

## **Separate standards soon for frozen peas, beans, cauliflower and spinach: FSSAI**

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**E-paper**

Companies in the business of selling frozen peas, beans, cauliflower and spinach may soon have to follow standards for hygiene, stability of colour and flavour before the vegetables are packaged.

For the first time, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on setting separate standards for the four categories of frozen vegetables. It has released draft regulations for these vegetables seeking stakeholders' comments. The standards will be part of the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Amendment Regulations 2018.



Currently, there are regulations for thermally processed vegetables, ready-to-eat vegetables, canned tomatoes and frozen vegetables. Frozen vegetables, is a segment which is growing in strong double-digits, owing to growing demand from urban consumers.

The draft regulations have also proposed for tolerance of visual defects such as blemishes and limits for extraneous vegetable material. In addition, the draft proposes regulations for labelling of these frozen vegetables depending on whether they are packaged as whole, cut, sliced or chopped format. For instance, in case of frozen spinach, it will need to be labelled as whole spinach, cut spinach, chopped spinach or pureed spinach.

These regulations are getting finalised at a time when many companies are looking to get into the frozen vegetable segment. While Mother Dairy is one of the key players in this segment, recently Patanjali launched frozen peas, sweet corn and mixed vegetables in the packaged forms. Other companies such as ITC are also looking at this space, at a time when the government has been focusing on reduction of wastage by increase in processing of agricultural produce to increase farmers' income.

Over the past two years, the FSSAI has been working on filling gaps as well as revising standards for various categories of processed food products.

Last month, the regulator had notified comprehensive standards for all pulses and new standards for pearl millet grains, maize flour, sago flour, bee wax and spring water. It also recently revised standards for honey to check adulteration through artificial colours and sugars.