

FSSAI strives to prevent surplus food waste

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has steered a second round of meeting with 20 surplus food distribution agencies from various parts of the country to discuss the steps taken by government to ensure safe distribution of surplus food.



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FSSAI has gazette notified Food Safety and Standards (Recovery of Surplus Food) Regulations, 2018 on 4 August 2019 to establish a uniform national regulation to protect organisations and individuals when they donate food in good faith. "This regulation will further encourage big food businesses to come forward and donate food to these surplus food distribution agencies. These regulations will be enforced with effect from 1st July 2020," said a FSSAI official.

The meeting was targeted to apprise the surplus food agencies about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring safe food collection and distribution as well as prevention of food waste. "They were also trained on hygiene practices during food collection and distribution under Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC). It will be mandatory for surplus food distribution agencies to register with FSSAI on food licensing portal. FSSAI provided on the spot registration to the agencies attending. At present, 20 such agencies have been registered on FSSAI licensing portal," the official added.

The first meeting on the same topic was organised on 30 July 2019. The meet was attended by 13 Surplus Food Distribution Agencies.

FSSAI has started an initiative called 'Save Food Share Food Share Joy' to create a food recovery ecosystem. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between food companies, surplus food distribution agencies and beneficiaries.

It has also created Indian Food Sharing Alliance (IFSA) - A network of food collection/recovery agencies in India, to create a pan India network of these agencies. The

network serves as a common platform where all the agencies will be equally benefitted with regulatory support, food safety training and capacity building efforts.

At the meet, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, announced free FSSAI registrations for the participating agencies. The forum also provided an opportunity to the surplus food distribution organisations to share their concerns and suggestions to help the network grow.

Representatives from Elan Professional Appliances attended the meeting to present their ideas for ensuring solutions to ensure safe food handling during food recovery and distribution. They have committed to extend CSR support to select agencies in developing their systems for safe food handling. Integrated efforts from government, food businesses and surplus food distribution organisations are necessary to create an ecosystem for prevention of surplus food waste and the initiative is a beginning in this direction.