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E-Paper

ALL NON-EDIBLE ICE TO BE IN BLUE COLOUR *Archana Jyoti*

How many times have you doubted the quality of the ice used in food and juices or say ice golas being sold in the open market? From June 1, however, you will be able to distinguish edible ice from non-edible ice as the latter will have a blue tinge.

Taking cue from Maharashtra, the country's top food regulator, Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed the food controllers across the States to ensure that manufacturers use blue colour in manufacturing industrial ice to differentiate it from edible ice which remain colourless.

A month ago, Maharashtra Government, taking into consideration that 70 per cent of the edible ice used by the food vendors in the State was found to be contaminated, directed the businesses involved in the manufacturing of industrial ice to use blue colour to differentiate it from the edible ice.

Now, the FSSAI has decided to replicate the order pan India, a senior official from the Authority said. Prone to harmful bugs like E-Coli, contaminated ice can leave one sick.

E-coli can cause problems in lungs and intestines and some people can contract pneumonia as well, said the official.

"The use of non-edible ice which is made from non-potable water for edible purpose is a health hazards. Similarly, incorrect use of non-edible ice for preservation/storage or transportation of food commodities may lead to contamination of such food commodities.

"It has been observed that in the absence of any visible distinguish between the edible and non edible ice, the latter is being diverted for the edible purpose," said the FSSAI circular issued two days ago.

With a view to check the use of non-edible ice as edible ice, it has been decided that food colour (indigo Carmine or brilliant blue upto 10 ppms must be used in production of non-edible ice and non-edible ice blocks coming in contact with food products during preservation and transportation of perishable food items to give it a bluish look so as to enable clear difference between the two, it added.

State food collectors have been asked to ensure that the order is enforced from June 1.

Industrial ice is used for preservation of dead bodies, and in medicines and cement factories, amongst others.

As per the regulations, edible ice is considered as food under the Act However, it has come to the notice that both the edible as well as non-edible ice are made from the

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same water, which sometimes is contaminated and harmful for human health, the official added.



FSSAI issues training manual for veterinary drug residue analysis in food

Monday, 07 May, 2018, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi

FSSAI, India's apex food regulator, has issued a training manual for the veterinary drug and pesticide residue analysis in food products. It shall be used for programmes like training of trainers to educate the food analysts about analytical techniques to identify such harmful drugs present in the food products.

Experts opined that it would help in taking preventive measures, as the manual prescribed the prohibited drugs and their maximum residue levels (MRLs).

The current manual borrows the majority of its content and structure from the Training of Trainers (ToT) manual prepared by the International Food Safety Training Laboratory (IFSTL) partners, the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN).

It will help food testing labs primarily in routine monitoring, determination and control of residues of some veterinary drugs in animal products.

The manual consists of analytical techniques and methods in the form of standard operating procedures for testing selected veterinary drug residues in some animal products. It covers a number of chromatographic-spectrometric techniques.

According to the experts, the presence of residues of banned substances/substances permitted but exceeding the prescribed limits by the regulatory authorities in case of veterinary drugs, pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutically active substances in products of animal origin (like muscle, liver, kidney, fish-flesh, egg, milk, honey, etc.) and from various species (like bovine, ovine, porcine, caprine, poultry, rabbit, farmed fish, etc.) is a matter of concern for public health.

As a consequence, national food safety authorities and regulatory authorities have either banned its use or strictly regulated its use in veterinary practice or established legal guidance to ensure proper use of these substances.

"The successful implementation of national regulation and surveillance monitoring depends on availability of reliable analytical techniques. Various techniques are available, employed and are in practice like immunoassay for screening and liquid

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chromatography with ultra-violet, fluorescence detection and mass spectrometry to determine and identify the commercially available veterinary drugs, pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutically active substances in products of animal origin,” said the manual.

Explaining the manual, Ashwin Bhadri, chief executive officer, Equinox Labs, said, “It is an issue which was long awaited and had to be resolved for public welfare. The advent of a training manual is for the optimum utilisation of veterinary drugs, which will benefit tremendously and prevent the outburst of its consequences.”

“The training manual educates about analytical techniques which can be implemented to test selected veterinary drug residues which are proved to be harmful. With this initiative of FSSAI, there will be a clarification on list of drugs which are prohibited and the MRLs,” he added.

Also, out of the two analytical techniques that are at the disposal, one can use either the screening or the confirmatory methods, whichever proves to be convenient and economical.

“Nevertheless, the use of such methods will only add to consumer safety and hygiene. This will emphasise on the Indian veterinary drug standards, ensuring trust in consumers and suppliers and achieving toxin-free food products,” he concluded.



FSSAI selects Pristine Organics to address inborn errors of metabolism

Saturday, 05 May, 2018, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

Our Bureau, Bengaluru

Pristine Organics has been selected as the only company in India by FSSAI to address the inborn errors of metabolism (IEM) issue.

The country's apex food regulator has begun to recognise genetic conditions, such as IEM, as an issue and has set up a new initiative, Diet4Life, to address the same.

The platform addresses various issues such as diet, healthcare and support groups to adopt the right approach towards IEM management.

The five companies chosen to address the issue were Abbott Nutrition, Mead Johnson Nutrition, Nestle and Danone (Nutricia).

Pristine Organics, which is based in Bengaluru, is the only Indian company to address the IEM issue.

Inborn errors of metabolism is a rare genetic (inherited or congenital) disorder, in which the human body cannot properly turn the food into energy for the body consumption.

This type of a disorder is usually caused by defects in specific proteins or enzymes that helps break down or metabolise the parts of food.

Children are affected by this are unable to survive beyond the age of one due to complications caused by protein build-up in the body.

In India, the diagnosis is extremely limited because of the lack of awareness amongst people.

IEM cases in India often go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed. Children with IEM disorders tend to reflect different symptoms and signs based on the type of enzymes that are lacking in their metabolism.

Typically, one in 2,497 newborn suffers from this condition, and often don't survive due to the misdiagnosis and the lack of awareness about the condition.

A special IEM diet is required for these children to be able to process the food and get

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the required nutrition for growth at the same time.

IEM diets can be formulated for specific condition. As IEM diets help in management of the condition and increase the lifespan of the child, recent technological advancements such as enzyme replacement, gene therapy and organ transplantation have opened doors for treatment of IEM.

“We have children from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, Rainbow Hospital, Hyderabad, and hospitals in Bengaluru and Chennai using diets for IEM. Their nutrition, growth and development are no longer stunted,” said K C Raghu, founder and managing director, Pristine Organics.

The Bengaluru-based company caters to over 500 IEM patients. It can provide the required diet at a fraction of the costs, being an Indian company with its research and development (R&D) and manufacturing facilities in India.

Previously, it was imported from Abbott Nutrition, Mead Johnson Nutrition, Nestle and Danone (Nutricia), and that cost a lot.

FSSAI has entered a partnership with professional organisations, healthcare professionals and corporate to address the challenge that plagues our society.

The treatment process in the initial years of IEM discovery was the restriction of dietary proteins, which resulted in malnourished children with further complications.



Roundtable on reducing foodborne illnesses FSSAI's new food safety step

Thursday, 03 May, 2018, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

Our Bureau, New Delhi

An expert's roundtable on Reducing Foodborne Illness: Strengthening Surveillance Capabilities and Epidemiological Investigations was organised at FSSAI recently. The collaboration between the country's apex food regulator and the industry on promoting science-based food safety took another step towards tackling the enormous burden of foodborne illnesses in the country.

In 2016, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CHIFSS, a partnership initiative on food safety sciences between the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Hindustan Unilever (HUL) to promote science-based food safety.

Foodborne disease burden is a global concern both in terms of human suffering and economic costs. The Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG), set up by the World Health Organization (WHO), in its 2015 report, estimated that the global burden of foodborne illnesses in 2010 was 600 million cases worldwide, with 4,20,000 deaths.

The burden in South-East Asia alone (including India) is about 150 million cases and 1,75,000 deaths with India having the highest mortality for children aged below five years' age and an estimated economic burden of foodborne illnesses.

A recent report of the Wageningen University and International Livestock Research Institute estimated that the annual economic costs of foodborne illness were to the tune of \$28 billion.

This roundtable was jointly organised by FSSAI and CHIFSS, and supported by the American Society of Microbiology, with the intention of bringing together relevant stakeholders of the country comprising

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regulatory bodies, government, research institutes, healthcare professionals, public messaging services and industries on a common platform to address the foodborne illness burden in India, and to develop a roadmap for monitoring and mitigating the disease burden in India.

The meeting was attended by key international and national stakeholders, including the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA and India office, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The technical sessions provided an overview of the current scenario for monitoring and burden of foodborne illnesses in India and international experts shared experiences from other countries.

This was followed by group discussions across three critical pillars: overall burden of foodborne illnesses; outbreaks and epidemics, and enabling mechanisms for management and control of foodborne illnesses.

Each group identified short, medium and long-term action plans which were shared in the concluding session. The output of group discussion will be sharpened into an implementation plan which will be discussed with key stakeholders.

Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, said that India is moving towards the direction of making a well-developed food network, but still a lot of work is to be done.

He highlighted the presentations from WHO on IHIP and the US experience, including the case studies and gave the attendees very good pointers of what can be achieved through a robust surveillance system like identifying the pathogen, the root cause and issue food recalls.

In order to undertake more effective surveillance and investigation of foodborne illness in India, Agarwal emphasised the importance of connecting the new information technology- (IT) based FSSAI system, the IHIP system and the food testing lab network in a seamless manner.

In this way, the attendees can complete the entire loop of prevention by identifying the cause of the illness right up to the level of the food businesses and undertaking corrective actions and food recalls.

Agarwal also stressed the importance of such a meeting and highlighted the responsibilities shared by each of the stakeholders in achieving the

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overall agenda of reducing the foodborne illness burden of the country.