

MEDIA COMPENDIUM

FSSAI Asks States to Intensify Inspections and Carry Out Drives to Curb Use of Illegal Ripening Agents and Synthetic Coatings on Fruits

Press Release

New Delhi, 20th May, 2023: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has urged all States and Union Territories to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents and synthetic coatings on fruits, as well as colouring and coating of fruits with synthetic colours or non-permitted wax. The Commission of Food Safety of all States/UTs and Regional Directors of FSSAI have been requested to maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets and mandis, to curb illegal use of fruit ripening using agents like calcium carbide, commonly known as 'masala'.

As part of the enforcement drive, inspection of godowns and storage facilities, particularly those suspected of using substances like calcium carbide for ripening may be carried out. The presence of calcium carbide on the premises or stored alongside crates of fruits will be treated as circumstantial evidence against the Food Business Operator (FBO), potentially leading to prosecution under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006.

Calcium carbide is strictly prohibited for the artificial ripening of fruits under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. The use of this substance poses serious health risks and is known to cause mouth ulcers, gastric irritation and has carcinogenic properties.

Further, FSSAI has also identified cases where FBOs are using ethephon solution to artificially ripen bananas and other fruits by dipping them directly into the chemical. In this context, the Authority has issued a comprehensive guidance document titled "Artificial Ripening of Fruits - Ethephon Gas: A Safe Fruit Ripener" (https://www.fssai.gov.in/Uploads/Information/Regulatory/Artificial_Ripening_of_Fruits_03_01_2019.pdf). The document clearly states that ethephon may be used only as a source for generating ethylene gas and strictly in accordance with the prescribed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This SOP details all critical aspects of artificial ripening using ethylene gas, application protocols, post-treatment operations, requirements, handling conditions, sources of ethylene gas, application protocols, post-treatment operations, and safety guidelines. FSSAI urges all Food Business Operators to adhere to these SOPs to ensure safe and compliant ripening practices.

FSSAI reiterates that any violation of these norms will attract strict penal action under the FSS Act, 2006. The Authority encourages all stakeholders in the supply chain including FBOs and consumers to remain vigilant and ensure that only safe and legally compliant fruits reach the market to ensure food safety and quality.

Curb use of illegal ripening agents, synthetic coatings on fruits: FSSAI

New Delhi: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked all states to check illegal use of ripening agents and synthetic coatings for fruits as part of its efforts to ensure safe food for people. As part of an enforcement drive, FSSAI has suggested that inspections of godowns and storage facilities, particularly those suspected of using substances like calcium carbide for ripening, may be carried out.



FSSAI Calls for Action on Fruit Ripening

NEW DELHI: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has urged all states to curb the illegal use of ripening agents and synthetic coatings on fruits to ensure food safety. In a statement on Tuesday, FSSAI urged states and union territories to ramp up inspections and enforce bans on non-permitted ripening agents like calcium carbide, commonly known as 'masala', synthetic colours, and approved wax coatings.

Crack down on illegal fruit ripening agents: FSSAI



Curb use of illegal ripening agents: FSSAI

Food regulator FSSAI has asked all states to check illegal use of ripening agents and synthetic coatings for fruits as part of its efforts to ensure safe food for people. "The FSSAI has urged all States and Union Territories to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents, as well as colouring and coating of fruits with synthetic colours or non-permitted wax," the regulator said.

#FSSAIinNews

FSSAI asks States to curb use of illegal ripening agents, synthetic coatings on fruits



Synopsis

FSSAI has directed states to intensify inspections to curb the illegal use of ripening agents like calcium carbide and synthetic coatings on fruits. Calcium carbide is strictly prohibited due to serious health risks, while ethephon use is permitted only as a source for ethylene gas, following a strict SOP. Violations will attract strict penal action.

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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Good riddance to carbide, ethylene gas is in vogue to ripen mangoes in Chennai

KETHRA BALA G
CHENNAI, MAY 20

As the mango season is in full swing, a safer alternative to artificial ripening is spreading its roots in Chennai and other parts of Tamil Nadu. In the aftermath of the government's rigid ban on the use of calcium carbide—a chemical that was used for many years to ripen mangoes but found to be health-hazardous—fruit merchants have universally taken to a safer and science-approved method: ethylene gas.

Until recently, calcium carbide was the widely-used ripening agent despite its harmful effects. It emits acetylene gas, a compound that has been known to lead to respiratory complications, neurological damage, and cancer if ingested in large quantities over long periods of time. Lamenting the ill-effects, the Food Safety and



Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) prohibited the use of calcium carbide for artificial fruit ripening in 2011. This ban is outlined under Regulation 2.3.5 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. Later, in 2016, it gave permission for regulated usage of ethylene gas for artificial fruit ripening.

Ethylene, a natural plant hormone, induces fruits to ripen in a very natural way. "Mangoes ripened with ethylene are safe and have no ill effects, unlike carbide-ripened ones,"

stated Dr. M. Jagadish Chandra Bose, Chennai and Thiruvallur district food safety officer. He added that ethylene has to be used in the form of a gas and not powder or liquid, according to FSSAI regulations.

The transition to this practice is now more or less evident in markets such as Koyambedu, the largest fruit market in Chennai. Kumar, a wholesale trader there, said, "We employ two small sachets of ethylene (known as enripe) for each 20 kilograms of mangoes. It takes care at room temperature and provides the fruits with a natural appearance

and flavour." He also attested that the practice of using calcium carbide has completely stopped among responsible traders, owing to growing awareness and enforcement.

To maintain safety and compliance, the food safety department has stepped up monitoring. "We have organised seven awareness camps this year and seized more than 100 kg of illegally ripened mangoes using carbide," stated Sundaramurthy, food safety officer at Koyambedu. He noted that the better mango harvest this season could also cut down on the pressure to use rapid-ripening techniques.

Some of the well-known varieties include Banganapalli, Imam Pasand, Alphonso, and Sendhoora. Apart from the sale of fresh fruit, Tamil Nadu also plays a role in processed mango items such as juices, pickles, and pulp, particularly from areas like Theni and Salem.

Similarly, the demand for carbide-free, naturally-ripened mangoes is on the rise among health-conscious consumers, further motivating more traders to switch to approved techniques. With the entry of hundreds of tonnes of mangoes every day in Chennai, compliance with safe methods of ripening ensures quality, consumer confidence, and food safety. As awareness gains momentum and inspections remain consistent, the days of hazardous carbide use may soon be behind us.

millenniumpost

'Over 1L warehouses identified to bring under WDRA'

'Food processing & warehousing are two crucial players as far as surplus food is concerned'

NEW DELHI: India has identified more than 100,000 warehouses as part of a push to reduce post-harvest losses, noted WDRA Chairperson Anita Praveen at the 16th FICCI Foodworld India 2025 conference. "Today, we have over 100,000 identified warehouses, and we are trying to bring in as many as possible into the fold of the WDRA," she said.

The integration of warehousing and food processing is considered crucial for handling India's growing agricultural production, which continues to increase year after year. "The food processing sector and

warehousing are two very crucial players as far as the surplus food is concerned. Otherwise, we end up with lots of losses of food," Praveen said.

G Kamala Vardhana Rao, CEO of FSSAI, highlighted the changing consumer landscape, noting that "most people no longer go to supermarkets to pick up products. Now everything is coming home—supermarkets are coming home." Rao also addressed the shifting consumption patterns towards packaged and processed foods, urging the industry to consider its "great social responsibility" to ensure proper nutrition con-

Closer Look

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tent in products as consumers increasingly rely less on home-cooked meals.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has made remarkable strides in developing the sector's infrastructure. Ranjit Singh, Joint Secretary, noted that the government

has funded nearly 1,600 projects, creating a food processing capacity of 4.1 million tonnes and benefiting approximately 900,000 farmers. The PLI scheme has catalysed investments worth Rs 7,000 crore and generated over 250,000 employment opportunities in

the country.

Hemant Malik, Chair of the FICCI Food Processing Committee and Executive Director, ITC Ltd & Div CEO ITC Foods, expressed industry concerns about the labelling debate, advocating for serving-size-based front-of-pack nutrition information rather than per-100g measurements, since "most consumption of packaged food is in small sizes," and cautioned against broadly categorising packaged foods as "ultra-processed," citing examples such as soy nuggets, which provide affordable protein despite being processed products. **MPOST**

Crack down on illegal fruit ripening agents: FSSAI



Calcium carbide is prohibited for the artificial ripening of fruits under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011. — Photo: Surya Sridhar

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Tuesday has urged Commissioners of Food Safety of all States to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents, as well as colouring and coating of fruits with synthetic colours or non-permitted wax.

It also asked officials to maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets and mandis, to curb illegal use of fruit ripening using agents like calcium car-

bide, commonly known as 'masala'.

As part of the enforcement drive, inspection of godowns and storage facilities, particularly those suspected of using substances like calcium carbide for ripening should be carried out. The presence of calcium carbide on the premises or stored alongside crates of fruits will be treated as circumstantial evidence against the Food Business Operator (FBO), potentially leading to prosecution under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act 2006, FSSAI in the letter said.

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ripening of fruits under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. The use of this substance poses serious health risks and is known to cause mouth ulcers, gastric irritation and has carcinogenic properties.

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Curb use of illegal ripening agents: FSSAI

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FSSAI calls for crackdown on illegal ripening practices

Press trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all States and Union Territories to intensify inspections and carry out targeted enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents and synthetic coatings.

The Commissioners of Food Safety in States and Union Territories, along with FSSAI's Regional Directors, have been asked to maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets and *mandis*. The move is aimed at addressing the use of calcium carbide, commonly referred to as "*masala*", for artificial ripening.

As part of the ongoing enforcement campaign, the regulator has recommended inspections of godowns and storage units, particularly those suspected of using hazardous substances for fruit ripening.

FSSAI directs states to curb use of illegal fruit ripening agents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 20

WITH THE reports of fruits being artificially ripened, the country's apex food regulator has urged states to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb the use of ripening agents that are not permitted.

The food safety commissioners of all states, and regional directors of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) were asked to maintain a strict vigil over fruit markets and mandis, storage facilities.

This is being done to curb the use of calcium carbide, also known as masala, used for ripening mangoes. The use of calcium carbide is strictly prohibited as it is known to cause mouth ulcers and gastric irritation.

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This is being done to curb the use of calcium carbide, also known as masala, used for ripening mangoes. The use of calcium carbide is strictly prohibited as it is known to cause mouth ulcers and gastric irritation. It also has carcinogenic properties.

The FSSAI said the presence of calcium carbide on the premises or storage along-side the fruits will be treated as circumstantial evidence, "potentially leading to prosecution under the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act 2006". FSSAI also cited the cases of food businesses using ethephon solution to artificially ripen bananas by dipping them into the chemical, which is not allowed under the regulations.

However, the use of ethephon to generate ethylene gas and ripen the bananas is allowed. This is because ethylene is a natural plant hormone and does not pose any health risks. The application of the gas, however, has to be done as per established protocols for chamber requirements, handling conditions, application protocol, post-treatment processes and safety guidelines.

The food safety authority also said, "FSSAI reiterates that any violation of these norms will attract strict penal action under the FSS Act, 2006."

Curb use of illegal fruit ripening agents: FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Tuesday urged all states and UTs to intensify inspections and carry out special enforcement drives to curb illegal use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents and coating of fruits with synthetic colours or non-permitted wax.



FSSAI SEEKS CURBS ON ILLEGAL RIPENING AGENTS

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FSSAI directs states to check use of illegal ripening agents

This is being done to curb the use of calcium carbide, used for ripening mangoes

By: **Express News Service**

New Delhi | May 21, 2025 02:54 IST

 **NewsGuard**

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FSSAI directs states to curb synthetic colouring, carbide use on fruits

FSSAI has asked states to inspect fruit mandis and storage units for illegal ripening agents like calcium carbide and unsafe colouring; violators to face legal action under FSS Act

ECONOMY

FSSAI asks States to step up surveillance on use of calcium carbide for artificial ripening

Calcium carbide is strictly prohibited for the artificial ripening of fruits under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011

By BL New Delhi Bureau

Updated - May 20, 2025 at 08:25 PM. | New Delh



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FSSAI asks States to curb use of illegal ripening agents, synthetic coatings on fruits



Carry out inspections to curb use of illegal ripening agents, synthetic coatings on fruits: FSSAI asks states

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‘Over 1L warehouses identified to bring under WDRA’

BY [MPost](#) 20 May 2025 11:32 PM

The logo for ANI, consisting of the letters "ANI" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.

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Representative Image

FSSAI urges states to intensify inspections against illegal ripening agents, synthetic coatings in fruits

ANI | Updated: May 20, 2025 21:45 IST

FSSAI urges States to curb use of illegal fruit ripening agents

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BY [TELANGANA TODAY](#) PUBLISHED DATE - 20 MAY 2025, 09:06 PM



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FSSAI Asks States to Curb Use of Illegal Ripening Agents, Synthetic Coatings on Fruits

The regulator warned that any violation of these norms will attract strict penal action



PTI
Updated on: 20 May 2025 8:36 pm



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Wednesday, 21 May, 2025, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi



Food Safety & Traceability

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