

On World Food Day, Dr Vardhan launches Food Safety Mitra scheme



New Delhi, Oct 16(UNI) Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Wednesday emphasised that the 'Eat Right India' movement is a crucial trigger for the much needed social and behavioural change and this along with the 'Fit India' Movement' can achieve huge success if the right strategy is adopted and efforts are made to reach out to every section of the society.

Addressing a function to commemorate World Food Day 2019 with the theme 'Healthy Diets for a Zero Hunger World', Dr Vardhan said, 'By motivating key players in the system who can reach out to people at large, we can reach out to each and every individual. We have to include every section of the society so that Eat Right India becomes a country wide movement.'

He also launched the 'Food Safety Mitra (FSM)' scheme, along with the 'Eat Right Jacket', and 'Eat Right Jhola' to strengthen food safety administration and scale up the 'Eat Right India' movement.

Dr Vardhan stated that people should adopt Gandhiji's messages of eating less, eating safe and healthy food, and also reduce wastage of food while developing the habit of sharing surplus food. Citing the example of polio to highlight multi-sectoral approach, he said, 'All of us have to take up this responsibility in our own capacities. I believe that together we will be able to develop new approaches to combat challenges to health and society.'

Highlighting the critical importance of a Jan Andolan on issues around food safety, Dr Vardhan said small positive actions can be performed by individuals or organisations to strengthen the cause of food safety and food wastage.

The 'Food Safety Mitra' scheme will support small and medium scale food businesses to comply with the food safety laws and facilitate licensing and registration, hygiene ratings and training. Apart from strengthening food safety, this scheme would also create new employment opportunities for youth, particularly with food and nutrition background.

The FSMs would undergo training and certification by FSSAI to do their work and get paid by food businesses for their services. The first batch of 15 FSMs were awarded certificates today.

The 'Eat Right Jacket' launched today will be used by the field staff. This jacket has a smart design to hold tech devices like tablets or smart phone, a QR code and RFID tag for identification and tracking. Apart from providing safety to field staff on duty, this would bring in efficiency, professionalism and transparency in food safety administration and bring in a sense of ownership and visibility of FSOs.

The 'Eat Right Jhola', a reusable cloth bag shall replace plastic bags for grocery shopping in various retail chains. Since on repeated use, bags are often contaminated with microorganisms and bacteria, proper and regular washing of cloth bags is essential to ensure safety and hygiene. These cloth bags are being provided on rental basis through a private textile rental service company.

FSSAI has partnered with the Domestic Workers Sector Skill Council (DWSSC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to launch a training course for domestic workers and homemakers across the country. In the first phase, one lakh domestic workers and homemakers will be trained through training partners of DWSSC in association with RWAs. This would be scaled up in due course.

For scaling up the Eat Right India movement across the country, FSSAI has got endorsement of several celebrities. Two short films, on repurposing of used cooking oil into biodiesel and, nutrition in the first 1000 days of life featuring Indian Cricket team Captain Virat Kohli and Bollywood actress Juhi Chawla respectively, were released on the occasion.