

Fortified rice kernels to be categorised as premix under category 99

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Fortified rice kernels (FRKs) will be now treated as premix under Category 99 of the Food Categorisation Code. FSSAI, through a letter, has clarified that the broad category of FRKs will fall under Category 99, as it is a premix sub-category 99.5 – nutrient and its preparations.

The clarification has come in continuation with the country's apex food regulator's recently-issued letter, which had clarified that premixes be licensed under Category 99 of the Food Categorisation Code.

FSSAI stated that any intermediary products/premixes which are not for direct consumption and are to be added to the final formulation, shall fall under the Category 99 of Food Categorisation Code.

Such premixes can be licensed in one of the following categories as per eligibility: Category 99 - Substances Added to Food - 99.5 – Nutrients and their preparations; 99.6 – Micro-organisms and microbial preparations, and 99.7 – Functional ingredients.

The current letter also provided a license breakdown to the board category of FRK. It states that food business operators (FBOs) producing FRK will have to do registration and get licenses under Sub-category 99.5.

If an FBO is blending FRKs with normal rice, the final product would be fortified rice, which will be licensed under category 99.6, whereas if the same FBO is producing FRK and blending it with rice, he needs to register and obtain a license under two separate categories - one for FRK (i.e. Category 99) and another for fortified rice (i.e. 99.6).

Throwing light on the subject, Nilesh Lele, vice-president, Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (India) [AFST(I)] Mumbai Chapter, explained, “In FSSAI’s Food Categorisation Code, premix were not classified, premixes are generally dry mixes of two or more ingredients/ powders. Some were classified as traditional foods, like idli atta premix, and some were classified as proprietary foods, while others were not classified at all. To eliminate confusion, and make it easy for FBOs, FSSAI has now classified premixes and FRK in Category 99, which will be very helpful.”

An official from FSSAI, said, “There is already a law for licensing for premix. However, the industry and FBOs were confused regarding its category, i e, under which category will it be included. Thus, this letter has been issued in this regard.”

According to Future Market Insights, the global food premix market is likely to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.4 per cent over the forecast period (2017-2027). In terms of revenue, the market is expected to be valued at \$2,156 million by the end of 2027.