



PRESS RELEASE

Fortification gets a big push by the Edible Oil Industry

New Delhi, 21ST March 2017: All major edible oil manufacturing and processing sector decides to fortify the edible oil with vitamin A and D within the next three months. The decision is the outcome of a meeting convened by the FSSAI recently in New Delhi. Over 130 persons, representing the edible oil industry partners; industry associations; academia and the development sector; attended this meeting. Of these, 85% were from the edible oil industry and its associations. During the deliberations Industry partners, including 'Patanjali' resolved to adopt fortification of all their edible oil variants as an "Industry norm" and have agreed to initiate fortification within 8-12 weeks.

As per National Institute of Nutrition, Government of India, there is a high prevalence of vitamin A and D deficiencies amongst Indian population. Almost 50-90% of the Indian population, across all socio-economic groups, suffers from vitamin A and D deficiencies. Fortification of edible oils with vitamin A and D, offers the most feasible and cost-effective intervention, as India has a fairly high consumption of edible oils, ranging from 12-18 kg/ per annum per person. India meets this demand by making available 217.09 lakh tons of edible oils in the country, which includes an import of 127.31 lakh tons of edible oils.

During the meeting, technical issues and challenges with respect to edible oil fortification were discussed. This helped in creating an enabling environment that would help the industry in improving its trade practices. In addition, issues related to the sale of loose edible oil were also discussed, and the industry was advised to adopt small packaging of edible oil so that issues of affordability of oil in larger packaging can be addressed and the sale of good quality edible oil becomes consumer-friendly. Stakeholders of the meeting also agreed to jointly promote 'Consumer-facing' awareness, including promotion of the national logo for fortified foods, symbolizing better nutrition.

Nation's health being paramount, FSSAI has laid standards for fortification of edible oil with vitamins A and D, and has specified regulations that prohibit the sale of loose edible oil. Since food safety and promotion of good health warrants public health interventions, this meeting provided a unique opportunity to engage with diverse actors from the public and private sectors; including a large number of medium and small industry partners; and work towards strengthening public-private partnerships.

At the behest of Governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat, entire edible oil industry is already selling only fortified edible oil across these States. Several state and UT governments like

Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, etc. have started providing fortified oil through the public funded programmes like the PDS, ICDS and MDM.

In his remarks on the occasion, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, stated that *“Food fortification has a great potential to enrich the nutritional quality of various foods. It is encouraging to see such a traction and commitment within the food industry to initiate fortification of foods. This would indeed help India to improve the nutritional status of millions of people, both the poor and the rich.”*

Edible oil processors also decided to come out with oils in small pouches in order to ensure effective ban on loose oil sale in the country. The oil processors also decided to take up a nation-wide drive on awareness about repeated use of edible oil and Total Polar Compounds (TPC) standards being finalized by the FSSAI.