

# Business Standard

## Regulatory vacuum in dealing with GM food, says FSSAI chief

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Calling Genetically Modified (GM) [food](#) a "contentious issue", [FSSAI Chief Executive Pawan](#) Kumar Agarwal on Monday said there is a regulatory vacuum in dealing with the transgenic [food](#).

Agarwal's comment comes in the wake of a recent laboratory findings by the non-profit [Centre for Science and Environment](#) (CSE), which showed as many as 21 of the randomly picked 65 [food](#) products from different [retail outlets](#) in the country were found GM-positive.

"GM food is very contentious issue. There is a regulatory vacuum. It is taking time since the GM issue is still evolving. We are working on regulations and we hope the draft will be ready soon. We expect it will clear uncertainty over the GM food," Agarwal told reporters here.

The [Food Safety](#) and [Standards Authority of India](#) (FSSAI) is considering labelling food that have GM ingredients of 5 per cent or more.

Agarwal refused to share salient features of the draft saying they are still under consideration.

However, he said, the "procedural regulations" would consider risk assessment of the GM [food items](#) to be introduced for public consumption, their scientific examination and provisions of appeal for companies against rejection of their products.

He said the draft will be submitted to the government in three-four weeks.

Agarwal admitted that action against adulteration and safety enforcement are not being done at required scale due to lack of manpower with the [food safety](#) regulator.

"Our country is big. We agree that enforcement is not happening at the level it should be. There is need to make it stronger. But the FSSAI does not have its own enforcement staff," he said.

"There is a proposal under consideration to build staff for enforcement. Then enforcement can be done properly with the help of states."

**Agarwal made an appeal to the people to not believe in rumours of "plastic eggs" being sold in the markets saying storage and transport of eggs in higher temperature bring about differences in the smell, texture and appearance.**