

Packaged food companies request FSSAI to keep some products out of front-of-pack labelling regulations

By Shambhavi Anand, ET Bureau • Last Updated: Mar 03, 2021, 05:02 PM IST



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Packaged **food companies** have requested the Food Safety and **Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** to keep some products like juices, cookies, confectionery among others out of the front-of-pack labelling regulations that insist on display of detailed nutritional information prominently citing "practical issues".

“We have requested the authority to leave out certain products as they will fall under the unhealthy category due to practical issues. They should be kept out of the list at least in the first phase of implementation,” said a senior official of a packaged food company.

For instance, any food item with more than 10% sugar will have to be labelled as a high sugar product. In most juices 90% of calories are from naturally occurring sugars and hence they will have to be labelled as high sugar or unhealthy, he said explaining the practical issues the industry is facing.

In 2019, FSSAI had proposed in its draft regulations, traffic light labelling for packaged food items based on their fat sugar and salt content - red is for unhealthy, amber for moderately **healthy** and green for healthy products.

However, food companies said that the red category was so stringent that it would cover most fast selling items, hence, has not been implemented yet.

There have been several rounds of consultation between food regulator and companies to reach workable solution, the person quoted above said.

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However, due to resistance from the industry the front-of-pack labelling, which has a classification symbol for healthy and unhealthy products, was delinked from the general labelling regulations.

The controversial front-of-pack labelling has two aspects – threshold for salt, sugar and fat for Indian consumers and a pictorial representation of the same for easy identification.

The current threshold is in accordance with the World Health Organisation's South East Asian Region (SEAR) framework which is has been developed keeping in mind the dietary habits of the countries in the region.