

*For immediate release*

**Press Release**

## **FSSAI commemorates World Food Day by launching several innovative initiatives**

**New Delhi, 16th October 2019:** The country's food regulator commemorated the World Food Day today by launching several innovative initiatives to strengthen food safety administration and scale up the 'Eat right India' movement.

In order to strengthen food safety administration, FSSAI launched the '*Food Safety Mitra (FSMs)*' scheme to support small and medium scale food businesses in compliance to the food safety law by facilitating licensing and registration, hygiene ratings and training. Apart from strengthening food safety, this scheme would also create new employment opportunities for youth, particularly with food and nutrition background. The FSM would undergo training and certification by FSSAI to do their work and get paid by food businesses for their services. The first batch of 15 FSMs were awarded certificates today. Details of the scheme are available at <https://fssai.gov.in/mitra/>

FSSAI also launched a jacket for field staff. This jacket has a smart design to hold tech devices like tablets/smart phone, a QR code and RFID tag for identification and tracking. Apart from providing safety to field staff on duty, this would bring in efficiency, professionalism and transparency in food safety administration and bring in a sense of ownership & visibility of FSOs.

FSSAI has partnered with the Domestic Workers Sector Skill Council (DWSSC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to launch a training course for domestic workers and homemakers across the country. In the first phase, one lakh domestic workers and homemakers will be trained through training partners of DWSSC in association with RWAs. This would be scaled up in due course.

On this occasion, FSSAI also launched a reusable cloth bag ('Eat Right Jhola') to replace plastic bags for grocery shopping with retail chains such as Big Bazaar, More, 24/7 and Reliance Fresh etc. These cloth bags are being provided on rental basis through a private textile rental service company. Proper and regular washing of cloth bags is essential to ensure safety and hygiene, as on repeated use, bags are often contaminated with microorganisms and bacteria.

For scaling up the Eat Right India movement across the country, FSSAI has got endorsement of several celebrities. Two short films on repurposing of used cooking oil into biodiesel and nutrition in the first 1000 days of life featuring Shri Virat Kohli and Ms. Juhi Chawla respectively, were released on the occasion.

FSSAI has recently partnered with NASSCOM Foundation to develop an online platform to connect over 50 NGOs working to prevent food waste in the country. A short film on the same was also released. In addition, FSSAI is publishing two books, namely 'Gandhi and Food' and 'Eat Right Textbook'.

Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, the chief guest at the function, launched these initiatives. A large number of representatives from the government, international organizations and foreign embassies, food industry, civil society organizations, development agencies, academia, professional associations in food and nutrition had gathered to celebrate World Food Day. Students and faculty from over sixty universities and colleges across the country participated in the event through a webcast.

The theme of World Food Day this year is 'Healthy Diets for Zero Hunger'. Achieving Zero Hunger is not only about addressing hunger but nourishing people while nurturing the planet. This means focusing on diets that are not only safe and healthy but also environmentally sustainable. FSSAI has taken a 'Food Systems Approach' to promote safe and healthier diets that are good for the people and the planet. The new initiatives and innovations launched on World Food Day reflect this spirit by promoting the right diet and lifestyle choices.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Harsh Vardhan complemented FSSAI for its out-of-the-box thinking to reach out to almost all sections of society in its efforts to provide safe food to citizens. He remarked, *"By motivating key players in the system who can reach out to people at large, we can reach out to each and every individual. ERI is doing this successfully through its multiple partnerships and convergence with existing Government programmes. This movement has no opposition as it concerns everybody."*

Dr. K. Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor, Govt. of India, citing a Sanskrit shloka that says that the behaviour of those who are looked up to is a powerful way to change behaviour of the community at large, lauded the initiative by the Health Minister to tweet about ERI on social media every day. He observed, *"Many initiatives under ERI have the potential to become transformative. Nudge, can bring change at individual level. Proof of action from social influencers is a powerful nudge to change behaviour."*

Mr. Arun Maira, former member of Planning Commission of India & former India Chairman of Boston Consulting Group opined, *"To implement any programme successfully, it is important to see it in the context of the entire system as well as consider the interplay of systems. Eat Right India has taken this 'systems approach' in a commendable way."*

Shri Sangram Singh, the world's best professional wrestler, echoed the mantra of the Eat Right India movement and said, *"Khana bhook se kam, Paani double, Work-out triple and Hasana chauguna."* Citing his real life experiences, he further added, *"Real wealth is health and what challenges you, changes you. So embrace this mantra for health challenges."*

CEO, FSSAI, Pawan Agarwal expressed deep gratitude to various partners and stakeholders in providing their whole hearted support in ensuring that we together are able to provide safe and healthy food to our citizens, a foundation for preventive healthcare. He added, *"FSSAI is inspired by Gandhi's views and vision on health and aligned to global thinking and discourse on social and behavioural change in societies."*

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