

FSSAI asks food business operators to gear up for rigorous inspection regime

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New Delhi: Food regulator FSSAI will launch "rigorous" inspections on food companies to ensure that best standards are followed as part of its effort to build trust among people about the safety and quality of cooked or packaged products, its CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said Thursday. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will also conduct surveys on many food products being sold in the market to check quality, he said, adding a survey on milk and dairy products has recently been done.

"Our mandate is to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption. We have taken initiative in last few years to create demand for such foods. Businesses will make it available only if consumer demands," Agarwal said at a CII conference on Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory summit here.



However, he said an average, Indian citizen is still not confident about safety of packaged or cooked food. "We need to do something to bring trust among people".

Agarwal highlighted various initiatives being taken to create visibility of FSSAI, develop new ecosystem for training/audit of food safety officers, strengthen testing labs and energise state enforcing agencies.

Now, he said the FSSAI would focus on creating a "culture of self-compliances" for food businesses as well as for labs and audit agencies.

"Food businesses now have to be geared up for rigorous inspection regime," Agarwal said, adding that regulator through this inspection would verify whether food companies are complying with standards laid by it.

"We will also conduct surveys and huge surveillance to find out risk. We need to find problem area and make efforts to fix it, then only people's trust can be build," he said. The surveys and surveillance effort would help in generating robust data for the regulator.

Agarwal informed that the government has recently permitted creation of about 800 posts in the authority, but still the strength would be lower than many other countries.

Therefore, he said, the FSSAI is making efforts to create network of partnerships with scientific, research and academic institutions to fulfil its mandate.