

## ‘Consumer fora should not be harsh on small businesses’

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, AUGUST 12, 2019 21:08 IST



Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India Pawan Kumar Agarwal speaking at a meeting in Madurai on Monday.

Consumer forums should not be harsh on small businesses unless they were habitual defaulters so as to sustain economic growth, said Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India Pawan Kumar Agarwal.

Addressing a meeting on Food Safety and Standards Act conducted by Tamilnadu Foodgrains Merchants Association and Tamil Nadu Hotel Owners Association here on Monday, he said, “Business people must take the responsibility of educating the public on unethical practices such as artificial ripening, adding colours as adulterants so that consumers can make an informed choice,

When one of the members of the audience complained that Food Safety officers who collect samples took up to six months to release results of the tests, Mr. Agarwal said the officers should give the results within two weeks even if they needed the service of private labs. To expedite this process, the Central government could have tie-ups with private labs. Tamil Nadu was one of the few States with six laboratories as some States did not even have one lab, he said.

He explained the various layers of food safety standards and said problems need to be resolved step by step. Some issues need to be discussed with the central advisory

committee as well. "If we create an ecosystem for food safety, it could serve as a model for other developing countries," he said.

K. Vanaja, Director and Additional Commissioner of Food Safety, V. Pasupathy, National Advisor, Food Safety, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India, took part in the meeting.