

Brief Report on Western Region Conference of Food Safety Commissioners

Venue: Jaipur, Rajasthan

Date: 11th May, 2010

The conference of Food Safety Commissioners of Western Region viz. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadara & Nagar Haveli, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh started with welcome note from Shri P.I.Suvrathan, Chairperson, FSSAI, New Delhi. He explained that the prime objective of the conference is to assess the preparedness of the States/UTs for implementation of FSS Act and to know various steps taken by each state. FSSAI has already prepared draft Rules and Regulations which are expected to be notified within the next 3 months. States/UTs should expedite preparatory steps so as to have the requisite infrastructure/staff in place well within the time. No representative from Daman & Diu and Dadara & Nagar Haveli attended the conference. The important points that emerged during the discussion in the meeting are given below:

- There is need to have common set of food standards which can be implemented with reasonable level of competency in the country.
- Under NRHM, States may consider inclusion of food safety activities in the scheme as it is an essential ingredient of any plan to promote health. The representative from Rajasthan mentioned that they have got approved funds to the tune of Rs.4.5 crore for strengthening of food laboratories from NRHM.
- FSSAI is also considering to have a Plan Scheme for Food Safety to strengthen the laboratory infrastructure, capacity building in the States.
- States/UTs should plan to develop a report on food safety in their State by next year.
- Chhattisgarh mentioned that they are facing difficulty in recruiting food safety officer due to mandatory training in the draft rules. It was clarified that recruitment may not require to consider mandatory training as the same would be the requirement for notification as Food Safety Officer. The necessary modifications in the draft rules may be done accordingly.
- Food Safety Commissioner Gujarat brought to the notice some practical problems like rank of Food Safety Commissioner as defined in draft rules, PFA rules do not mention about qualification of LHA however draft FSS Rule specify qualification of Designated Officer, rank & pay scale of designated Officer. In this regard, CEO, FSSAI clarified that the States may make suitable arrangements in the transition phase but ultimately the structure will have to be on the suggested lines. It was also mentioned that Food Safety Commissioner being head of department of Food Safety in the State will be handling various inter-departmental issues and he have to of sufficiently senior status for successful implementation of the Act.

States made presentations regarding status on their preparedness for implementation of Act and proposed plans. Based on the inputs, fact sheets on the States/UTs have been prepared and enclosed as part of report.