

FSSAI mulls guidelines on use of health supplements, nutraceuticals

KEEPING VIGIL. State food commissioners asked to submit action taken report on enforcement drive

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NON-COMPLIANT. Nutraceuticals and health supplements sold in the markets are not compliant with standards or are being marketed with false and exaggerated claims, says FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) is considering releasing a standard operating procedure (SOP) or guidelines on usage of health supplements and nutraceuticals. This comes at a time when more and more people are turning to health supplements amid rising awareness on fitness. The products are usually recommended by coaches or personal trainers at fitness centres.

The regulator had recently directed food safety commissioners in States and Union Territories to undertake a special enforcement drive to check on the quality and safety of the nutraceuticals and health supplements sold. They were asked to take strict action against violators. In its order,

FSSAI said that it has come to its notice that “various nutraceuticals and health supplements being sold in the markets are not compliant” with its standards or are being marketed with false and exaggerated claims. Sources said such products are often imported

and found non-compliant with FSSAI standards.

CREATING AWARENESS

“We want to ensure the quality of health supplements and nutraceuticals being used by consumers. There are a lot of new products coming up in this seg-

ment. Also of concern are the quantities in which health supplement products, such as whey protein, are being consumed. So we need to create awareness among consumers about these products as well as give information to coaches and trainers on the quantity that needs to be recommended. So we will prepare an SOP on the same,” a senior official told *businessline*.

Organisations such as the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition have established the estimated average nutritional requirements across age groups in the form of recommended dietary allowance (RDA) values. Sources said efforts will be made to create awareness among coaches and trainers on the RDA values of various nutrients.

Meanwhile, State food safety commissioners have been asked to submit an “ac-

tion taken” report by March 31 on the enforcement drives in their jurisdictions.

SURVEILLANCE

The food authority recently directed States to step up the overall surveillance of commonly consumed food products, especially during festival and wedding seasons. At the recent meeting of FSSAI's Central Advisory Committee in Goa, the authority directed States and UTs to increase regular surveillance and random sampling of food products to determine their compliance with standards. States and UTs have also been directed to ensure the testing of 10 samples of milk per day using the Food Safety on Wheel (FSW) vans available with them, officials said. A total of 168 FSW vans are available across the country for on-the-spot food testing.