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All India Food Processors' Association National Seminar

on

“Millets: The Global Super Food”

Wednesday, 15th March, 2023, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

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AIFPA's participation at the Indian Industry Bodies Meeting on Quality Infrastructure
Organized by Quality Council of India on 16th January 2023 at Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi



Globalization has compelled Indian organizations to look beyond the traditional boundaries and adopt innovative technologies in their processes to cater to the transforming demand. The complex nature of the supply chain, technical barriers in cross-border trade and demonstrating the quality of the products and services pose major challenges for economic growth. Across the world, the significance of Standards, Technical Regulations, and a robust Quality Infrastructure (QI) has become important for industries to enhance their domestic as well as international presence.

QCI organised an Indian Industry Bodies Meeting to discuss the challenges and key issues of the Indian industries related to Quality Infrastructure (QI) and the way forward to overcome the existing gaps. There were discussions on the issues related to policy and institutional framework, experiences of the industry at the sectorial level, and their needs and expectations from the government related to QI.

Dr. Raghav Jadli, President, AIFPA participated in the event and presented a PPT on **“Issues and Challenges at the sectorial level and the Opportunities for Indian Industries in overcoming the Trade Barriers and to comply with the prerequisites to access the Global Market”**.

In his presentation, he shared the perspective of the Indian MSME Food Industry, which is not only meeting the food requirement of its 141 crore population providing them with three meals a day, but also the world population. India is the largest producer & exporter of Rice, Mango Pulp, Spices, Gherkin etc. and this could have been possible only by meeting the high International Quality Standards & Parameters.

A Food Business Operator goes through various implementation of Certifications/Licenses meeting regulatory requirements and frequent changes in the same, which are mostly copy-paste from other countries, are hampering the focus of FBO & Industry Productivity. Indian Food, which is now becoming the taste & nutrition of the Global Community, but changing its Standard & Specifications without discussion with the Industry, Market study & consumption pattern will not only disturb the food habits & nutrition but also hamper the growing International Market.

As China & EU did Co-production from the MNCs & MSMEs industry, there is a need to support the Indian MSME Food Industry in the form of subsidies from the Govt. for continuous up-gradation of in-house lab and frequent analysis which costs lakhs of rupees. Along with QCI, it was suggested that AIFPA could support the accreditation and implementation of the same for the Growth of Indian Food Business in both Domestic & International Markets & meet the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for 'Vocal for Local' and 'Local to Global'.

DD- Kisan's Live Discussion with Experts on Union Budget 2023-24



A live panel discussion was organised by Doordarshan (DD – Kisan) Channel on 1st February, 2023. DD Kisan Channel is a full-fledged television channel for the farmers and it launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi as a new initiative for the inclusive growth of the farmers.

Dr. Raghav N. Jadli, President, AIFPA was invited as a Panelist in the discussion to deliberate on the topic **“GST and Tax related matters for saving perishable and growth of food industry & exports”**.

Dr. Jadli highlighted that the budget is in the interest of farmers which is appreciable, but need of the hour is 'Value Addition and Processing' which is possible only by connecting farmers with the Food Processing Industry and to boost the sector it is important to strengthen the MSMEs Industry.

Dr. Jadli added that the Budget allocation for the Food Processing industry is slightly lesser than what was expected. He further explained that once the industry is linked to the farmers with capital investment, it is as much important that the need for 'working capital' of food processing industry is catered. Strengthening the MSMEs sector will definitely help this goal of connecting farmers with the processors and ensure that the farmers get the right value for their produce. AIFPA extensively focus on evolving the MSME industry and the main concern of this industry is the need for continuous support with regard to working capital.

Also, as 2023 is the International Year of Millets, the value addition of millets is of prime importance. The way Indian Government is promoting millets not only in the country but in the world, is praiseworthy, also there is a good response in terms of demand of millets all over the world.



Inventicon is proud to present their flagship event the '9th Annual Food Quality & Safety Congress India 2023'. Over the past eight years we have brought regulators, F&B manufacturers with analytical services and testing companies together to discuss best practices in aligning food quality and safety systems with changes and instrumentation standards.

Further, the adoption of food safety and quality assurance mechanisms such as Total Quality Management (TQM) including ISO 9000, ISO 22000, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHP) by food processing industry enable adherence to stringent quality and hygiene norms and thereby protect consumer health, prepare the industry to face global competition, enhance product acceptance by overseas buyers and keep the industry technologically abreast of international best standards.

The Food Quality & Safety Congress is the only dedicated conference featuring F&B quality and safety industry leaders, this conference will examine strategies in implementing quality and food safety systems. Delegates will learn how to fast-track an analytical set-up, enhance nutrition quality and comply with the latest food regulations to mitigate risk exposure.

North Zone Chairman, AIFPA & Chief Regulatory Officer, DFM Foods Ltd., Mr. Kajal Debnath, chaired the Session on Day-1 and briefed on “**Driving Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy and Ensuring Transparency and Fairness throughout the Food Supply Chain**” and also participated in the Panel Discussion on “**India's Food Safety Regulations: What does industry need to know**”?

During his session he illustrated new objectives focused on outcome-based regulations that enable innovation and flexibility to introduce new technologies, processes and procedures. Later, he briefed on how the new licensing, preventive control and traceability requirements can help align the domestic food industry with international safety standards, increasing trade opportunities.

The Sessions were designed perfectly for the delegates to gain a comprehensive understanding on the latest cost-effective analytical techniques, best practice strategies for overcoming quality issues, practical solutions to real-life safety challenges and ensure their firm is positioned to comply with latest regulatory guidelines.

RASNA FOUNDER, AREEZ KHAMBATTA AWARDED 'PADMA SHRI' POSTHUMOUSLY



Khambatta is a well-known name for their popular local beverage brand, Rasna. The brand is sold in 18 lakh retail outlets in the country. Rasna is now the world's largest producer of soft drinks, available in dry-concentrate form.

Late Sh. Ariz Khambhatta, Founder and Chairman of Rasna Group has been awarded the '**Padma Shri**' posthumously, in the trade and industry category of Gujarat. Sh. Ariz Khambhatta took the domestic beverage brand Rasna to 60+ countries.

He was also the Former President of WAPIZ (World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarathostei) and Former President of Ahmedabad Parsi Panchayat, as well as Vice President of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman Federation of India. He was also the Chairman of Khambhatta Benevolent Trust and Rasna

Foundation. According to Rasna Group, Khambhatta made important contributions in the field of Indian Industry, Commerce and Social Service.

HIGHLIGHTS OF UNION BUDGET 2023-24

The Union Finance Minister, Smt. Nirmala Sitaraman laid the budgetary proposals for the fiscal 2023-24 in Lok Sabha on Wednesday, 1st February 2023. The Finance Minister called the Budget a blueprint for India@100 (2047).

The budget has set a budgetary proposal of Rs.3287.65 crore for the Ministry of Food Processing Industries for the fiscal 2023-24. Whereas, the proposal of the previous fiscal year was Rs 2941.99 crore and the actual revised budget for the fiscal 2022-23 was 1901.59 crore.

For the current fiscal Rs. 2453.24 crore have been sanctioned for the Centrally-sponsored schemes including Pradhan Mantri Kissan Sampada Yojna (PMKSY) with Rs. 923.24 crore and Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industries (PLIFPI) with Rs. 1530 crore. Also, for the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME), the budgetary proposals are set for Rs.639.05 crore.

According to the budgetary proposals under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana', provision is made for financing schemes of (a) Mega Food Parks Rs. 54.80 crore; (b) Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters Rs. 81.30 crore; (c) Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure Rs. 196.50 crore; (d) Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities Rs. 320.00 crore; (e) Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages Rs. 5.39 crore; (f) Scheme for Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure Rs. 46.50 crore; (g) Scheme for Human Resources and Institutions Rs. 4.96 crore; (h) Committed liabilities under infrastructure related schemes; (i) Operation Greens Rs. 213.59 crore; and (j) Swachhta Action Plan Rs. 0.20 crore.

The Other Budgetary Highlights are:-

- 1. Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture:** It will be built as an open source, open standard and inter operable public good. This will enable inclusive, farmer-centric solutions through relevant information services for crop planning and health, improved access to farm inputs, credit, and insurance, help for crop estimation, market intelligence, and support for growth of agri-tech industry and start-ups.
- 2. Agriculture Accelerator Fund:** It will be set-up to encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas. The Fund will aim at bringing innovative and affordable solutions for challenges faced by farmers. It will also bring in modern technologies to transform agricultural practices, increase productivity and profitability. An **Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program** to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops at an outlay of Rs.2,200 crore.
- 3. Agriculture Credit:** It's target will be increased to Rs.20 lakh crore with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries.
- 4. Fisheries:** A new sub-scheme of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana with targeted investment of Rs 6,000 crore to further enable activities of fishermen, fish vendors, and micro & small enterprises, improve value chain efficiencies, and expand the market.
- 5. Vivad se Vishwas I – Relief for MSMEs:** In cases of failure by MSMEs to execute contracts during the Covid period, 95 per cent of the forfeited amount relating to bid or performance security, will be returned to them by government and government undertakings. This will provide relief to MSMEs.
- 6. Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-Input Resource Centres:** Over the next 3 years, the Government will facilitate 1 crore farmers to adopt natural farming. For this, 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres will be set-up, creating a national-level distributed micro-fertiliser and pesticide manufacturing network.
- 7. Credit Guarantee for MSMEs:** Last year, the Finance Minister proposed revamping the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs. The revamped scheme will take effect from April 1, 2023, through infusion of 9,000 crore in the corpus. This will enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs.2 lakh crore. Further, the cost of the credit will be reduced by about 1 per cent.
- 8. Marine products:** In the last financial year, marine products recorded the highest export growth benefiting farmers in the coastal states of the country. To further enhance the export competitiveness of marine products, particularly shrimps, duty is being reduced on key inputs for domestic manufacture of shrimp feed.
- 9. MSMEs and Professionals:** Micro enterprises with turnover up to Rs.2 crore and certain professionals with turnover of up to 50 lakh can avail the benefit of presumptive taxation. The Minister proposed to provide enhanced limits of Rs.3 crore and Rs.75 lakh respectively, to the taxpayers whose cash receipts are no more than 5 per cent. Moreover, to support MSMEs in timely receipt of payments, the minister proposed to allow deduction for expenditure incurred on payments made to them only when payment is actually made.
- 10. Global Hub for Millets: 'Shree Anna':** The finance minister has also announced that to make India a global hub for 'Shree Anna' (Millets) the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TO REGULATE GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS IN INDIA

Written by the Food Law Team @ PLR Chambers

Introduction

On 18.11.2022, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India ('FSSAI') notified the Draft Food Safety and Standards (Genetically Modified Foods) Regulations, 2022 ('**Draft Regulations**'). This article will first break down the current regulatory framework for Genetically Modified Foods ('**GM Foods**'). Secondly, it will analyse the definitions, procedures of approval and other regulatory requirements for GM Foods under the draft Regulations. Lastly, the requirements under the GM Regulations will be critically analysed.

Current Regulatory Status of Genetically Modified Organisms and Genetically Modified Foods

Genetically Modified Organisms ('**GMOs**') and cells corresponding to any products, including foodstuffs are generally regulated under the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export, and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells Rules, 1989 ('**GM Rules**'). In terms of regulatory bodies, the GM Rules established the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee ('**GEAC**') under the Department of Environment Forests and Wildlife for approval of proposals relating to the release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment. The GM Rules go on to prohibit the import, export, transport, manufacture, process, use, or sale of any hazardous microorganisms of genetically engineered organisms/substances or cells except with the approval of the GEAC.

With specific regard to food items, as of date, the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 ('**FSS Act**') prohibits the manufacture, sale, distribution, and import of genetically modified articles of food. The Draft Regulations have relaxed this implicit ban on genetically modified foods and have proposed a new framework wherein the FSSAI would grant approval for certain genetically modified foods.

Draft Regulations - Definitions

The FSS Act currently defines genetically engineered or modified food as “food and food ingredients composed of or containing genetically modified or engineered organisms obtained through modern biotechnology, or food and food ingredients produced from but not containing genetically modified or engineered organisms obtained through modern biotechnology.” This definition has been replicated in the Draft Regulations. However, the Draft Regulations have created a threefold categorization of GM Foods with varying levels of scrutiny for each category. The categories are as follows –

- i) Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) intended for food use. – Category 1
- ii) Food ingredients produced from GMOs that contain modified DNA – Category 2
- iii) Food ingredients produced from GMOs that do not contain modified DNA. It includes ingredients/additives/processing aids derived from GMOs. – Category 3

Draft Regulations - Framework of Approvals

This section will break down the approval process for all three categories of GM Foods.

- i) **All categories:** Regulation 3 of the Draft Regulations states that no person shall manufacture, pack, store, sell, market, or otherwise distribute or import any food or food ingredient produced from GMOs, except with the prior approval of FSSAI. Manufacturers/Importers of GM foods are required to submit an application in the specified format with the necessary documents and fees.
- ii) **Category 1** – If an FBO desires approval for use of a GMO, it must submit clearance received from GEAC to FSSAI. Further, if the GMO is intended to be used as seeds or other plant-propagating material (cultivation), FBOs must parallelly submit an application to the GEAC, Ministry of Environment Forest, and Climate Change for compliance with GM Rules.

Draft Regulations - Procedure for Approval of GM Foods

The Draft Regulations have provided exhaustive documentation that manufacturers of GMOs need to provide, including details of technical as well as procedural information. This information is provided under Form 1A- Application for the Approval of Foods Derived from Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Form 1A is to be used by manufacturers of GM food as referred to in sub-regulation 2 (a) and (b) of regulation 1 (Category 1 and Category 2). There also exists Form 1B, which asks for significantly fewer details to be provided. Form 1B is to be used by manufacturers of GM food as referred to in sub-regulation 2 (c) of regulation 1 (Category 3).

There are three categories of GM food as detailed in sub-regulation 2 of the Draft Regulations. However, Categories 1 and 2 of GM food are subjected to the same level of scrutiny and regulation. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) intended for food use as well as food ingredients produced from GMOs that contain modified DNA are both subject to equal levels of disclosure under Form 1A.

This is problematic, as it burdens manufacturers of Category 2 GMO foods, even when they are produced from GMOs containing modified DNA and not GMOs themselves. This unequal compliance burden can be seen to be triggered even in situations where there is the presence of merely 1% of the GM ingredient. This can be corrected to ensure a fair and equitable compliance burden by introducing a separate Form for Category 2 Food Business Operators.

This would ease the regulatory burden on them, while still subjecting them to scrutiny as necessary. Easing the regulatory burden will directly reduce the cost of compliance for FBOs engaged in the production of GM Foods and will bolster the nascent GM Foods industry in the country, setting India up as a global leader in this market.

Draft Regulations- Labelling Requirements

Regulation 5 of the Draft Regulations states that all food products in Category 1 and 2 must be labelled with the words 'Contains genetically modified organisms' if the product contains one per cent or more of the GM ingredient considered individually. This label must appear on the front of pack of pre-packaged products and also applies to adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of GM ingredients. An exemption is provided to products falling under sub-regulation 2(c) of regulation 1.

The requirement to provide labelling on the front of pack of pre-packaged products is detrimental to both consumers as well as the manufacturers of GMO Foods. The reason for this is three-fold. Firstly, providing for labelling on the front of the pack means that it will be an insignificant source of information as key information regarding the food product such as Nutritional Information and allergen declarations are provided on the Principal Display Panel as mandated by the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020. Rather than providing any meaningful details, it will merely be lip service. Secondly, it will also serve the purpose of fear-mongering amongst the citizenry who are already sceptical about the general idea of GMOs in food.

Thirdly and most significantly, the Rule 6(7) of the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011 mandate that every package containing GM Food must carry the words 'GM' on its principal display panel, i.e. close all other mandatory information. Providing 'GM' declaration both on the front of pack, as well as principal display panel, would be repetitive and may not serve any significant purpose.

Conclusion

The Draft Regulations have taken a step in the right direction towards providing a comprehensive framework for the regulation and approval of GM Foods. However, the process of approval is cumbersome, especially for Category 1 food products that need parallel approval from both the FSSAI and GEAC. Further, Category 2 food products - Food ingredients produced from GMOs that contain modified DNA are subjected to the same level of scrutiny as Category 1 food products – GMOs intended for food use. This level of scrutiny can be reduced considering that there are significantly fewer regulatory burdens for Category 3 food products - Food ingredients produced from GMOs that do not contain modified DNA. A GM food product containing even 1% of modified DNA is subjected to the same level of regulatory strictness as a GMO intended for food use. This imposes unnecessary burdens on GM Foods with minimal traces of modified DNA.

The labelling requirements under the Draft Regulations mandate that Category 1 and Category 2 GM Foods must be labelled with the words 'Contains genetically modified organisms' if the product contains one per cent or more of the GM ingredient on the Front of the Pack. This information would instead be much more suited to be placed on the Principal Display Panel, as already mandated by the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011.

The average consumer scrutinises the Principal Display Panel to gain insights into the specificities of the food product while the Front of Pack is predominantly considered as the advertisement panel. As a citizenry that is already sceptical of new innovations and technologies in their food products, Front of the Pack declarations could potentially put GM Food Business Operators at an unnecessary disadvantage.

Should you or your business have any queries or questions regarding the GM Draft Regulations, or want us to help you formulate your comments to the authority, please feel free to contact the Food Law Team Partner – Harsh Hiroo Gursahani on harsh.gursahani@plrchambers.com

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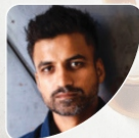
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For stall booking, kindly contact:
Mr. Rameshwar Maurya, Deputy Manager (Events), All India Food Processors Association
Tel.: 011-41550860 (D) ; Mobile: +91-8744088116 ; E-mail: maurya@aifpa.net



FSSAI to allow instant modification in licences for non-high risk products



The FSSAI has decided to allow instant modification in food licences for non-high risk standardised products and the provision will be available only to the existing licensed manufacturers through FoSCoS (Food Safety Compliance System).

According to the FSSAI, generally the modifications in a licence are related to changes in company details such as address, name, communication details, product details, addition of new products in the licence and so on and usually the manufacturers wish to add only standardised products (non-high risk) in the already existing licence.

An official with the FSSAI stated that the matter was examined by the food authority during its 40th meeting and for ease of doing business and streamlining the process of modification of licences, it decided to allow 'Instant Modification' of licence in case of modification applications for the addition of any of the standardised food products under the Vegetable Oil and Processing Units Kind of Business (KoB) and General Manufacturing KoB except the High-Risk Food Categories numbers 01, 08, 09, 13 and 99.

Further, the modification fee shall be Rs 1,000 (plus any differential fee due to change in fee slab within the same category of licence).

At present, all the modification applications have to be scrutinised by the concerned Licensing Authority/Designated Officer for issuance of the modified licence in a similar manner, as that of new licence applications with similar processing time as defined Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses Regulations while the FBOs required to ensure that the Registering or Licensing Authority always has up-to-date information on their food business establishments and shall inform the relevant Authority of any modifications or additions or changes in product category, layout, expansion closure, or any other material information based on which the licence was granted and such information shall be conveyed before the changes occur.

FSSAI extends deadline for health certificate to accompany imported foods



The Indian Food Safety Authority, FSSAI, has decided to further extend the deadline for its order on requirement of 'health certificate' with imported food consignments. The date for implementation of the order is now set for March 1, 2023.

The previous extension was until January 1, 2023. The food authority had issued an order in August 2022 and the subsequent clarification in September on the subject, wherein the FSSAI ordered that from November 1, 2022, the imported consignment of milk & milk products, pork & pork products and fish & fish products were required to accompany by a health certificate issued by a competent authority of the exporting country.

The food authority had also prescribed the format of the health certificate to accompany such imported food categories wherein attestations were required regarding sanitary and food safety related conditions and a general condition that the source animal shall not be fed with feed containing meat or bone meal including internal organs, blood meal and issues of bovine or porcine origin material except milk and milk products and has/have not been manufactured using animal rennet.

Also, in September, FSSAI issued a clarification that an integrated/single certificate incorporating food safety related requirement/attestations is also accepted by FSSAI at the time of import clearance and it may be ensured that integrated certificates shall incorporate all the information as per format notified by the FSSAI in August 2022 order.

Meanwhile, the FSSAI has stated that the decision to extend the implementation by two months until March 1 was taken after considering the request from the WTO members wherein it was conveyed to the Indian Food Authority that many trade partners were in process of adopting the requirement.

Earlier, comments were sought from the WTO members on the subject and after considering the comments received from the trading partners in respect of implementation time, it was decided that the date of implementation of the order shall be extended by two months until January 1, 2023.

FSSAI to give 6 months for FBOs to comply with milk logo norms



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided to give six months to food business operators for compliance with the regulations related to milk logo. The FSSAI has stated that when finalised, six months' time shall be given to FBOs for compliance with the specification of milk logo.

The milk logo was made mandatory through FSS (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Amendment Regulations notified in December '21. However, specifications including dimensions and colour scheme of the milk logo, were yet to be finalised. Subsequently, directions issued by the FSSAI extended the time period for compliance of the notification up to Dec 31, 22.

According to the FSSAI, since the specifications of milk logo were still being finalised, representations have been received from stakeholders for providing an extension of at least six months from the date of issue of such specifications for compliance with the mandatory milk logo required under the amendment regulations. And the food authority has decided to give six months' time for compliance with the specification, after it was notified. It has been decided to extend the timeline for mandatory compliance with the clause 2(iv) of the notification related to milk logo for a period of six months from the date of issue of logo specifications by FSSAI, reads the order.

FSSAI issues comprehensive standards for identification of basmati rice



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has, for the first time, come out with comprehensive standards for the identification of basmati rice as part of efforts to ensure fair trade practises and check adulteration. Basmati rice should have the natural fragrance characteristics of basmati rice, and there should be no artificial colouring, polishing agents, or artificial fragrances. These standards, which have been announced, will go into effect in August of this year.

Basmati rice includes brown basmati rice, milled basmati rice, parboiled brown basmati rice, and milled parboiled basmati rice. The FSSAI has come out with these standards through the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) First Amendment Regulations, 2023, notified in the Indian Gazette.

As per these standards, basmati rice shall possess the natural fragrance characteristics of basmati rice and be free from artificial colourants, polishing agents, and artificial fragrances. These standards also specify various identity and quality parameters for basmati rice, such as the average size of grains and their elongation ratio after cooking.

These norms also state maximum limits for moisture, amylose content, uric acid, defective or damaged grains, and the incidental presence of other non-basmati rice, etc. The standards are aimed at establishing fair practises in the trade of basmati rice and protecting consumer interests, both domestically and globally," the ministry said. These standards will be enforced with effect from August 1, 2023. Basmati rice is a premium variety of rice cultivated in the Himalayan foothills of the Indian subcontinent and is universally known for its long grain size, fluffy texture, and unique inherent aroma and flavour; the ministry highlighted.

FSSAI to operationalise norms related to standards of packaged drinking water



The FSSAI has decided to operationalise the draft regulations related to standards of packaged drinking water (other than mineral water) until the final notification is done. The regulations were related to the value of total dissolved solids, calcium and magnesium. According to the FSSAI, it was decided upon request from the stakeholders seeking time for transition to new regulations.

Representations have been received from the stakeholders seeking transition time for implementation of the direction and after due consideration, the authority has decided to extend the date of implementation for the above direction by 01.07.2023 or until final notification of ibid draft regulations whichever is earlier, reads the direction.

Previously, the FSSAI had issued a direction in May 2022 wherein the date for implementation was set from Jan 1, 2023, and stated that 'no further extension beyond 01.01.2023 shall be provided'.

In the May 2022 direction, the FSSAI published the FSS (Food Products Standards & Food Additives) Amendment Regulations with respect to the value of total dissolved solids, calcium and magnesium based on recommendation of the scientific committee.

And as the process of approval by the food authority was on, and to allow the food businesses to formulate packaged drinking water (other than mineral water), FSSAI stated that it was decided to operationalise the provisions of the amended draft with immediate effect.

The draft proposed that under sub regulation 2.10.8 relating to standards of packaged drinking water of the FSS (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, the permissible limits shall be substituted as total dissolved solids mg/l – 75 to 500, calcium as Ca, mg/l – 10 to 75, and magnesium as Mg, mg/l – 5 to 30.

News Briefs

Rage Coffee introduces easy-to-make coffee sachets with 10X more caffeine



Rage Coffee, a Delhi-based caffeine innovation FMCG company that manufactures, markets, and distributes innovative packaged caffeine-related products, has announced the launch of its 20 ml coffee sachets. The innovatively mobile packaging takes scanty space and spreads happiness through a cup of delicious filter coffee laced with 200 mg of caffeine, which provides an instant electrifying effect to your senses. With a stronger and smoother concoction that has a 10X concentration of caffeine and no bitterness, it will just take three easy steps to prepare a piping hot cup of coffee.

The easiest and most convenient way to sip your favourite beverage includes taking your mug and pouring out all the filter coffee concentrate from the 20-ml sachet into the mug.

The second step entails adding hot milk to the mug, mixing it well with the concentrate, and adding some sugar if needed. The third and final step consists of pouring the concoction of milk and coffee back and forth from one mug to another to achieve a dreamy layer of froth. Voila! Your delightful cup is ready to fuel your day. The rich and aromatic coffee sachets come packed in an elegantly styled box which has five servings of 20 ml sachets.

Articulating his thoughts on the launch of the new product, Mr. Bharat Sethi, founder and CEO of Rage Coffee, said, our brand is consumer-backed to the core by our beloved Ragers; therefore, our main objective is to always bring new ideas to the table that can excite them. Our new coffee sachets are for every coffee lover around the country who craves a powerfully caffeine-stocked cup of creamy coffee on the go. It is the easiest and most convenient way to enjoy a cup of caffeinated bliss in just three easy steps. We couldn't be more excited about this launch, and we are looking forward to developing even more innovative products for our customers this year.

Rage Coffee, being one of the fastest growing FMCG brands in the country, also made an entry into the healthy snacking segment recently with the launch of three exciting new snacks – Coffee Peanut Bars, Caffeine Almond Bars, and Chocolate Oats Cookies. These products provide consumers with apt options in the healthy snacking category as all of them are gluten-free, crafted with natural premium ingredients and contain no preservatives or colourants. These snacks are very handy and have been created for the fitness age where they can be consumed on-the-go.

WOW Life Science launches peanut butter infused with superfoods



In the past three years, the peanut butter category has seen fast growth, and along with this growth, many D2C brands have innovated and given consumers great choices for peanut butter. WOW Life Science, a leading FMCG and wellness brand, has launched its new peanut butter range with a twist. It has been developing an exclusive peanut butter that offers consumers incomparable health benefits.

The internal innovation team developed the first peanut butter with superfoods in India after doing significant customer research and seeking advice from experts, and has introduced two variants: one with super seeds (chia, pumpkin, watermelon, and sunflower) and the other with Sattu (roasted chana powder).

Loaded with these superfoods, WOW Life Science's Peanut Butter is power-packed with protein and nutrients like Omega 3, Vitamin E, and Magnesium. They are 100% natural and have no added sugar, palm oil, preservatives, or emulsifiers. Pure jaggery is also used to sweeten them so they taste good.

According to Mr. Manish Chowdhary, co-founder of WOW Life Science, people of all age groups around the world are fond of peanut butter as a spread, and it has over the years earned the tag of 'healthy snack'. With health and wellbeing increasingly taking precedence over only flavour in food consumption, we at WOW Life Science felt it important to make snacking a perfect combination of health and taste. We have customized our peanut butter line to make it healthier and are excited for consumers to try something different. With nutritious seeds and a desi twist of Sattu, our peanut butter packs a punch and is an energy-boosting snack alternative for many. To bring out the positive attributes of the newly launched peanut butter range, WOW Life Science will soon be collaborating with health experts and key opinion leaders for an experiential campaign that will further WOW Life Sciences' vision to provide nutrition-rich alternatives and motivate the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

Heavy metals make 'healthy' dark chocolate more problematic than thought



A study by Consumer Reports has found dangerously high levels of heavy metals in chocolate from well-known brands including Hershey's, Theo, and Trader Joe's. Of particular concern are the levels of sugar in dark chocolate, which many people have come to believe is better for you than milk chocolate. Scientists recently measured various heavy metals in 28 dark chocolate bars and found cadmium and lead in all of them.

For 23 of the 28 bars tested, eating one ounce a day would put an adult over the level of one of the heavy metals that health authorities say is safe for adults. Five of the brands had higher levels of both metals. Acceptable levels for children are much lower.

It has long been known that heavy metals, particularly lead, can cause serious health problems for all people, but especially for children who are at risk for developmental problems, impaired brain development, lower IQ scores, and other issues. It is for these reasons that lead has long been banned from paint and plumbing. For adults, frequent exposure to lead, for example, can lead to nervous system problems, hypertension, immune system suppression, kidney damage, and reproductive issues.

While most people don't eat chocolate every day, 15 percent do, according to Mintel, a market research firm. When combined with levels of lead and cadmium in other foods, the problems can add up. For example, heavy metals can be found in carrots, sweet potatoes, and spinach, which are all considered healthy foods.

While dark chocolate is lauded for many reasons, such as lower sugar and higher fibre than milk chocolate, the very things that make it "better" can cause problems. The cacao, or cocoa, levels in dark chocolate are proclaimed on packaging as signals about which brands or sub-brands are healthier, with higher percentages translating into more so-called health benefits.

The problem is that the cocoa solids are also where the heavy metals, especially cadmium, lurk, according to the Consumer Reports research team. Some of the same concerns may extend to products made with cocoa powder, which is pure cocoa solids, such as hot cocoa and brownie and cake mixes. Researchers have found that cacao plants take up cadmium from the soil, so growing the plants in soil with lower cadmium density makes a difference. However, lead seems to get into the cacao beans after harvest, so different mitigation methods are needed.

The researchers found that lead was typically on the outer shell of the cocoa bean, not in the bean itself. Moreover, lead levels were low soon after beans were picked and removed from pods but increased as beans dried in the sun for days." During that time, lead-filled dust and dirt accumulated on the beans, researchers said.

To mitigate lead contamination, changes in harvesting and manufacturing practises are needed, according to Danielle Fugere, president of As You Sow, which is an organization that pushes for corporate accountability. Such practices will include minimizing the amount of soil contact for the beans and finding ways to remove lead when beans are cleaned at factories.

Mitigation of cadmium is not so easy, according to the researchers. Careful breeding to create plants that do not take up as much of the substance during growth is one option. That will take time. Another option would be to replace older trees with younger ones, but that will also take time and financial investment. Careful decisions about where to grow cocoa plants should also be implemented to avoid places where the soil is more heavily contaminated with lead and cadmium.

PepsiCo rolls out a lemon-lime drink called Starry, a Sprite competitor



PepsiCo has started rolling out its latest soda, a lemon-lime offering called Starry that will target Gen Z consumers.

Starry competes with Coca-Cola's Sprite and is available in regular and zero-sugar versions. Promotional materials for Starry refer to the drink as a "purpose-driven brand built for Generation Z" and "a crisp, refreshing formula with a bite to win share and grow the category." Starry's packaging also said the soda is a "fun escape" that also takes "steps on sustainability."

PepsiCo has launched a number of beverages aimed at competing with Sprite since the early 1980s, including Slice and Storm. Its current lemon-lime soda offering, Sierra Mist, which launched in 2000, has faced dwindling sales over the past decade and may be discontinued. PepsiCo has attempted to revamp the soda in the past, briefly changing its formula to include stevia sweetener in 2015. That year, it also renamed the drink Mist Twist before reverting back to Sierra Mist in 2018.

The attempts have not proved fruitful, as Sierra Mist only had a 0.1% dollar share of carbonated soft drinks as of last October, compared to 6.9% for Sprite, according to Beverage Digest. Given the popularity of the lemon-lime soda space, launching a product with its own branding aimed at the lucrative Gen Z consumer segment could allow PepsiCo to gain market share.

Nestlé Health Science launches 'ThickenUp Clear' for individuals with Dysphagia



Nestlé India has launched ThickenUp Clear, a food and beverage thickener that can be used to help patients with swallowing difficulties especially in oropharyngeal dysphagia. It can be administered to those experiencing challenges in swallowing, clinically known as dysphagia due to conditions such as head and neck cancer, stroke, Parkinson's Disease among others. Dysphagia is a major yet understated health condition that leads to dehydration, malnutrition led infections, and impaired quality of life.

ThickenUp Clear is clinically proven to improve swallowing safety and efficacy. The product is scientifically designed and is manufactured by a unique technology at Osthofen, Germany, exclusively for Nestlé Health Science. It is xanthan gum-based and is tasteless, colourless, odourless and amylase resistant. The product can be added to varied liquids to enhance swallowing safety and efficacy.

Talking about the launch of the product, Mansi Khanna, head, Nestlé India Health Science, said, "As a global leader in the science of nutrition, we nourish those who need extra care, fill nutrition gaps and provide innovative products for a healthier future. With the launch of ThickenUp Clear, we are sustaining the momentum on new growth platforms, strengthening our presence in nutritional science. This product is an addition to the existing portfolio that addresses various health-induced nutrition issues, thus reiterating our commitment to empowering healthier lives through nutrition."

The company is a global leader in the space of nutritional science. It focuses on advancing the therapeutic role of nutrition to change the course of health management for consumers, patients, doctors, nurses and its partners in healthcare.

All India Food Processors' Association

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