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FSSAI launches used oil collection plan

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Madurai: Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO), a programme spearheaded by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) aimed at disposing used cooking oil in an environmentally safe way, was launched at a private city college on Thursday.

Food safety officials, representatives of Madurai district hoteliers association and oil manufacturers association took part in the launch, which took place in the presence of about 500 students of Lady Doak College. The purpose of the scheme is to make sure that the cooking oil used by bulk users such as hotels, snacks manufacturers and bakeries do not enter into the system again. Often such used cooking oil is sold at a cheaper rate to small eateries or disposed of in an environmentally hazardous manner.

FSSAI prescribes the limit for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) to be a maximum of 25% beyond which cooking oils are unsuitable for use. The TPC level increases when oil is reused more than three times and the prolonged consumption of food prepared in reused oil can cause serious health problems like hypertension, liver disease and cancer. Designated officer for food safety, Madurai district, Dr M Somasundaram said that the programme was organized in the college so that they can reach out to a large number of families directly. A sticker released during the launch will be pasted at hotels from where used oil has been promptly collected by them. Hence, such hotels can be considered safe for the public. The oil collected will be sent to a private company, where it will be converted into bio-diesel.

President of Madurai district hoteliers' association K L Kumar said that the programme will help to wean used oil away from the system. Though they used oil only once, they used to sell it. The used oils were purchased by roadside eateries, but now it will directly be collected by officials to be converted into biodiesel. "There are 300 members in our association and around 50 of them took part in the function. All our association members will render cooperation to the food safety officials to make this programme a success," he said.