

FSSAI Employs Expert Panel For Draft Labeling Regulations

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India's food safety regulator the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided to form a committee comprising of three members to look into the draft food labeling and display regulations, according to reports. One of the regulations that have been proposed is to make red color-coded labels mandatory on packaged food products which are high in sugar, fat and salt contents.

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“The pre-draft was earlier sent to the Health Ministry for finalization. However, industry stakeholders have expressed concerns. So we have decided to set up a panel of experts with health and nutrition background to look into the draft regulations,” said Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI. He also said that these front-of-the-pack labels are required in order to create more awareness about healthy and unhealthy food products among consumers.



B. Sesikeran, former director of National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) is reported to lead the panel of experts, that comprises current NIN director Hemalatha and AIIMS' Nikhil Tandon.

It is to be noted that FSSAI had recently said that it is open to suggestions from industry stakeholders and that it will also look at labeling regulations adopted by other nations. The draft labeling regulations were released in April.

INSPIRATION FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

According to the publication, George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International, said that India can learn from the best practices of labeling and trans-fat regulations from other countries such as Denmark, Norway, and Singapore. He also added that the consultation attempted to begin a dialogue among stakeholders on the proposed draft labeling regulations.

Several leading F&B companies have recently pledged to FSSAI's Eat Right Movement and have announced that they will reduce salt, sugar, and fat in their products. It is reported to be likely that FSSAI will push more and more companies to voluntarily make such commitments in the future.