

*For immediate release*

## Press Release

# 365 Days of simple thinking, healthy eating and sustainable living

**New Delhi, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** Its time for India to Eat Right, with Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare kick-starting POSHAN Maah 2019 with a year-long social and mass media campaign on the Eat Right India movement. Leading with 1 tweet-a-day focusing on a weekly theme of eating right for the next 365 days, Dr. Harsh Vardhan also launched the new Eat Right India logo that represents a healthy plate, an online Eat Right Quiz, the Eat Right Online Course for frontline health workers and the Eat Right India Store featuring merchandize to nudge right eating habits.

The country is in need of a ‘Jan Andolan’ on preventive and promotive health for all in the backdrop of the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases, widespread deficiencies of vitamins and minerals and rampant food borne illnesses. The Eat Right India movement is being helmed by FSSAI as a crucial preventive healthcare measure to trigger social and behavioural change through a judicious mix of regulatory measures, combined with soft interventions for ensuring awareness and capacity building of food businesses and citizens alike. This movement is aligned with the Government’s flagship public health programmes such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat Yojana and Swachh Bharat Mission.

The groundwork for escalating the Eat Right India Movement to the level of a Jan Andolan has been underway during the past few months. FSSAI has put in place robust regulatory measures under three major pillars: Eat Safe, Eat Health and Eat Sustainably. FSSAI has prescribed a limit for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) at 25% in cooking oil to avoid the harmful effects of reused cooking oil. Standards for five fortified staples -wheat flour, rice, oil, milk and salt to reduce large-scale deficiencies of vitamins and minerals have been notified, in addition to standards for health supplements, nutraceuticals, prebiotics and probiotics products. To trigger informed consumer choices regulations on ‘Advertising and Claims’ and mandatory menu labeling has been notified. In addition, labeling provisions have been made for appropriate use of sweeteners for children and pregnant women. To reach the target of Trans-fat Free India by 2022, regulations to reduce trans-fats to less than 2% in all oils, fats and food products are in place. Promoting sustainability, FSSAI has removed the restriction on the use of returnable bottles and is promoting the use of bamboo instead of plastics.

Preparatory work for creating awareness around mindful eating is also in place, with pilots/prototypes for clusterisation schemes such as Clean Street Food Hubs, Clean and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable markets and Eat Right Campus for schools, colleges, workplaces and other campuses being successfully tested on a pan-India basis. Food businesses have participated in large-scale training and capacity building programs on ensuring food safety through the Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) initiative, under which over 1.7 lakh Food Safety Supervisors have been trained and certified. Robust material in the

form of Pink Book, Yellow Book, DART Book, informative videos etc are in place, and can be accessed through a video library on FSSAI's website.

*Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare mentioned that Eat Right India takes a holistic approach to food habits that promote health and sustainability. He mentioned that like 'Green Good Deeds', a campaign to protect the environment and promote good living in the country, has found global acceptance, the Eat Right India movement is also poised to become a global best practice with the support of national and international stakeholders. He also urged the media to amplify the key message of this Jan Andolan to citizens and make it popular like Polio Mukh Bharat. Launching this movement on this platform with the support of stakeholders such as the World Health Organization, along with Ministers and delegates from South East Asian countries, is a landmark event.*

*Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, World Health Organization (WHO), remarked, "The Eat Right India movement's message is close to the heart of what the WHO has been saying all along. Now, this has been put into action by FSSAI, for which I congratulate the Government of India. There has been a shift in the cause of mortality from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer and so on, not only in India, but also across the world. The four main factors to prevent non-communicable diseases are healthy diet, physical exercise, avoidance of tobacco and alcohol. Therefore, the message of 'Eat Right' should be promoted everywhere. Citizens should choose healthy food and the food industry should manufacture healthy food. The media can be very effective partners in spreading this message. Let us take the Eat Right India movement forward in mission mode."*

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## Twelve Key Regulatory Measures by FSSAI in support of Eat Right India

- 1) India@75: Trans-fat free India by 2022. India has decided to become free of industrial trans-fat by 2022, a year ahead of the global target set by WHO to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fat from the food supply by the year 2023. For this, FSSAI has notified regulations to reduce trans-fatty acid levels to <2% of fat in all edible oils and fats. This is now being extended to food products having fats and oils. The existing FSS (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011 limits the trans fatty acids (TFA) content to not more than 5% of total fats in various partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, including inter-esterified vegetable fats, vanaspati, bakery shortening and bakery and industrial margarine. Special drives are being taken up for trans-fat free products in future in a phase-wise manner.
- 2) Safe frying: In order to check *re-use of cooking oil* by repeated frying and avoid use of leftover oil, FSSAI in partnership with Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has taken up an initiative, namely, "Re-purpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)". Under this, FSSAI has prescribed a limit of Total Polar Compounds (TPC) to be a maximum of 25%, beyond which the edible oil is not suitable for use. Under RUCO initiative, used cooking oil is being converted to biodiesel. An ecosystem for collection, aggregation and conversion of UCO to biodiesel is being developed in the country.
- 3) Healthier beverages: It has been decided to remove the mandatory requirement of minimum percentage of *total soluble solids (TSS)* in thermally processed fruit nectars, thermally processed fruit beverages/fruit drink/ready to serve fruit beverages, carbonated fruit beverages or fruit drinks. This will facilitate reduction of sugar through reformulation or development of fruit and vegetable products with lower amount of TSS, thereby allowing the industry to restrict addition of sugar to fruits products.
- 4) Strict vigil over healthy claims: With the objective to place a check on misleading *claims and advertisements* on food products and to provide scientifically validated information on claims to consumers, FSSAI has notified FSS (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018. The regulations provide for detailed procedure for prior approval of the Authority for disease risk reduction claims and also conditions for making nutrient function claims and other claims on food products. It also puts a check on advertisements in respect of a food product that undermines the importance of healthy lifestyles or portrays the food product as a complete replacement of normal meal or promotion of food products or influence consumer behavior.
- 5) Menu labeling to enable healthier choices: It is important for consumers to understand what they eat. In this context, FSSAI has decided to make *menu labeling* mandatory for food service establishments having Central license or outlets at 10 or more locations and draft notified regulations for the same, which is intended to inform the consumers about the calorific value and nutrient content of the food. Displaying the calories on

menu card/boards are very important to provide information to customer to help them make well informed choice about the food being served.

- 6) Robust standards for food supplements and botanicals including those of Ayurveda: *Functional foods* are foods which provide benefits beyond basic nutrition and play a role in reducing or minimizing risk of certain diseases and health conditions. FSSAI has also notified regulations for standards on health supplements, nutraceuticals, prebiotics and probiotic products, which are primarily intended for sustenance of a healthy life and fall in the category of functional foods.
  - 7) Food fortification: With the FSS (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018, it is aimed to address micronutrient deficiencies in the country through provision of addition of adequate quantities of micronutrients in regularly consumed staple foods such as oil, milk, salt, rice, atta and maida. The primary focus of these regulations is to make *fortified foods* easily accessible to the public mainly through government run programs, i.e. Integrated Child Development Scheme, Mid-day meal programme and Public Distribution system and also through open markets.
  - 8) Robust and scientific approach for use sweeteners in food: Review FSSAI conducted in-depth review of *sweeteners* used in food products, and specifically with respect to existing labeling requirement of “Not recommended for children” based on scientifically substantiated data and it has been decided to remove this labeling advisory for around 17 sweeteners except SACCARINS and also add certain advisory provisions for pregnant women, etc. The labeling provisions will help in judicious use of sweeteners in the food products and facilitate availability of such products for obese population.
  - 9) Reducing plastic footprint in F&B packaging: In order to promote sustainability, FSSAI has permitted use of *liquid nitrogen* dosing in PET bottles during the packaging of drinking water which would help in strengthening the bottle thereby facilitating the manufacture with the use of bottles with lower wall thickness.
  - 10) Promoting alternatives to plastics: Besides, FSSAI has also initiated the process of removing the restriction on the use of *returnable bottles* for packaging of artificially sweetened beverages and is promoting the use of *bamboo* as an alternative to plastics such as straws, plates, bowls, cutlery etc.
  - 11) Phased approach for Front of pack nutrition labeling: Through a concerted consultative approach a phased approach for front of pack (FoP) nutrition labeling is being evolved.
  - 12) School food regulation: School food regulation is in the process of being finalized and efforts are on to use food as pedagogical tool to promote safe, food, healthy and sustainable diets.
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