

Acreage of certified organic production rising: FSSAI chief

Speaking on food tests carried out by the FSSAI, Rita Teotia said "3-4 per cent" samples are found to be unfit for consumption.

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Representative image

PANAJI: Organic food production in the country is still low and the Union Agriculture ministry's Participatory Guarantee Scheme is expected to raise levels by bringing in more farmers, Rita Teotia, chairperson of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said on Monday.

The Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a process of certifying organic products which ensures the agriculture production process is in accordance with the standards

laid down and that desired quality has been maintained. It is exhibited in the form of a documented logo or a statement.

"The certified organic food production is still very low. The PGS brings together peer group of farmers and the costs are low. It is being popularised," Teotia said on the sidelines of a function of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation's (WHO) Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA).

"Several farm produce is naturally organic but they are not certified. Like in the north-east states, farmers don't use pesticides or fertilisers. So their produce is naturally organic. But from the consumer point of view, certain level of certification is needed," she added.

She said the efforts of the FSSAI are resulting in acreage under certified organic production increasing nationwide.

Speaking on food tests carried out by the FSSAI, Teotia said "3-4 per cent" samples are found to be unfit for consumption.

Elaborating on measures taken to tackle the problem, she said, "We carried out a national milk survey last year. We are working on vegetables, oils and spices. Our effort is to ensure rigorous inspection of high-risk products," she said.