

FSSAI to review packaging regulations to accommodate eco-friendly materials

Monday, 14 October, 2019

Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will review its packaging regulations to accommodate more environment-friendly materials. This will help the companies to look for materials which can be substitute to single-use plastic, according to FSSAI.

Although, the government, for the moment, has decided to put a hold on the issue of banning single-use plastic considering its impact on overall economy and employment, the FSSAI seems to be ready to meet the challenges that such a ban will bring forth.

In this regard, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, stated, “Plastics are most widely used in the food and beverages sector and therefore food businesses have greater responsibility in managing plastic waste.”

He, however, pointed towards the role of the FSSAI in the whole process and added that the apex food regulator would help the companies to migrate to alternatives of single-use plastic.

Agarwal stated, “FSSAI was thus far concerned only about safety of packaging material, now FSSAI would also focus on sustainability of food packaging. It would review all its regulations, particularly packaging regulations and view them with sustainability lens. It would also promote reduction in use of plastics in food packaging, find suitable alternatives and ensure that plastic used is recycled and businesses participate in collection and recycling of plastics.”

Meanwhile, according to FSSAI, 22 of the top food companies including multinational companies committed themselves to effectively manage plastic waste in their operations and reduce their plastic footprint in the coming years. They signed a voluntary pledge in this regard.

Further, FSSAI has kick-started a campaign for safer and sustainable food packaging. There are materials, which could be considered, like glass, bamboo, compostable plastic, however, according to sources, FSSAI would look into the possibility of allowing such materials for the purpose of food packaging only after ascertaining their food safety.

It is pertinent to mention here that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a ban on single-use plastic, the government was expected to announce a ban on the same.

It was also reported earlier that the Department of Consumer Affairs had already started talks with the industry in this regards while the Central Pollution Control Board had finalised the list of the items to be banned.