

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 be 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. 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.