

Maiden Global Food Regulators meet discusses regulatory challenges, explores ways to boost food safety

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NEW DELHI: The recently-concluded Global Food Regulators Summit (GFRS) 2023 highlighted several initiatives to revolutionize the world's food safety systems.

The maiden global regulators summit was organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in the national capital on July 20 and 21.

The summit witnessed the participation of regulators and experts from various countries, and called for collective action in tackling regulatory challenges for ensuring consumer well-being worldwide.

“Harmonized global regulator regimes can play a crucial role in setting and enforcing standards and regulations to protect

consumer health, promote fair trade practices and maintain public trust in the global food control system”, Dr V K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog said in his address during the opening session.

Key strategies adopted by food regulators in different countries to mitigate food-related risks and challenges were discussed, with a focus on strengthening food safety systems throughout the food value chain.

Raj Rajasekhar, vice chairperson, Codex Alimentarius Commission emphasized on the initiatives taken by Codex in addressing emerging challenges in the area of food safety.

"This platform allows cross fertilization of ideas from experts belonging to different countries and can help in developing a Global model for food safety," he said.

The summit also addressed the issue of Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and explored potential solutions and best practices to combat this global concern. Experts emphasized the need for collaboration and partnerships among global food regulators and organizations, such as FAO, WHO, and OIE, to effectively tackle AMR. Innovative approaches using emerging technologies like nanotechnology to find alternatives to antibiotics were highlighted during the discussions.

The sessions also delved into the topic of 'Contaminants and Residues - Risk Mitigation - Regulatory Intervention', with discussions centered on establishing safety limits and employing mitigation strategies to prevent biological hazards. Harmonizing food safety standards with international agencies was emphasized to address chemical contaminants and pesticide residues effectively.

Additionally, the session on 'Impact of Animal Feed on Food Safety and Human Health' highlighted the need for robust regulation and traceability mechanisms for animal feed to ensure safe food of animal origin for human consumption.

In his keynote address, Prof. Andreas Hensel, president, BfR, Germany said, "Traceability is the backbone of food supply chain". He also spoke about the tools developed by BfR, Germany to establish traceability for improved feed safety.

The summit also recognized the revolutionary impact of innovation in food analysis and techniques to respond to growing consumer concerns about food safety. Adoption of cutting-edge technologies like IoT and Blockchain for traceability, and integration of AI with instrumental analysis for efficient food safety assessments were discussed.

The Global Food Regulators Summit was inaugurated on July 20 by Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

