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FSSAI to align licensing norms with GST

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on amending the registration and licensing regulations for food businesses. It will look at reclassifying food businesses on the basis of their turnover, in a bid to align these norms with GST.

FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said: “We are working on bringing a comprehensive amendment to the licensing and registration regulations for food business operators. The amendments will include classification of licences for food businesses on the basis of turnover in line with GST and MSME norms.”

All food business operators need to register with, or obtain licences from, the authorities at the State or Central level. But small food business operators with a turnover of ₹12 lakh, also known as ‘petty food manufacturers’, are only required to register but not obtain a licence.

Agarwal said the FSSAI proposes to raise the turnover limit for ‘petty food manufacturers’ to ₹20 lakh in line with the GST norms. In addition, it proposes to reduce the number of kind of businesses (KOB) categories from 17 to eight categories.

At the same time, FSSAI is also focusing on revamping its existing online portal used by companies to register or apply for licences. “We are now developing a new-generation e-portal which will focus not just on registration and licensing applications but also create a compliance history of food businesses. We will call this portal the Food Compliance System and it will be launched in three to five months,” Agarwal added.

The regulator will look at the company’s track record with regards to compliance with standards and labelling norms before issuing fresh licences through the revamped portal.

In a bid to raise the bar of quality and hygiene at restaurants, the FSSAI is launching a framework for voluntary hygiene rating mechanism. The aim is to promote self-

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compliance of food hygiene and safety among restaurants and inform consumers about hygiene quality in the eateries, he explained.

FSSAI is exploring the option of hiring a third party agency to do the hygiene ratings for restaurants. It is in the process of training food safety advisers for food businesses to promote self-compliance of food safety norms.

It has conducted 800-odd training programmes for food businesses, and The could look at making the hygiene ratings mandatory in a few years.