



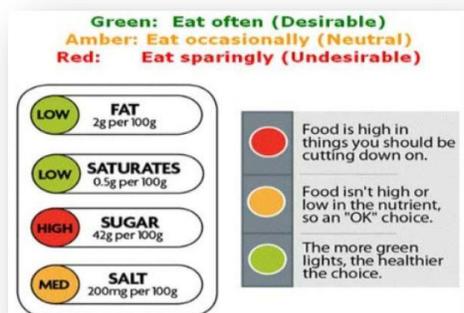
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E-Paper

India's food sector attacks government health-labelling plan

An Indian government plan to adopt new food labelling regulations that mandate detailed nutrition information on the front of packaging in a fixed format is being bitterly opposed by the industry.

Subod Jindal, president of All India Food Processors' Association, accused the Indian authorities of "damaging the sector", adding: "They are hell bent on doing it."



He was commenting on draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2018 issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which includes authorisation for the regulator to introduce a traffic-lights warning system on food packs. The proposal says the FSSAI could, if it chose, introduce a "colour-coding system", including marking potentially unhealthy foods with a red-light symbol.

Jindal commented: "If the half of the front of the label is covered with a big table giving salt, sugar, fat and such things in a particular design, then the remaining valid information which the consumer needs to select the product gets compressed. Also the entire range of brands on the shelf will look alike."

He warned such labelling changes would cost manufacturers millions of rupees to change their labels and designs. And this would be a significant problem for smaller brands: "While the large companies can do that within few months the millions of [small-and-medium-sized food companies] will take much longer," he said.

The FSSAI has already completed its own internal review of the regulation and a spokesperson said it could come into force as early as June. "We will proceed gradually and give the manufacturers some time to clear off their existing inventory," he said.

However, Jindal was not happy with this schedule, noting that the regulator was not helping the industry and should heed its warnings and amend the final regulation to take account of its concerns.