

Business Today

FSSAI to increase testing, enforcement activities to ensure food safety

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has done a survey on milk recently and it would like to conduct surveillance across all the food categories, CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said.

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Food safety regulator FSSAI will test more samples and increase enforcement activities to ensure availability of safe food to people, its CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said Thursday.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has done a survey on milk recently and it would like to conduct surveillance across all the food categories, he added.

Agarwal also assured food businesses not to be scared with the increased enforcement as it is meant for ensuring safe food supply in the markets.

"We in FSSAI have recognised the importance of food testing and analysis. Our laboratories are essentially the heart of our food safety ecosystem," he said while addressing a conference on food safety organised by AOAC India, an analytical body.

It is important to put up quality food testing system for developing a robust food safety ecosystem, he said.

Stating that strengthening of lab system is "very critical", Agarwal said FSSAI is attempting to create the foundation for a national network of well-functioning credible food laboratories.

"I must confess that only some initial work has been done," he said.

In the last few years, FSSAI has given thrust to improve government labs through financial support and also notified private labs, he added.

However, a lot more needs to be done in the area of building capacity of analytical staff for these labs.

Agarwal pointed out that less samples are being tested in the country by enforcement agencies as well as food business operators. He asked corporates to double the samples for food testing conducted by them.

FSSAI's CEO also emphasised on the need to expand surveillance activities and said the state agencies are increasing their headcount to carry out inspections and testing.

"We are monitoring to ensure that enforcement activities increase. This is not to scare food businesses. This is to see that food that are available in market place is safe," Agarwal said.