

FSSAI releases SOPs for FSOs to ensure FSSR compliance of organic foods

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E-paper

FSSAI, India's apex food regulator, has released a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the food safety officers (FSOs) to monitor the compliance to the Food Safety and Standards Regulations (FSSR) for organic foods.

“It was meant to serve as guidelines to the FSOs to inspect an organic product and traceability-related documentation,” stated a senior FSSAI functionary.

The note released by the FSSAI stated, “Under Regulation 7 of Chapter II of the Organic Food Regulations 2017, the organic food product must comply with all the relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act for additives, contaminants, toxins and residues, along with labelling and packaging, amongst others.

FSOs, therefore, can take samples of the organic products to test for compliance of the provisions.



Under the guidance note, FSSAI has asked the retailers to keep a record of purchase to ensure the traceability and stated that product be bought from a bona fide distributor. The retailer also must maintain trace records of the source of the produce, which may be checked by the FSOs, while in case of fresh produce, suitable evidence may be provided by the retailer on the source of the produce.

“FSOs can check the labelling requirements, the manner in which the organic products were displayed in the shop and draw samples if required,” stated the guidance note.

Under the regulations, the product needs to carry FSSAI's logo for organic product (Jaivik Bharat), while in case of a single-ingredient product, where all requirements have been met, the product may be labelled as organic, and in case a minimum of 95 per cent of the ingredients are certified organic, the product can be labelled as certified organic.

It is pertinent to mention here that the claimed organic food should comply with either of three programmes, namely the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for India, and any other system notified by FSSAI.

Further, the regulations have provisions that organic food which is marketed through direct sales by the small original farmers producers or producer organisations to end consumers are exempted from the provisions of the three programmes.