

Press Release

Big push to country's food testing system: Launch of 'Food Safety on Wheels'

New Delhi, Aug 22, 2017: Testing of food gives confidence to consumers that food is safe for consumption. It is an integral part of the food safety ecosystem. The number and spread of food testing labs in the country is currently inadequate. To strengthen the food testing infrastructure, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is encouraging both public and private investment in food testing infrastructure. With Central government support, FSSAI has taken up strengthening of State food labs, provision of mobile food labs and related initiatives.

On the eve of completion of the eleventh year of the umbrella Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, FSSAI has launched five key initiatives to give a big push to food testing system in the country.

- 1) Launch of Indian Food Laboratory Network (InFoLNet):** A digital solution to connect all food labs in the country to a centralized Lab Management System (LMS). This system would provide an end to end solution, where samples collected by the field units would be coded and tested in FSSAI notified labs and the results would be available in a central database. This data would be available for enforcement and food import controls in a seamless manner. InFoLNet would become a focal point for risk analysis, standards improvement, training and capacity building and better surveillance.
- 2) Food Safety on Wheels:** Mobile units called "Food Safety on Wheels" are multipurpose vehicles for food testing, public education and awareness and for conducting awareness programs. Mobile unit has a fully functional laboratory equipped with basic infrastructure for quick qualitative testing for detection of common adulterants in various food commodities. These mobile units would spread awareness around food safety & hygiene and be useful for conducting training and certification programs for food businesses. In addition, these mobile units would help the functionaries in the States to enhance their outreach and conduct surveillance activities even in far-flung areas. 62 such units are planned, at least one for each State // UT and more in respect of bigger States. Nine mobile units have been flagged-off today. This covers the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

- 3) **Strengthen State Food Testing Labs:** FSSAI is also strengthening 45 State food labs by providing state-of-art high end food testing equipment including microbiology labs. This initiative has been rolled out today with exchange of MoU with eight States/UTs.
- 4) **Tool-kit for rapid testing of common adulterants:** A compilation of simple test methods for detecting common adulterants at home such as extraneous matters deliberately added with food has been put together. DART (Detecting Adulterants with Rapid Testing) offers a self-enforcement tool and a ready home-guide to the citizens to combat adulteration.
- 5) **Junior Analysts Examination:** In order to address the issue of acute shortage of food analysts in the country, FSSAI has decided to hold Junior Analyst Examination along with Food Analyst Examination in late September/ early October this year. This would help to attract young talent for food analysis in the country and over time, build a large pool of such analysts both for the food industry and the regulatory system.

Sh. Ashish Bahuguna, Chairperson, FSSAI said, *“This holistic effort towards using digital solutions, strengthening food safety infrastructure, enhancing capabilities and creating a large pool of trained specialists would go a long way in ensuring that the food safety and hygiene ecosystem becomes more robust.”*

For more details, contact:

Ruchika Sharma

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

M: +91-9999431104

E: sharmaruchika.21@gmail.com