chain. That is the model system of food safety and that is where the food safety ecosystem is graduating itself.

Recently, FSSAI announced to open many offices across the country. How, FSSAI is utilising the regional offices?

Until now the work of the regional offices was primarily on computer to issue licences. Now we are expecting the food safety officers to go into the field undertake inspections. However inspections are not possible at all places and therefore random sampling based on surveillance should be done and to bridge the gap, third-party audits should be conducted to ensure food safety. Further we need to maintain the integrity of the entire system and there is no graft.

**There were also allegations of FSSAI's cosy relation with the industry.
Comment.**

The businesses are responsible for safeguarding the interest of the consumers. No business would like to produce bad product. Our role is to trust the businesses that they are doing the right job but we do verification of their work. And the verification should be done in manner that there are no issues of graft and integrity. The inspector raj is not an option.

Our organisation has evolved this culture of having cordial relationship with every stakeholder of the food safety ecosystem.



“CORONAVIRUS ‘LEVERAGE’: FSSAI UPS MEAT HYGIENE AUDITING AND MANPOWER IN INDIA”

By Pearly Neo | Monday, 02 March, 2020

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has denied that the recent novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has had any impact on the local meat and fish industry but said that it intended to ‘leverage’ on this to raise hygiene standards nationwide.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has denied that the recent novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has had any impact on the local meat and fish industry but said that it intended to ‘leverage’ on this to raise hygiene standards nationwide.

The vast majority of evidence so far has pointed to COVID-19 originating from a wet market in Wuhan, China known for selling various forms of meat, and FSSAI wants to utilise the fact that many public consumers are aware of this to clean up the acts of local meat and fish businesses.

“The hygiene of our meat and fish shops and slaughterhouses is very critical. Slaughtering meat products in India requires a lot of hygiene upgradation,” FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said at a press conference earlier this month.

“[Across the past few months, we have taken steps to do this]. In the first phase, we [did] a third party audit of all the municipal slaughterhouses, and in the second phase [the same for] all slaughterhouses in the country at the cost of the FSSAI.

“We are [planning to] introduce hygiene rating schemes for meat shops too.”

Agarwal went on to add that FSSAI intended to ‘leverage on the awareness in the country surrounding the coronavirus to improve local meat and fish shop/market hygiene’, but categorically denied that COVID-19 has had any impact on the local meat industry.

As of time of publishing, India claims that it has only detected three cases of COVID-19 in the country, all of which have supposedly already recovered. All three were from the state of Kerala, and were students that had been studying in Wuhan

and were evacuated.

Despite the low number of cases and denial of any negative impacts, this move by FSSAI is an understandably cautious one, as India may have a real problem on its hands if the situation escalates further.

"Serious cases who have viral pneumonia will need supportive intensive care, including mechanical ventilation when required," Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) President Dr K. Srinath Reddy, told *India Today*.

"Hospitals in large cities can provide this, if the numbers are not overwhelming. Small towns and rural areas in most states will be ill-equipped if the virus spreads further."

The country's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare declared the situation 'under control' earlier this month, but a public survey conducted by *Local Circles* found that over half of the 40,000 participants felt that the government was not doing enough about the situation, and a further 7% was certain that it does not have the capacity to do anything beyond current efforts.

Manpower boost - but is it enough?

FSSAI also announced earlier this month that it would be setting up a total of 12 new facilities (six new branch offices, four import offices and two food laboratories) to ensure it reached a 'pan-Indian presence, strengthen its inspection and enforcement activities and have better control of imported food'. *"While all issues of food safety and nutrition in the country have not been addressed, there is now a correct diagnosis and a proper treatment regimen available to address all the safety issues in a comprehensive manner,"* Agarwal said in a formal statement. *"Building a public institution like the food safety authority is not a sprint, it is like a marathon. At times we may appear slower than the others, but eventually we have to be ahead."*

The agency also gushed about its 'beautiful office space with a modern day-care centre', 'a well-equipped fitness centre' and 'nice cafeteria', but no mention was made of how these additional facilities and manpower would help in preventing the agency's continued [postponements](#) of regulation enforcements due to 'representations' from various parties, or the high rate of dairy adulteration in the country, which FSSAI seems to consider a [closed case](#). *"Intense scrutiny, greater visibility and full commitment has helped FSSAI to become a better public institution and a model regulator that other countries around the world could emulate,"* Agarwal added..

NO DATA THAT NON-VEG FOOD RESPONSIBLE FOR CORONAVIRUS: AYYANGAR

B S Rawat| Thursday, March 05, 2020

No data that non-veg food responsible for coronavirus: Ayyangar

— March 5, 2020



FSSAI CEO, G.S.G. Ayyangar

BS RAWAT

NEW DELHI: *There is no scientific data till date to prove that coronavirus spreads through chicken, mutton and other non-vegetarian food including seafood, says Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) CEO GSG Ayyangar.*

Speaking at an ASSOCHAM event, Mr Ayyangar said, "Lot of misconception is there that coronavirus will spread through chicken and mutton. There is nothing like that. It is scientifically not proven. I am a scientist. I will not buy that argument."

Mr Ayyangar explained, "It is a virus, like many other viruses. Definitely now it is in the limelight. So, we have to take all precautions."

He informed, "Government is making all efforts to isolate the virus. Once we are able to isolate the virus, then it takes some time to find a vaccine to counter the virus which depends on the complexity of the virus."

The FSSAI chief also said, "In India, we are very good in handling these viruses. It is a matter of time. We have to take precautions and be on our toes. India, being a tropical country, when once the temperature crosses 35-36 degrees centigrade, no virus will survive."

Sharing his views on whether there is a need to maintain extra hygiene in terms of food business, especially in places like poultry farms and others, in wake of coronavirus, Mr Ayyangar said, "Definitely, you have to eat hygienic food. On that there are no two words. But till date there is no scientific data to prove that chicken mutton sea food is responsible for coronavirus."

MUMBAI: CSMT BECOMES EAT RIGHT STATION, GETS 5-STAR RATING BY FSSAI

March 04, 2020

The FSSAI awarded a five-star rating with 88 percent scope to CSMT Station

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) on Wednesday became the Eat Right station. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Wednesday conferred Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) station of Central Railway with 'Eat Right Station' certification with a five-star rating.



Eat Right Station is a part of the 'Eat Right India' movement launched by FSSAI and Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) aimed at promoting food safety and hygiene at the static catering units at Railway Stations.

The food quality regulator of FSSAI and HUL along with Officers of Central Railways (CR) and Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and food auditors inspected Food Plaza, Jan - Ahaar, Base Kitchen, Retail Catering stalls and other catering establishments at the CSMT station and certified and rated the standard of food.

CSMT has been judged on the basis of compliance of food safety and hygiene, availability of healthy diet, food handling at preparation, transshipment and retail/ serving point, food waste management, promotion of local and seasonal food and creating awareness on food safety and healthy diet. After the final audit, the FSSAI awarded a five-star rating with 88 percent scope to CSMT Station. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) is the first station on Central Railway to have been given this certification.

'Eat Right India' movement is built on two broad pillars of 'Eat Healthy' and 'Eat Safe'. The "Eat Healthy" pillar of the movement is about nudging citizens to make healthy food choices and building healthy food habits. It encourages them to choose nutritious and fortified foods in the right proportion and limit foods that are high in salt, sugar, and fat. The 'Eat Safe' pillar is about ensuring food safety to prevent foodborne diseases. It includes maintaining hygiene and sanitation, both personal and environmental, proper waste disposal, following safe food practices and combating adulteration.

This concept has been promoted and supported by the Railways to help passengers make healthy and right food choices. The food business at stations is a major attraction for passengers and Central Railway and IRCTC have joined hands to ensure that healthy and tasty food in a hygienic manner is sold at the catering units. The behavioural change in the catering staff in preparation, storage, and distribution of food has been emphasized in the training given to the licensees of the catering units which will go a long way in inculcating the culture of health and hygiene in food business on Railways.

Sanjeev Mittal, General Manager received the award from Dr. Yogesh Kamat, Director Western Region FSSAI, at CSMT in presence of B.K. Dadabhoy, Principal Chief Commercial Manager, Prabhat Ranjan, Chief Commercial Manager (Catering), Iti Pandey, Chief Commercial Manager (Passenger Services), Central Railway, Rahul Himalian, Group General Manager, IRCTC, Padmamohan T, General Manager (T), IRCTC, N.K. Pipil, Jitender Kumar, Joint General Managers (catering), IRCTC Sourav Chatterji, National Channel Manager, HUL and senior railway officers of Central Railway.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK: IMPORTED FOD SAFE, SAYS FSSAI

By Rhythma Kaul | March 06, 2020

People wearing a protective mask following multiple positive cases of coronavirus in the NCR, in Noida, India, on Thursday, March 05, 2020. (Photo: Sunil Ghosh / Hindustan Times)

The country's apex food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), on Thursday said that the food imported into India is safe from the novel coronavirus.

"...the food imported into India including from the novel coronavirus affected countries is safe for human consumption," a statement from the food regulator said.

FSSAI had constituted a committee of experts to examine the possibilities of the presence of coronavirus in imported food items.

"The committee in its report opined that as of now there is no conclusive evidence for the food borne transmission of the virus. Coronavirus predominately affects the respiratory system and is spread from human to human via droplets while sneezing, coughing, contaminated hands and surfaces. The committee agreed with the advisories of global organizations that the predominant routes of transmission of coronavirus appear to be human to human," the statement read.

The food regulator also clarified that cooked meat, including poultry, was safe to eat.

"As a precautionary measure, the committee has advised to avoid consumption of raw or undercooked meat as well as unprocessed food products. Frozen food items must be consumed only after cooking them properly. Good hygienic practices must be followed before consuming raw fruits and," it said.

Since the outbreak was reported on December 31, 2019, in China, a total of 80,270 confirmed cases and 2,981 deaths have been reported in China. Outside of China, 12,857 confirmed cases and 220 deaths have been reported in 78 countries including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. India has reported 30 positive cases so far, with no deaths.

FORGED ORDER IN THE NAME OF FSSAI ISSUED, MENTIONING FINE, BEING CIRCULATED

B S Rawat| March 07, 2020

It has been brought to the notice of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) that an order FNo Std/SP-10/T (Formaldehyde), dated February 12, 2020, is being circulated on social media and amongst food businesses. It mentioned a notice of Rs 1,200 for the one-year security fine for the said industry/company.

It is clarified that the country's apex food regulator has not issued any such order dated February 12, 2020 related to a fine of Rs 1,200. All the food businesses and other stakeholders, including state food safety authorities, are advised to verify/confirm the veracity of any order released by FSSAI on its official website before making any payment or initiating any other action.

It appears that some individuals are trying to cheat food businesses or other stakeholders through these fake orders. Combating such mischief and fake news requires one to be vigilant. FSSAI requests anyone who comes across such mischief to alert the appropriate authorities, either in the state food safety departments or at the regulator's regional offices or at its headquarters in New Delhi. The regulator is taking legal action about this incident of forgery and spreading a fake order.

ANAND VIHAR TERMINAL RAILWAY STATION BECOMES FIRST EAT RIGHT STATION

Ashwani Maindola | Friday, March 013, 2020

New Delhi's Anand Vihar Terminal railway station (ANVT) has been declared as the first Eat Right Station in the northern region with an audit score of 92 per cent, which is the highest in the country.

The Eat Right Certification (ERC) is an initiative of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), wherein detailed guidelines and norms have been established for certifying any railway station as an Eat Right Station.

The certification process involves a series of activities including pre-audit checks, inspection, training and audit of the station complex, as well as those of the units where the food is handled, viz. catering stalls, kiosks, quick food joints, food plazas, etc.

According to FSSAI, the process starts with registration of intent for the station to achieve an ERC with the country's apex food regulator. It is followed by the collection of primary data followed by pre-audit checks.

The vendors and the food handlers are given a basic level training on food safety, hygiene and sanitation practices under the Food Safety and Training Certification (FoSTaC) programme.

The audit involved various parameters to assess the practices and processes followed at the Anand Vihar station. The broad criteria involved the assessment of two areas - the station complex and individual food units, viz. catering stalls, kiosks, quick food joints, food plazas, etc.

For the station complex, the aspects related to infrastructure, quality of drinking water for passengers, facilities of public washrooms, cleanliness, etc. were covered.

For the food units, parameters assessed, checked and audited included:

- Food safety and hygiene check: Aspects covering infrastructure, operations control, maintenance and sanitation, personal hygiene and training, etc.
- Healthy and local food monitoring: Aspects related to availability of healthy, fortified, local and seasonal food
- Food waste reduction and management

Hindustan Unilever was also involved in the process as an implementation partner and RIR certification as auditors. The detailed post-audit of ANVT was undertaken by the third-party auditors on January 15, 2020, and ANVT was rated in the exemplary category with a score of 92.08 per cent with a rating of five stars.

Rita Teatia, chairperson, FSSAI, said, "On one hand, FSSAI has been taking several measures towards effective implementation of various regulations, targeted enforcement and compliance efforts to ensure availability of safe food."

"And on the other, we are also trying to leverage partnerships across the levels to ensure safety and hygiene of food wherever it is served. FSSAI has taken a clusterisation approach to ensure that the concept of Eat Right Certification (ERC) rolls-out across the country," she added.


“Our partnership with Indian Railways (being one of the largest sector handling a major footfall of citizens everyday), particularly with Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation (IRSDC), is really laudable, and I must place on record their efforts towards implementation of this unique concept,” Teotia said.

Present on the occasion, Sanjeev Kumar Lohia, managing director and chief executive officer, IRSDC, mentioned, “Eat Right Certification is a unique concept and a very good initiative by FSSAI.”


“Anand Vihar is the third Eat Right Station after Mumbai Central and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Railway Station, and has the top-most ranking. We feel proud to achieve such a high score,” he added.


Lohia said, “We are glad to be associated with FSSAI, and would continue to ensure that the food available across the outlets here will be prepared in the right hygiene and sanitary conditions, stored at proper temperature and served safely.”

Press Releases

[Press Release dated 31st March 2020 related to Import Clearance and Food Testing Labs classified as Essential Services by FSSAI during the COVID-19](#)  [0.61 MB] [Uploaded on : 31-03-2020]

[Press Release dated 12th March 2020 related to Anand Vihar Terminal Railway station becomes the 1st Eat Right Station](#)  [0.83 MB] [Uploaded on : 12-03-2020]

[Press Release dated 05th March 2020 related to Imported Food is Safe from Corona Virus](#)  [0.62 MB] [Uploaded on : 05-03-2020]

[Press Release dated 03rd March 2020 related to Circulation of Fake/ Forged Order in the Name of FSSAI](#)  [0.63 MB] [Uploaded on : 03-03-2020]

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<https://www.fssai.gov.in/press-note.php>

