

The Statesman

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State takes steps to help exporters meet norms for European market

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Abul Razzaq Molla addressing the 3rd food conclave at ITC Sonar on Saturday. (Photo: SNS)

In a bid to help fruits and vegetables exporters subsequently enter the European markets, West Bengal Government has taken initiatives to meet the stringent norms prevalent in most European countries, said the food processing & horticulture minister Mr Abdur Rezzak Mollah. He was addressing the inaugural session of the Food

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Processing Conclave organised by CII.

“While Rs 15 crore has been spent on setting up a hot water treatment plant at Malda, Rs 25 crore has been invested on providing modern water sprinklers in farms. The government is also encouraging participatory farming, making it easier for agro-based companies to enter into supply contracts with farmers,” the minister said.

Mr Molla said, “Litchi has huge prospects for export in European markets given that we are able to comply with their food processing norms.”

About the lesser yields of oranges in the last harvest, Mr Molla said that in spite of repeated endeavours, cultivators were unwilling to switch to new methods of grafting and budding even though in the old method the plants were attacked by pests affecting the produce. He added that to avoid such situations cultivators are being educated and better yield is expected in the next harvest.

Ashish Bahuguna, chairman, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), said, “The Eastern states have enormous potential which has remained unrealized for long years. Creating an eco-system which will enable farmers realise better prices is the need of the hour.”



FSSAI issues guidance document on use of supplements intended for athletes

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Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi

FSSAI issued a guidance document on the use of supplements/products intended for sportspersons recently. It provides an overview about the regulatory status and available provisions made in the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011, as well as in the National Anti-Doping Agency's (NADA) anti-doping rule.

This is in the wake of reports of supplements laced and spiked with banned substances which are unknown to the consumers and result in the unintentional use of prohibited substances, which can otherwise can be harmful to health.

NADA's rule imposes a strict liability clause upon the sportspersons, wherein the use of prohibited substances is strictly prohibited and considered unethical. And in such cases, the sportspersons face term bans.

The primary purpose of the guidance document was to provide information not only on the use, but also about the labelling and claims for the products.

"The stakeholders who will use the information provided in the document include sportspersons, supplement manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers and the general public," stated the document.

Vaibhav Kulkarni, chairman, technical and regulatory committee and board member, Health and Dietary Supplement Association (HADSA), said, "With an increase in sporting activities, the guidance document will have a positive impact on the player's nutritional system."

"While sports nutrition had not been very specifically addressed and its categorisation is very unclear, The present guidance clears many ambiguities," he added.

"The document categorises the sports nutrition product under the existing

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regulation. More importantly, it explains substances which are completely banned and those during the competition. This will immensely help the sportspersons to keep away from banned substances,” Kulkarni added.

“The document will also support the manufacturers in producing World Anti-Doping Agency- (WADA) compliant products. The document is a single window of useful information to sportspersons,” he said.

He added that the guideline was a good beginning and will evolve over a period of time. As it is a guideline and not a regulation, making changes is easier.

It really addresses the banned substances in sports nutrition in a very comprehensive manner. However, since the guideline has been just released and is being studied by all stakeholders, it is too early to rate it.

For this, FSSAI and NADA have collaborated, and under the collaboration, India’s apex food regulator has already issued a circular to all food safety commissioners for appropriate enforcement and surveillance to ensure the compliance with regard to the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.

The current regulation process for the manufacturers, including registration and licensing with FSSAI, labelling and claims, authenticity, traceability and date marking, have been mentioned in the document.

For the better understanding of the document, the appendices list is being provided. It includes the definitions, frequently-asked questions (FAQs) and list of prohibited substances and methods issued by WADA (which is revised annually, and is effective from January 1 every year.

The recommended dietary allowance (RDA) and dietary guidelines has also been provided in the document.

Meanwhile, Kulkarni suggested that there was a bit confusion about the category under which the guidelines should come.

He explained, “There are a few issues in the guideline which need to be addressed. In the main guideline, all sports nutrition products have directed to be categorised under Foods for Special Dietary Uses (FSDU) in the nutra regulation.”

“However, in the FAQ section, it has been proposed that sports nutrition

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products are be categorised under health supplements. This is confusing though," Kulkarni added.

"Health supplements would be more appropriate. FSDU is for special physiological conditions, and sporting activity or performance cannot be termed as a physiological condition," he said.

"Sports nutrition or sports supplements have been categorised into sports food, medical supplements and performance supplements. This is not required as these aspects will be taken care of by the claims," Kulkarni added.

"The ministry of youth affairs and sports has suggested a few generic names for sports nutrition. As this is likely to cause confusion, the categorisation will be left to FSSAI," he added.

Business Standard

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E-Paper

FSSAI favours comprehensive legislation for organic foods

Press Trust of India | Kolkata

Food Safety and Standards Authority of [India](#) (FSSAI), the autonomous body looking after [food safety](#) and regulations in the country, today said a comprehensive legislation should be in place for [organic food](#) products.

"Presently, the agriculture ministry and APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) are having separate guidelines for organic foods. We feel there should a single legislation in this regard," [chairman](#) of [FSSAI](#) [Ashish Bahuguna](#) said.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a [Confederation of Indian Industry](#) (CII) event here today, he said FSSAI has already prepared a draft regulation on organic food which has been put up in the public domain for seeking views from various stakeholders.

Bahuguna also sounded caution on boro rice cultivation due to high levels of arsenic contamination in water.

[Bangladesh](#) had already reduced boro cultivation for this purpose, he said, adding that use of drought-resistant paddy variants and long stem crops were desirable.

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E-Paper

FSSAI bats for comprehensive legislation for organic foods

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Kolkata: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will soon come out with a comprehensive legislation for organic food products. "Presently, the agriculture ministry and APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) are having separate guidelines for organic foods. We feel there should a single legislation in this regard," chairman of FSSAI Ashish Bahuguna said on the sidelines of a Food Processing Conclave organised by CII on Saturday.

"FSSAI is an autonomous body looking after food safety and regulations in the country. We have already prepared a draft regulation on organic food and we have put it in the public domain inviting opinions from stakeholders. It will be finalised with the assistance from the Ministry of Law," Bahuguna maintained. The FSSAI chairman also urged the states from Eastern India to reduce boro rice cultivation as it involves substantial use of water from underground that increases the chance of high level arsenic contamination in water. "Bangladesh had already reduced boro cultivation for this purpose. The use of drought-resistant paddy variants and long-stem crops are desirable," he said.

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According to him, the Eastern states have enormous potential which has remained unrealized for years. "Markets in the East are underdeveloped, and that explains why they need support from the government in the form of higher budgetary allocation and handholding," Bahuguna said, adding that it is time Bengal shows the way to the rest of India. He said participatory farming is being propagated and is quite popular across India.

FSSAI had sealed Guruvayurappan College mess

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E-Paper

The college authorities have also suspended the hostel warden and mess in-charge for acting irresponsibly.



Students on protest at Guruvayurappan arts and science college

KOZHIKODE: After the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India officials here sealed the hostel mess of Guruvayurappan Arts and Science College, the department started getting more complaints from the inmates of various other colleges and private hostels here. According to the officials, more than 10 complaints have been received in the office about the poor quality of food supplied in some of the hostels here.

This has led the department to prepare an action plan to conduct stringent inspection of both private and Government owned colleges and other hostels here. "After our inspection at Guruvayurappan college, we were appalled seeing the condition of the college mess, that has stored all its food under unhygienic conditions", said FSSAI assistant commissioner P.K. Eliyamma.

"The quality of the food being supplied to student hostels is worse than that of the food given to animals. In the college we even found food grains already passed their expiry

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months ago. Batter and dough for dosa and chapathi respectively are more than three weeks old. Adding to the woes is the terrible condition of the place in which these food materials are stored,” she added. Samples of food items including rice and other pulses and cereals, refined oil has been taken and sent for food safety test. Guruvayurappan college authorities have been directed to clean and rectify all the drawbacks of the hostel mess by Monday. The college authorities have also suspended the hostel warden and mess in- charge for acting irresponsibly.

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E-Paper

Arsenic contamination in 'boro' rice: FSSAI cautions farmers on excessive use of ground water OUR BUREAU



KOLKATA, MARCH 24

Increased dependence on groundwater during 'boro' cultivation could lead to arsenic contamination in crops.

According to Ashish Bahuguna, Chairman, FSSAI, farmers could look at alternatives like drought resistance paddy; high yielding varieties or other long stem crops where chances of contamination are much less.

FSSAI or the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is the autonomous body looking after food safety and regulations in the country.

"The excessive use of sub-surface or ground water during boro irrigation could lead to arsenic contamination. Farmers could look at different variety of drought-resistance seeds, go for long stem crops or other solutions," he told reporters on the sidelines of a CII seminar organised in the city.

Citing Bangladesh as an instance, the senior bureaucrat pointed out how the neighbouring country discouraged 'boro' rice cultivation and reduced its dependence to avoid such contamination.

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Bengal, he said, could also take a cue from Bangladesh, for areas which are prone to arsenic contamination.

Common Regulation

According to Bahuguna, the FSSAI is also in favour of unified regulations regarding organic food products. Labelling norms are expected to be in operation soon. Pegged as a premium offering, organic products command at least 30-40 per cent more price than their non-organic counterparts.

When it comes to organic farming in India, Sikkim has shown the way.

Declared the first 'Organic State' in India by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, Sikkim State Co-operative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (SIMFED) recently launched its brand of organic products.

SIMFED works with more than 40,000 farmers on almost 35,000 hectares of agricultural land in 10 states of the country.
