

Business Standard

FSSAI proposes labelling norm for food products with GM ingredients

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E-Paper

Food regulator FSSAI has proposed that all packaged food items with 5 per cent or more genetically modified (GM) ingredients should declare the information through labelling. It had last month issued a draft of Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2018 and sought comments from stakeholders. The final regulation is likely in the next two months.

"All food products having total Genetically Engineered (GE) ingredients 5% or more shall be labelled. The total GE ingredients shall be of top three ingredients in terms of their percentage in the product," the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said in the draft. The labelling shall be as -- "Contains GMO/Ingredients derived from GMO", it added.

In India, Bt cotton is the only GM crop allowed for commercial cultivation. The government has not permitted GM technology in cultivation of food crops like brinjal and mustard amid safety concerns. The FSSAI draft regulations prescribe the labelling requirements of pre-packaged foods and display of essential information on the premises where food is manufactured, processed, served and stored.

On labelling of alcoholic beverages, FSSAI has proposed that the labels should carry a statutory warning -- CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH; BE SAFE - DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE -- in English language.



In case, states want the warning to be printed in the local or regional language, it should be allowed, without the need for repeating the English version. FSSAI has also proposed that the country of origin of the food shall be declared on the label of food imported into India. "When a food undergoes processing in a second country which changes its nature, the country in which the processing is performed shall be considered to be the country of origin for the purposes of labelling," the draft said.