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Press Release

FSSAI and Industry initiative on capability development for food safety assessment in Novel foods and additives

The FSSAI-Industry collaborations, to strengthen science based food safety capability built in India are progressing rapidly. With the advent of global food supply chains, there is a growing list of novel ingredients and food additives which need safety assessment. At the 5th FSSAI-CHIFSS Public lecture series, **Dr Paul Hepburn**, Programme Director Food & Refreshment, Safety & Environmental Assurance Centre (SEAC), Unilever, UK delivered a talk on “**Food safety Assessment – Novel Ingredients and Additives**”

Dr. Hepburn outlined the critical importance of novel ingredients and additives for ensuing food safety, quality and food security, and explained the scientific safety evaluation principles that enable inclusion of these at safe levels. The concept of ‘exposure’ – milligrams of the ingredient or additive per kg body weight of consuming human being, helped the audience appreciate basics of risk assessment. He showcased risk assessment tools and shared compelling safety evaluation case studies e.g. plant sterols for cholesterol control.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Hindustan Unilever (HUL) had collaboratively set up CHIFSS (CII-HUL Initiative on Food Safety Sciences) and had subsequently signed a MoU with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2016 in order to promote science based food safety.

Mr. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India emphasized on how the Innovations in the food industry and increasing consumer interest in food safety, and the introduction of novel foods that are added to human foods, makes it imperative for the authority to have the safety evaluation of all the new ingredients through a rigorous scientific and risk assessment based framework. He shared how FSSAI, as per Food Safety and Standards (Approval of Non-Specified Food and Food Ingredients) Regulations, 2017, regulated the approval process and safety evaluation of novel food ingredients. FSSAI thus ensures that the foods consumed and sold within our country is safe. He also commended the partnership between FSSAI and CHIFSS that is rapidly building new scientific capability in food safety, through various mechanisms, including Public Lectures. This is establishing a robust and effective food regulatory body in India.

Ms Geetu Verma, Executive Director – Foods, Hindustan Unilever Limited took the audience through the journey of CHIFSS over the last two years. She highlighted the areas where CHIFSS was active and how CHIFSS was firmly establishing a scientific and robust food safety environment in the country. Ms Verma also emphasised the need for expanding such collaborative efforts to enhance food safety in India, in the larger interest of consumer health and safety. She was highly appreciative of CII and FSSAI on the strong partnership and commitment to the vision of science-led food safety, and making CHIFSS a sustainable platform.

The Public lecture was attended by stakeholders including eminent scientists, government officials and professionals from academia and Industry along with students from related fields. Subsequently, Dr. B. Sesikeran, Member, FSSAI panel on Functional Foods, Nutraceuticals, Dietetic Products, other similar products & Former Director, National Institute of Nutrition chaired the session on the “Key

Considerations on Food Safety Assessment – Novel Ingredients and Additives” and discussed some of the priority areas of focus e.g. development of risk assessment approaches, improvement of understanding of concepts like No Observed Effect Level & Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level, Acceptable Daily Intake Level & Safety factors. Audience were highly engaged and participated in the discussions.

This public lecture has set a tone for open and transparent dialogue on ingredients and additives and surely this will pave a way for consumers and stakeholders to enhance trust in our food safety system.

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