



FFRC marks World Milk Day to spread word about drinking fortified milk

Saturday, 02 June, 2018, 08 : 00 AM [IST]

The Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC), housed in FSSAI, observed World Milk Day - established by the United Nations' (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and celebrated on June 1 every year - to commemorate the dairy sector's contributions to sustainability, economic development, livelihoods and nutrition, and spread the message about adding milk fortified with Vitamins A and D to one's daily diet to make it balanced.

To do so, it planned a series of interactive and engagement activities via on-ground activation and social media campaigns throughout the day centred around the theme Raise A Glass - Say Cheers with Fortified Milk. The event was held to create awareness around food fortification and the cost-effective benefits it offers to everyone without a change in food habits.

Vitamin A deficiency is already a public health concern and the growing Vitamin D deficiency is highly prevalent in the Indian subcontinent, with an occurrence of 70 to 100 per cent in the general population, according to the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health.

The only source of Vitamin D is sunlight exposure from 11am to 1pm, mushrooms, fatty fish, etc. To bring about a change in the present situation, FFRC, in collaboration with Tata Trusts, World Bank, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), plans to take forward, fortification of milk with Vitamins A and D.

The fortification of milk with Vitamins A and D is a cost-effective and sustainable strategy to address the rising incidences of VDDs among Indians. It not only deals with the problem of micronutrient malnutrition effectively, but has several other benefits for the consumers.

The fortification of staple foods does not require people to change their dietary habits. It does not affect the taste, smell or colour of the fortified food and has a widespread reach amongst the vulnerable groups.

To help consumers in identifying fortified food through just a glance, a logo (+F for fortified

FSSAI IN NEWS

foods) has been notified by FSSAI for fortified food products.

FFRC is working to scale up the process of milk fortification in India by engaging food business operators (FBOs), states and ensuring the supply of fortified milk through government programmes, namely Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the Mid-Day Meal scheme (MDM) and the public distribution system (PDS).

Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, stated, “Milk is an integral part of our daily balanced diets, and World Milk Day is the perfect time to create awareness around the importance of consuming fortified milk among the general public.”

“Opting for milk that is fortified with Vitamins A and D is an effective means to inculcate healthy eating habits and create awareness around VDD, which is prevalent in both young children and adults, equally,” he added.

Agarwal stated, “Opting for fortified foods (with +F symbol) is a simple and inexpensive way to address micronutrient deficiencies without any radical change in behavior or eating patterns.”

On the occasion of World Milk Day, he urged people to pledge for “Eating Right; Eating Fortified”, mentioning that fortified foods were now readily available across the country.

The event saw several engaging activities that were intended to generate strong public interest and participation.

Activation in three of Delhi and the National Capital Region’s (NCR) most frequented malls, namely Select City Walk, Saket, GIP, Noida and Ambience, Gurgaon, with the mascots created by FSSAI, Master and Miss Sehat, educated people on the importance of fortified milk. There were various child-centric activities like face painting, tattoo-making, quiz competition for adults, etc. These were carried out to encourage the consumption of milk everyday.

Informative standees on Mother Dairy and DMS outlets throughout Delhi were placed to inform consumers about the benefits of fortified milk.

FFRC has an ongoing social media engagement plan to encourage consumers to buy and drink fortified food products every day.

The event saw overwhelming response from people who actively participated in event related activities.

Sharing their experiences, most parents said, “The event has been a great source in educating us about the importance of giving our children and other family members, only fortified milk. +F all the way!”

FSSAI IN NEWS

Observing the enthusiastic participation of citizens and partners alike, FFRC believed that this event will further the importance of making fortified milk a part of people's day-to-day lives.