FSSAI issues order on rejecting imported foods claiming to be organic

Tuesday, 07 August, 2018
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FSSAI has issued an order on import of organic food products, directing all the state food authorities to reject all the imported food consignments which claimed to be organic, but do not comply with the food safety regulations.

The Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 was notified under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 in December 2017, and food business operators (FBOs) were directed to comply with all the provisions of the said regulation by July 2018.

Thus, as per FSSAI, all the food products imported to India, which claimed to be organic are supposed to comply with the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, in addition to the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017.

FSSAI, in its order, stated, "In case the imported food consignments do not comply with the organic regulations and above instructions, the same will be rejected and the importer or clearing house agent (CHA) will have to follow the due procedure of review application as in the Food Safety and Standards (Import) Regulations."

The order, meanwhile, spoke about the relaxation for the consignments which were exported to India before July.

"However, the import consignments claimed as organic food items, which were exported before July 2018, but have reached on or after July 2018, may be given relaxation for compliance to the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017," the order said. After meeting several stakeholders, FSSAI, in June 2018, had allowed the use of non-detachable stickers with respect to the apex regulator's organic logo up to September 30, 2018.

And, FBOs manufacturing, processing or handling organic food were asked to obtain licenses under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, or get the organic food endorsed in their existing licenses through the food licensing and registration system (FLRS) till Sept 30, 2018.