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Petitions for GM food product import on hold till safety norms are charted By Richa Sharma

A committee of Environment Ministry has put on hold applications related to import of all genetically-modified food products and sugar till the FSSAI frames guidelines.

NEW DELHI: A committee of Environment Ministry has put on hold applications related to import of all genetically-modified food products and sugar till the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) frames guidelines and regulations.

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee has been receiving applications to import GM soybean, and crude, processed, partially processed oil derived from Genetically Modified (GM) soybean and canola. The panel took cognisance of the apex court order in 2017, directing the FSSAI for framing of relevant guidelines and regulations in connection with genetically engineered and modified food.

“The Committee agreed that all applications for import of oil may be transferred to FSSAI for consideration,” said an official. It looked into application related to import of sugar derived from GM sugarcane.

A FSSAI representative said the Association was in the process to frame relevant guidelines. The FSSAI could consider the applications after the guidelines/regulations are notified, the official said, adding it is bringing out a policy on labeling, which is at draft notification stage. The Committee requested FSSAI to expedite putting in place the relevant guidelines and policy on labeling at the earliest.