

## Stress on safety at every stage of food chain at seminar on Food Safety Day

Wednesday, 12 June, 2019 Vijetha Iyer, Mumbai

Building awareness among masses and keeping food safe at every stage of the food chain were the two key points that were emphasised at a seminar organised on the occasion of Food Safety Day. Food safety experts shared opinions and expertise on the subject and called for a multilevel approach while speaking at the event organised by FSSAI, along with AFST(I) Mumbai chapter.

Dr Yogesh Kamat, director, FSSAI-Western Region, in his keynote address said that food safety has a critical role in ensuring food stays safe at every stage of the food chain.

“Promoting healthy eating habits at school, home and other places is a must,” he said.

The chief guest, Prof. G D Yadav, VC-ICT, in his address, said, “Demand for food is driven by population growth and rising calorie consumption. Many young children have been going through malnutrition. The protein content, fat, carbohydrate in food is really important. The food should be washed properly before use. Cereals, fruits and vegetables should be properly transported and preserved without contamination.” He added that the food industry also needed to look into the effects of climate change on supply of food items.

Chinmayee Deulgaonkar, MD, Foodchain ID, spoke on hygiene. She said, “Hygiene is foundation to food safety, but food safety is beyond hygiene. Process control plays a vital role in maintaining food safety. The global standards define FSMS as a combination of HACCP, VACCP and TACCP. If food safety is the DNA of the organisation, the certification is just the endorsement.”

Amongst others Dr Krishna Methekar, Nilesh Lele and Jayanti Kathale were also present at the event.

Meanwhile, private institutions also celebrated the World Food Safety Day. Ashwin Bhadri, CEO, Equinox Labs, states, "We at Equinox are driving new initiatives like The Orange Book under FSSAI, that has the potential to uplift the quality and nutrition standards among people. We are a team of 300+ auditors, the company has one of the largest reaches in the country. It has expanded its reach exponentially across 100 cities pan-India. Recently, we have also taken the initiative to create more awareness among people with the help of various social media sites."

He added, "On the occasion of food safety day, we made videos on adulteration and household methods to detect them using the Dart Book developed by FSSAI. Along with this we also made a video of food vendors pledging to follow all food safety norms stated by FSSAI."

“We posted images showing the importance of food safety and why people should follow them. As a company Equinox mainly aims to stand together with FSSAI to achieve food safety in every possible

way and to avoid dangerous food incidents across the globe. Their aim is to access sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food which is key to sustaining life and promoting good health," he said.

World Food Safety Day, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, was celebrated on June 7, 2019, under the theme "Food Safety, Everyone's Business."

In an estimate of 600 million, almost 1 in 10 people in the world fall ill after eating contaminated food and 420,000 die every year, resulting in the loss of 33 million healthy lives every year.

Food safety is the need of the hour considering the statistics that have been out by the World Health Organization (WHO). Studies also show that children under five years of age carry 40% of the food-borne disease burden, with 125,000 deaths every year. Diarrhoeal diseases are the most common illnesses resulting from the consumption of contaminated food, causing 550 million people to fall ill and 230,000 deaths every year.

Food safety is used as a scientific discipline describing handle, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent food-borne illness. The occurrence of two or more cases of a similar illness resulting from the ingestion of a common food is known as a food-borne disease outbreak. This includes a number of routines that should be followed to avoid potential health hazards.

Food can transmit pathogens which can result in the illness or death of the person or other animals. The main mediums are bacteria, viruses, mould and fungus. It can also serve as a growth and reproductive medium for pathogens. In developed countries, there are intricate standards for food preparation, whereas in lesser developed countries there are fewer standards and less enforcement of those standards. Another main issue is simply the availability of adequate safe water, which is usually a critical cause in spreading the diseases. In theory, food poisoning is 100% preventable.