

FSSAI urges state food safety depts to comply with organic food norms

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The country's apex food regulator issued a directive to all the state food safety authorities to gear up for the implementation of the Food Safety Standards (Organic Food) Regulations, 2017, with which all the food business operators (FBOs) were required to comply by April 1, 2019.

However, FSSAI stated that after careful consideration of the representation received, state food authorities were instructed that these regulations may be considered as enabling regulations, and should not be considered for prosecution, particularly for small original producers and producers' organisations during the initial phase of its implementation till April 1, 2020.

The apex food regulator has advised the state food safety departments to consider that the provisions of direct sale of organic food to end consumer by small/original producers and organisations having an annual turnover not exceeding Rs 12 lakh was permitted and may be allowed to sell organic food without any certification, i.e. NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production)/PGS (Participatory Guarantee System)-India.

Further, direction stated that the aggregators/intermediaries who often help small farmers to sell the produce to end consumer may be allowed to sell products without any certification, i.e. NPOP/PGS-India.

And in both the above mentioned cases, the organic food is also exempted from bearing the Jaivik Bharat Logo.

However, FSOs (food safety officers) have been asked to ensure that the limits of contaminants and insecticide residues were complied with as specified in the regulations.

Organic food retail companies are required to comply with all the requirements of the regulations.

According to FSSAI, several representations were received by the FSSAI regarding the challenges faced in the implementation of the regulations by the organic food businesses, including small original producers.

It is pertinent to mention that the regulations were to be implemented by July 1, 2018,

while FSSAI has asked the FBOs to get license in this regard by September 30, 2018 and a January 24, 2019 notification by the regulator deferred the use of the Jaivik Bharat logo by April 1, 2019.