

## **FSSAI notifies Food Fortification Regulations; FBOs must comply by Jan 1**

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FSSAI has notified the Food Fortification Regulations, 2018, while food business operators (FBOs) need to comply with the provisions of these regulations by January 1, 2019.

“The provisions of these regulations shall supersede the standards for fortification of food set out in any regulations, orders, or guidelines issued under the Act,” said the notification.

The new standards now provide a minimum and maximum range for fortification of staples like wheat flour (atta), maida, rice, salt, vegetable oil and milk, while the dosage of the micronutrients has been adjusted to provide 30 to 50 per cent of the daily requirements.

In milk and oil, the unit of dosage has been changed to microgram Retinol Equivalent for Vitamin A and microgram for Vitamin D from IU. In wheat flour and rice fortification, other sources of iron have been added, while vanaspati fortification has been excluded.

According to the country’s apex food regulator, since the adoption of the standards, 62 top companies and their 110 brands of all five fortified staples are available in the open market across the nation. Leading the movement, the oil and milk industry, with 47 per cent packaged refined edible oil industry and 21 per cent of the organised milk industry is fortifying their products as per FSSAI standards.

“Over two years since the operationalisation of the standards, edible vegetable oil industry has adopted fortification as a best practice. Following this, mandatory oil fortification is proposed to be the way forward,” said Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI.

“As a result of massive advocacy launched by FSSAI and Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC), fortified staples (wheat flour, oil and DFS) are being used in Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme,” he added.

“It has been made mandatory since 2017 by Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development, respectively,” Agarwal said.

“As of today, 15 states, like Odisha, Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, West Bengal, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and three Union Territories (UTs) have now adopted

fortification of their chosen commodities at the district or at scale in the government safety net programmes (SNP), namely ICDS, MDM and the public distribution system (PDS),” he told.

FSSAI set up FFRC with the support of TATA Trusts to promote and support large scale implementation of food fortification in the SNP as well as ensure availability of fortified products in the open market. FFRC provides end-to-end technical support as well as advocacy in collaboration with development partners, like TATA Trusts, GAIN, PATH, the World Food Programme (WFP), World Bank and NI.

Welcoming the move, Rachit Kumar, senior consultant, food and beverages, Future Market Insights, said that several governments and non-governmental organisations across the world had already successfully implemented food fortification initiatives at various scales with the help of key stakeholders.

“Considering that fortified food products of all food staples, such as rice, wheat, oil, salt, and milk, are already available on retail shelves and to food processing companies in India, it is only a matter of formality to acknowledge the regulations and promote the use of fortified food products,” he said.

“Companies in the packaging business are likely to partner with small- and mid-tier food producers to offer solutions for incorporating the new packaging and labelling requirements,” he added.

“Initiatives by foundations such as TATA Trusts, PATH, GAIN, FFI, etc. have already established fortified food as a requisite for developing a sustainable nutrition strategy in India” Kumar said.

In October 2016, FSSAI operationalised the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, for fortifying staples, namely wheat flour and rice (with iron, Vitamin B12 and folic acid), milk and edible oil (with Vitamins A and D) and double-fortified salt (with iodine and iron) to reduce the high burden of micronutrient malnutrition in India.

Meanwhile, the +F logo also has been notified to identify fortified foods, while scientific health claims for label declaration of fortified foods approved by the scientific panel on nutrition and fortification were also released.