



Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

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Building **healthy** INDIA with **safe** food



Message from the Chairperson



Food Safety is the prime concern of each country. It is an integral part of the development agenda since food safety; health and economic prosperity are closely related. With this in mind, the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 was passed and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the statutory Food Regulator was set up in the year 2008.

The critical features of the FSS Act are: its emphasis on safe and wholesome food for consumers; the premise that food articles meant for human consumption must be regulated on science based standards; Self-regulation by and amongst the FBOs; improvement Notice, a new and innovative tool to promote self-regulation, has been introduced in this connection and there is a renewed focus on building infrastructural capacity in the form of sophisticated accredited labs.

The Act was operationalized with the notification of six Regulations in August 2011 and these initial years have focussed on licensing and registration; system building and putting in place the broad contours for implementation of the Act. With over a little two year experience of having implemented the Act, we are now ready to embark on the next stage of implementation with focus on Food surveillance to assess the implementation of the Act.

In our endeavour to communicate with our stakeholders on a regular basis, FSSAI has decided to publish a bi-monthly E-Newsletter, which will give a snapshot overview on a regular basis on the work done and the future planned activities in the coming months. We hope to use this vehicle to increase our communication outreach for spreading the message of Food Safety, which is SurakshitAahaar, Swasthya ka Aadhar.

Shri K. Chandramouli

Chairperson,

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India



Food Safety as defined in the Food safety and Standards Act, 2006 is the assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use. For having that assurance in the National Food Control System, all the stakeholders in the sector have an equal responsibility. The Food industry needs to inculcate the culture of food safety in its operations from farm to fork; be compliant with the regulatory provisions; and have systems in place to respond to emerging safety hazards and challenges. On the other hand, the consumers need to be aware about the risks and benefits of their choices and develop the habit of reading food labels carefully.

As the national regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) need to put in place a robust regulatory regime. Standards setting and enforcement has to be evidence based with focus on transparency. For discharging the duties entrusted by the Act, adopting E-Governance initiatives is perhaps the most potent way to ensure transparency and accountability. IT applications like Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS) and Food Import Clearance System (FICS) have been in operation for the past two years. FSSAI has recently launched another IT application in September 2014, the Food Product Approval System (FPAS). You will read about the features and functionality of the application in detail in this issue. Any suggestions/comments to improve the application will be welcome.

Food testing laboratories are the bedrock for ensuring food safety and quality. As part of the 12th Plan Initiative of FSSAI, special attention would be paid to improve the food testing laboratory infrastructure in the country. We have already build synergies with the existing institutions and also focus on setting up new laboratories, both in the public sector and through the private initiative.

Effective communication of the message of the food safety is critically important for the implementation of the Act. There would be special focus on IEC activities and this quarterly E-newsletter from FSSAI is one step in that direction. We hope that you find this informative and look forward to your feedback on improving it further.

Shri Y. S. Malik
Chief Executive Officer
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

Shri Y.S Malik, 1983 batch I.A.S. officer from Haryana has taken over the charge of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of FSSAI with effect from 20th October, 2014. He is the 5th CEO of FSSAI

ENFORCEMENT

- 12th Meeting of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) held on 01st August, 2014.
- 5,20,867 licenses and 22,72,018 registrations have been issued/done by State Governments till 15-10-2014.
- Manuals on Adjudicating Officer, Designated Officer and Food Safety Officer have been prepared.
- Additional Food Safety Commissioners for Railways, Airports and ports have been appointed.
- Designated Officers at Ports Health Organization (PHO) and Airport Public Health Organization (APHO)
- Designated Officers and Food Safety Officers at Railways have been appointed.
- 19 States/UTs established Appellate Tribunal in their respective States/UTs till 15.10.2014
- 23 States/UTs established Steering Committee in their respective States/UTs till 15.10.2014
- 23 States/UTs have online Licensing/Registration (FLRS) till 15.10.2014
- FLRS has been updated with FLRS version 3 on 29th September, 2014 with some new features like Special section for consumers under "FBO Search", Latest announcements section, link for FSS Act /Regulations/Advisories Images slider to highlight important events/news, Dedicated landing pages for Central and State License, New Eligibility Criteria Page, Segregation of Kind of businesses based on activity and location, Premise (s) at Seaport/Airport /Railways is separated, Hyper link on Regulations for easy information to FBOs, Help text for each page to the FBOs to fill the page etc.

FLRS version-3 page

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

- FSSAI has signed an MoU with the Kingdom of the Netherlands on co-operation in the field of food safety. Two Joint Workshop-cum-Training Programmes have been organised so far. The proposal for the 3rd workshop is under process.
- FSSAI is part of the India – EU project on Capacity Initiative for Trade and Development (CITD) and actively participate in all its activities/meetings
- A draft agreement is under process between the Saudi Food and Drug Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Export Inspection council of the Republic of India (under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry - for export purposes) & the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India of the Republic of India (under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare- for food imports purposes) in the field of safety and quality of food.
- FSSAI is in process of formulation/negotiation for signing bilateral agreements/MoUs with other Countries like Pakistan etc and their relevant Organisations/ departments in the area of food safety issues and technical co-operation.
- A proposal has been received from the Govt of New Zealand for signing a MoU on mutual co-operation in the area of food safety.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Proposal for up-gradation of State/Public Food Testing Labs in the 12th five year plan wherein it has been proposed to upgrade State/Public Food Laboratory in two stages covering the up gradation of 36 laboratories in first stage and remaining laboratories in the succeeding year. It is also planned to establish 33 new State/Public food laboratories over the country.
- 68 NABL accredited food testing laboratories have been notified by FSSAI for a period of 1 year and has also framed a procedure in May-2014 for Recognition/ Authorization/ Notification of NABL Accredited Food Testing Laboratories for analysis of sample under FSSA.
- FSSAI has notified 7 more referral laboratories in June-2014 totaling to 11 referral laboratories under FSSAI.
- FSSAI has conducted 2nd Food Analyst Examination, 2014 during the month of July, 2014.
- Technical Committee (s) for guidance on Laboratory related issues and for evaluation of DPR towards setting up of new food testing laboratory have been formulated.

TRAINING

- 5-days Crash course for newly notified Food Safety Officer till induction training for FSO is finalized. The crash course is in progress and recently Crash course training programme in the State of Chhattisgarh at Raipur from 4th to 8th August, 2014 and in the State of Gujarat at Ahmedabad from 1st to 5th September, 2014 were arranged.
- All India Institute of Local Self Govt., Khanpur, Ahmedabad, Gujarat has been approved as training institute for conducting Induction Training Programme of Food Safety Officers in August-2014.
- The eligibility criteria for trainers for Training of Trainers (ToT) Programme have been finalised.
- Orientation Training Programme of Adjudicating Officer conducted on 1st September, 2014 at Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

PRODUCT APPROVAL

- In light of the Order dated 13.08.2014 of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India related to Advisory on Product Approval Procedure dated 11th May, 2013; the Product Approval Division resumed its work of receiving / processing of the applications for product approval.
- FSSAI launched online Food Product Approval System (FPAS) on 09th September, 2014 through which users can check online, the need for Product Approval of their products, apply online, pay relevant fee, provide required clarifications, track status and finally receive No Objection Certificate OR Product Approval as relevant. FPAS is first of its kind IT system for Food Product Approval by a regulator. The details of the FPAS is available at FSSAI's website i.e. www.fssai.gov.in
- FSSAI issued an FAQs on Product Approval in October, 2014.



STANDARDS

- The matter regarding developing guidelines for supporting research projects/proposals and related innovative R&D proposals pertaining to food safety and quality control is under consideration. The findings/outcome of R&D will be helpful ultimately in strengthening of Food Sector.
- Likewise to facilitate trade in food sector, the FSSAI has decided to harmonize the Food Safety Standards with Codex Standards; other International best practices and other domestic standards.
- FSSAI is in process of reviewing and developing Microbiological Standards for various food categories.
- Development of standards for Fortification of Milk with Vitamin A & D is under consideration.
- Meetings:-

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE/ SCIENTIFIC PANEL	SR. NO. OF MEETING	DATE
Scientific Committee	13 th	24 th July, 2014
Scientific Panel for Food additives, Flavourings, Processing aids and materials in contact with food	18 th	17 th -18 th Sept., 2014
Scientific Panel for Pesticides and Antibiotic Residues	32 nd	10 th October, 2014
Scientific Panel for Contaminants in Food chain	8 th	12 th August, 2014
Scientific Panel for Method of Sampling and analysis	11 th	26 th Sept., 2014
Scientific Panel for Labelling and claims/ Advertisements	16 th	25 th -26 th Sept., 2014
Scientific Panel for Biological Hazards	11 th	8 th October, 2014
Scientific Panel for Fish and Fisheries products	5 th	19 th September, 2014
Scientific Panel for Functional foods, Nutraceuticals, Dietetic products and Other similar products	22 nd	23 rd July, 2014
Scientific Panel for Genetically Modified Organisms & Foods	7 th	22 nd September, 2014



A view of 11th meeting of Scientific Panel for Biological Hazards held on October 8, 2014 at FSSAI, New Delhi

IMPORT

- Food Import Clearance System (FICS) is in operation at locations namely Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Cochin.
- FSSAI is in process of finalisation of Food Safety and Standards (Food Import) Regulations.
- During September 2014, 3298 No Objection Certificate applications were filed in FICS, total 5,439 samples drawn, total 5442 No Objection Certificates (NOC) issued and 37 Non Conformance Certificates (NCC) issued. It amounts to value of Rs. 4175 crores and quantity of 679707 MTs.
- The top categories of food Imports in terms of quantity are Pulses, Edible Oil, Fresh Fruit, Confectionary, Cereals and Spices in descending order during September, 2014.
- The top countries from where India imported food in terms of value are Myanmar (Rs. 1181 crores) Ukraine, Indonesia, Canada, Malaysia, Argentina, USA, Brazil, Cote d'Ivoire, Australia, UK and China (47 crores) during September, 2014.

REGULATIONS

- Fourteen manuals on method of analysis of Foods have been finalized.
- Standards for encapsulated ferrous fumarate in double fortified Salt, pullulan, aspartame and acesulfame salt in various foods were finalized and draft notified.
- Standards for Carboxy Methyl cellulose, use of lecithin in breads, natural colors in certain food products, Steviol Glycoside, glucose oxidase, xylanase and lipase enzymes in bread, have been finalized and sent for draft notification.
- Harmonization of limit of heavy metals, mycotoxins, naturally occurring toxins have been done as per the Codex Norms and sent for draft notification.
- Gluten free and low gluten products, histamine, biotoxins in fish and fishery products, microbiological standards for milk and milk products and the regulations for recall procedure, limit of TFA upto 5% level, nutraceuticals, functional Foods, dietary supplements, health supplements were sent for draft notification.

CODEX

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) organized the 3rd workshop on "Codex Alimentarius: Principles and Procedures" in collaboration with Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) on 12th September, 2014 at Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), Mumbai. The main purpose of conducting the workshop was to create awareness about Codex Alimentarius and the procedures among the stakeholders for effective increased participation in Codex related activities in India.



India has been made the Regional Coordinator for Asia of FAO/WHO after 35 years

At the recently concluded 19th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia on 7th November 2014 at Tokyo, India has been appointed as the next regional Coordinator for Asia subject to the endorsement of Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 38th Session in 2015. It is a major feat for the country as India has become the Regional Coordinator after 35 years. The Indian delegation of three members was led by Ms Vinod Kotwal, Director (Codex), FSSAI. The other two members were Shri Bakshi from NDDDB and Dr Reddy from EIC.

The FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia has 23 countries as its member. It is an important region in the Codex family as around 60% of the world population resides in this region and the diverse agro-climatic regions make food safety concerns critical. As Regional Coordinator, it would be the duty of India to coordinate the participation of the member countries from the region and facilitate effective participation.



Ensuring food safety and nutrition security to protect consumer health: 50 years of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The globalization of trade, which has contributed to food availability and diversification throughout the world, has also increased the chances that the food produced in one place will affect the health and diet of people living in another. As a result, global food safety and nutrition measures applicable across borders, institutions and disciplines, including the establishment of evidence-based international standards on food safety and nutrition, are more important than ever before. Since its inception in 1963, the Codex Alimentarius Commission has developed hundreds of such standards and provided guidance for improving food safety and nutrition in each of its member states and globally.

The Commission, whose 186 members represent 99% of the world's population, is the principal body of the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Food Standards Programme. In addition to international food safety and nutrition standards, it develops guidelines and codes of practice, also intended to protect consumers' health as well as to ensure fair practices in the food trade.

As the Commission celebrates 50 years of successful work, it may be a good time to reflect on its trajectory and how it can serve the public interest even better. Over the years the Commission has become more inclusive. Thanks to the work of the FAO/WHO Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex, launched in 2003, more countries in development and with economies in transition are actively participating in the Commission. The openness, transparency and precision of its reporting and prioritization procedures have been improved. Nonetheless, today's rapid changes in trade, travel and commerce call for an international standard-setting system that is able to respond more quickly to new situations. One way to achieve this might be through better use of modern information technology. Stronger support of national Codex contact points is needed as well, but equally necessary are heightened political will and an acknowledgement of the importance of food safety and nutrition in public health. Because trade, nutrition and food safety are so closely connected, closer collaboration between different sectors and strengthened interactions between the Codex and other global players will be essential.

Source: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/91/7/13-125518/en/>

New UN food safety standards include cap on levels of lead in infant formula

The United Nations body responsible for setting food safety standards adopted guidelines to protect consumers worldwide, including setting out maximum levels of lead in infant formula and arsenic in rice.

In a briefing note to the media, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) said today that no more than 0.01 mg per kg of lead should be permitted in infant formula and no more than 0.2 mg per kg of arsenic should be permitted in rice.

The decision comes from the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the UN food safety standards body jointly run by FAO and WHO, which sets standards to promote safer and more nutritious food for customers worldwide. Codex standards serve in many cases as a basis for national legislation, and provide the food safety benchmarks for international food trade.

The Commission's annual meeting this week was attended by representatives from 170 countries and the European Union, as well as 30 international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Source: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48288#.VGHdPcmTLCN>

WHO has mentioned 10 facts about Food Safety:

1. More than 200 diseases are spread through food- Millions of people fall ill every year and many die as a result of eating unsafe food.
2. Foodborne diseases are increasing worldwide- Disease-causing organisms in food are transmitted far and wide by today's
3. Food safety is a global concern- Globalization of food production and trade increases the likelihood of international incidents involving contaminated food.
4. Emerging diseases are tied to food production- About 75% of the new infectious diseases affecting humans over the past 10 years were caused by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens that started in animals and animal products.
5. The vast majority of H5N1 avian influenza cases in people follow direct contact with infected live or dead birds. To avoid risk of foodborne illnesses in poultry:
 - separate raw meat from other foods
 - keep clean and wash your hands
 - cook thoroughly (until meat is 70 °C in all parts, with no pink areas).
6. Preventing disease starts at the farm
7. Chemical hazards can contaminate food
8. Food contamination can occur at any stage from farm to table- Everyone on the food delivery chain must employ measures to keep food safe - farmer, processor, vendor and consumer.
9. School is a place for food safety- Educating children on safe food handling behaviors is key to preventing foodborne diseases today and in the future.
10. Five keys to food safety - WHO and Member States are promoting the benefits of food safety, healthy diets and physical activity. The five keys to safer food are:
 - keep clean
 - separate raw and cooked
 - cook all foods thoroughly
 - keep food at safe temperatures
 - use safe water and raw materials.

Source: http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/food_safety/facts/en/

Safe Street Food ... The Way Forward

A country's diverse fabric is best represented by the cuisine and the eclectic mix of street food that the country has to offer. Nothing represents the rich tapestry of India's multi-cultural fabric better than the food available in the nooks and crannies of the country. The cuisine of a place speaks volumes about the weather, culture, lifestyle and habits of its people. The Time magazine survey of 2004 and the CNN report of March 2012 find Asia's 10 greatest street food cities and tell us how street food make those cities economically bustling and socially charming.

Street food is also valuable because it is a source of self-employment for the millions of the urban poor. According to a 2007 study of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2.5 billion people eat street food every day. Accessibility, affordability and palatability make street food the most favoured choice of food. The concept of traditional street food has also acquired a new dimension in many countries, with food streets / food centres emerging as new tourist attractions.

Some studies estimate that street vendors constitute approximately 2 per cent of the population of a metropolis, out of which around 60% are food vendors. However, one of the important issues confronting this important segment is the hygiene and quality issues. Lack of access to basic infrastructure like clean water, solid waste disposal services etc. combined with lack of awareness amongst street food vendors about the food safety and quality issues make it a difficult area to address.

But all is not lost. There is work being done in pockets by Government as well as the NGO's to address the problems confronting the street food sector. Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Regulation, 2011 also lays down the sanitary and hygiene conditions to be followed by the street food vendors.

The Gujarat Story

The Food Safety Commissioner, Gujarat selected two streets of Ahmedabad, namely the Manek Chowk and the Law Garden for improving the safety and quality of street food being served in these two locations. The two streets have been operating in the city for more than 50 years and are visited by about 4 to 5 thousand customers daily on an average. There are about 50 FBOs in Manek Chowk and approximately 100 FBOs located in Law Garden. All kinds of Foods: Punjabi, South Indian, North Indian, Chinese, Continental Food along with traditional Gujarati Food like, Pav-Bhaji, Vadapav, Samosa, Pani-puri, Bhel, Chats, Fafda-Jalebi, alongwith Tea-Coffee, non-alcoholic beverages, Ice-cream, Kulfi, Popcorn etc. is being prepared and served in these streets. Most of the vendors operating in these two streets fall under the category of registration and are subject to part-1(A) of Schedule-4 of Licensing & Registration of the FSS Act, 2011.

The vending carts were inspected thoroughly by Gujarat FDA officials along with officers from Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 2010. Observations were made on the hygiene and sanitary practices being followed by the FBOs in all processes ranging from raw material procurement to use of water, food preparation to serving, and personal hygiene to the condition of vehicle/hand cart.

It was observed that the water was stored in dirty containers without cover & from unknown source, single cloth was used for multiple tasks, vessels & plates were washed in small bowls, dustbins were not used, unlabelled raw materials were being used, the hygiene and sanitary

condition of the vending cart was poor. Remedial measures were prepared for it and it was thought to show it to the FBO so that the improvement is made.

A reflex reaction of the Gujarat State Food Safety Authority (GSFSA) was to devise remedial measures and display them to the street food vendors on the principle of extension education "seeing is believing". The first training programme was held in December 2010 for the vendors. Wrong practices were exhibited and they were advised on a number of practices to improve the safety and quality of the food that they were preparing.



Shri Koshia, Food Safety Commissioner, Gujarat, says, "Our aim was to prevent physical, biological and chemical contamination of food and better sanitation and hygienic conditions of food preparation as well as serving. We evaluated the risk, its severity, identified the hazards and eliminated the risk with alternative measures. The streets were monitored and corrective actions taken. We also verified that remedial measures worked effectively by frequent monitoring".

Since the remedial measures had no or very little additional cost, they were adopted willingly by the street food vendors. There is an increase in their business and consumers also now have more confidence in street food. This act of the State Food Authority led to a win-win situation for both the street food vendors as well as the consumers.



The Goa Experience

Similarly, acknowledging the importance of promoting the street food vending as a multiplier for tourism Food Safety Commissioner, Goa with the active participation of other Government agencies launched, a special pilot project under the Capacity Building Project on Street Food Survey (CBP on SFS) in 2007-08. The project encompassed selection / identification of mobile food vendors / street food vendors / roadside dhabas, bus stand food outlets, sweetmeats shops, etc spread over geographical 6 (six) city centres of the State of Goa;



The project envisaged after its initial survey findings of the current scenario on their existing practices adopted, by imparting specific, focused and hands down training to all such street food vendors spread over a period of ten days of two hours each day on good hygienic and sanitation practices, practices in handling of food, personal hygiene, food hygiene, unit hygiene, environmental hygiene, use of packaging drinking waste, usage of all disposal plates / spoons, etc., use of closed dust bins separately for wet and dry waste, importance of selection of good quality ingredients, hygienic serving of food to promote high level of satisfaction amongst the consumers, use of nutritious food ingredients for promoting nutritional food, practices related to procurement and storage of food ingredients, its optimum cooking and serving, etc.

Street vendors were also provided with an identity both in terms of identity to the owner of the street food vendors as well as to his food cart through which he delivered his services and the cart design was so specific, which ensured avoiding direct exposure of food to dust pollution, insects, flies and was equipped with proper cover giving an elegant look to the cart.



This changed approach also brought about significant mind set change amongst the food vendors and they acknowledged that this change had also resulted in increase in their economic earnings as compared to the period prior to this focused training project program.

NASVI's journey

Championing the cause of street vendors is the raison d'être of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) and within this large set NASVI is actively espousing the cause of the street food vendors. The organisation believes that promoting street food and cementing the identity of street food vendors is closely linked with preserving and promoting the socio-cultural diversity of a region. Hence, NASVI mobilizes street food vendors and encourages them to exhibit their local culinary traditions, at the same time training them on hygiene requirements and the importance of serving safe, hygienic food.

Backed by FSSAI, NASVI started vendor registration, in association with NDMC in the Delhi-NCR region. The organisation has also launched the development of a Safe and Hygienic Food Zone in Sarojini Nagar Market.

Around 120 Street Food Vendors have applied for registration under the Food Safety Act 2011 and have been trained by NASVI in safe handling of food. They have been trained to maintain personal hygiene, unit hygiene and environmental hygiene with special focus on five keys outlined by World Health Organization (WHO) for healthy and hygienic food.

The launch witnessed beginning of use of aprons, gloves and hair caps. They were given training by the Program Manager of NASVI, Street Food Programs. NASVI also plans to set up a mechanism for supply of quality ingredients which would be cheaper for vendors and hygienic for consumers.

Kanchan Devi, a samosa seller in Sarojini Nagar, who was part of the NASVI program said that this attempt will definitely improve the business of street vendors besides giving them recognition and dignity.

A true example

A true example of NASVI's effort is Dilip Kumar. Setting up his van of fresh fruit juice and bhelpuri every morning, Kumar is determined to serve food which is tasty, fresh and hygienic at the same time. A cleanliness freak, Kumar has set a hygiene benchmark must for all street food vendors to achieve.

Donned in an apron, a cap and gloves outside Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, Dilip Kumar has formed his own niche of customers who swear by his food. Even doctors and nurses of the hospital prefer his food to other joints.

Kumar explains that as per the guidelines of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), vendors should stick to essential hygiene standards – wearing gloves and caps, washing hands before cooking, not scratching their head or ears and not picking their noses.

Kumar has been invited to give a speech on food safety at NASVI's event, for adhering to the FSSAI standards.

Despite being made fun of and jeered at, Kumar says, "Food vendors laughing at me will eventually realise that sticking to food safety standards is good not just for the customers, but also for the vendors as it would restore the confidence in costumers and increase our business."

And it is surprising that not just fellow vendors but customers also make fun of him drawing attention to the complete lack of awareness about safe and hygienic food among consumers.

The best practises illustrated above bring to the fore the point, "where there is a will there is a way". Food Safety is a shared responsibility and for making our street food safe all the stakeholders: food authorities, local bodies, police and consumers need to work together.

Codex Lessons for Spices: Imparting Science Based Business Proposition

By Dr. PSS Thampi, Deputy Director, Spices Board of India

When Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013, India was one among the member countries to rejoice during the festivities. Being the world's largest body inter-governmental body on setting standards, CAC has gained lots of repute and respect across continents on account of its science based resolutions having total global ramifications on matters relating to food standards. At the peak of its glory of the 50th year, Codex Alimentarius Commission gave birth to yet another Commodity Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs, thanks to the Indian proposal. The Indian effort to establish an exclusive Codex platform for spices and culinary herbs became a reality as the international forum finally decided to go for its total constitution.



The formation of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) is aimed at elaborating worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs in their dried and dehydrated state in whole, ground, and cracked or crushed form. It also engraved the basic thought of consultation as necessary, with other international organizations in the standards development process to avoid duplication.

As India became the host country for the CCSCH, the country also got on to the authentic route to the Codex platform. Being the host country for CCSCH, the Indian responsibility to participate and deliberate in Codex courts also grew.

The host organisation for the CCSCH, Spices Board India catapulted to the central arena of Codex activities with its newly constituted Codex Cell in Cochin. The successful hosting of the first Session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH1) in less than one year from its formation, from 11th -14th February 2014 in Kochi, Kerala had in fact strengthened the capacities for handling Codex assignments. To make the first session an astounding success within a short span of time was an onerous task which was possible only due to close liaison with the Codex Secretariat in Rome and the National Codex Contact Point of India in FSSAI. The outreach of the committee can be gauged from the participation of delegates from 40 member countries.

Though the youngest of all Codex Committees, the first session of CCSCH saw proactive involvement with substantial inputs from member countries. CCSCH1 deliberated on eight project documents proposing new work, on oregano (Argentina), paprika (Argentina), pepper (India, United States of America and Indonesia), rosemary (India), cumin (India), thyme (India), saffron (Iran) and nutmeg (Indonesia). The Committee agreed to establish, subject to the approval of the Commission, four Electronic Working Groups to prepare draft standards for two spices and two herbs for circulation for comments at Step 3 and consideration at its next session. The eWG on "Black, white & green pepper" led by India and co-chaired by Cameroon and Indonesia is now on full steam. The eWGs on "Brown Cumin" led by European Union and co-chaired by India, the eWG on "Thyme" led by European Union and co-chaired by Switzerland and the eWG on "Oregano" led by Argentina and co-chaired by Greece have started work fast and are deep into its procedures.

The CCSCH provided avenues for the Indian spices and herbs industry to make sorties to other Codex Committees of vital importance from point of view and other producing countries. The establishment of a Codex Cell in Spices Board to manoeuvre Codex commitments has brought in an element of Codex culture to preferentially study all documents and offer comments. New work proposals on various parameters for spices and culinary herbs got signed in by the Codex Cell. The Spices Board on behalf of India submitted a new work proposal on maximum limit of aflatoxin in spices for consideration at the eighth session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF). As a part of the Indian delegation, the officials of the Board got represented in various codex meetings such as 45th session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) held at Hanoi, Vietnam during 11th -15th November 2013. As per the decision taken during the 45th Session of CCPR, Spices Board in consultation with all stakeholders co-ordinate generation, consolidation and cataloging of national residues and toxicological data and is in the process of ensuring its submission to JMPR besides actively participating and keeping the shadow committee of CCPR (Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues) briefed on Indian viewpoint related to various agenda items.

The triumphant journey of the Spices Board towards various committees of Codex is unending and as on today, the Codex Cell has marked its presence in the floor of the house for food hygiene, on contaminants in food, on method of analysis and sampling, and on pesticide residues. Further into each of these committees, associated involvement has resulted in getting on board of nearly ten Electronic Working Groups whose final output will have direct or indirect implications for India which is a major exporter of spices and herbs the following is the list of assignments the Codex Cell has taken up exclusive of CCSCH.

1. **Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)**
 - Draft Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods (LMF)
 - Annexes on Statistical and Mathematical matters related to principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to foods
2. **Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF)**
 - Revision of the maximum levels for Lead in the General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed
 - Code of practice on Mycotoxin Contamination in Spices (including specific annexes)
 - Review Mycotoxins in spices for prioritization of the work in spices
3. **Codex Committee on Method of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS)**
 - Discussion paper - equivalency to Type I methods
4. **Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR)**
 - Electronic working groups on Criteria for Methods of Analysis for the Determination of Pesticide Residues
 - Electronic working groups on Minor Crops
 - Electronic working groups on priorities

The new association with Codex Alimentarius Commission is bequeathing lots of science, scientific and intellectual thinking and logical presentation in the standard setting process for spices and culinary herbs. The Codex Cell activity in Spices Board India is embedding a new culture of serious science based thinking in the country for national and international business.

With the objective to provide general information / tips on food safety, FSSAI started online campaigns on Facebook in August, 2014 and the same are being continued. Over the past couple of months, a few campaigns were run each with different focus and the response has been fairly well.

Safe Food for Healthy India Campaign

A five day campaign was run on Facebook w.e.f. 15th August, 2014 to spread awareness amongst the target audience about some standard, but lesser known measures, to ensure safety of food. The message was delivered with greater impact with the help of Creatives and use of #SafeFoodForHealthyIndia



Healthy Tiffin Campaign

While it is important for parents to make sure that their children eat healthy and nutritious food, it also becomes vital to educate kids about the necessity of having a balanced food and to inculcate healthy eating habits in their children. The campaign touched upon the importance of hygiene and having a balanced diet

#HealthyTiffin



Stand Against Food Adulteration Campaign

The campaign was run on FSSAI Facebook page to inform and educate the audience about common adulteration in food, its ill effects and common methods of its detection.



How is Food Adulterated?

Food is adulterated if its quality is lowered or affected by the addition of substances which are injurious to health or by the removal of substances which are nutritious. It is defined as the act of intentionally debasing the quality of food offered for sale either by the admixture or substitution of inferior substances or by the removal of some valuable ingredient.

Food is declared adulterated if:

- A substance is added which depreciates or injuriously affects it.
- Cheaper or inferior substances are substituted wholly or in part.
- Any valuable or necessary constituent has been wholly or in part abstracted.
- It is an imitation.
- It is coloured or otherwise treated, to improve its appearance or if it contains any added substance injurious to health.
- For whatever reasons its quality is below the standard.

Adulterated food is dangerous because it may be toxic and can affect health and it could deprive nutrients essential for proper growth and development.

#StandAgainstFoodAdulteration



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#StandAgainstFoodAdulteration



Children's Section

Ask your children to do the following activity. A guardian/parent should sit with child while he/she does this activity. Correct habits should be inculcated in them after the completion of the exercise.

True or False

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> We should buy food which does not have labels. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness and proper hygiene should be maintained around places where food is prepared and sold. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street food vendors should adhere to the regulations laid under Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Business) Regulation, 2011. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Habit of washing hands before cooking/handling of food is essential for our own health. | <input type="checkbox"/> True | <input type="checkbox"/> False |

Match the following to the correct sign



Upcoming Events

EVENT	VENUE	ORGANIZER	DATE	LINK
34 th India International Trade Fair 2014	Pragati Maidan, New Delhi	India Trade Promotion Organisation	14 th -27 th November 2014	http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/
Codex Committee on Food Hygiene	Lima, Peru	CODEX	17 th -21 st November 2014	http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/
Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses	Bali, Indonesia	CODEX	24 th -28 th November 2014	http://www.codexalimentarius.org/meetings-reports/en/

Image Gallery of FSSAI Activities



Inauguration of Hindi Fortnight
on 15th September 2014



Hindi Competition



Prize distribution ceremony
on 29th September 2014



Event of Swachhta Shapath wrt Clean India Campaign
on 2nd October 2014



Cleaning Campaign
on 2nd October 2014



Inspection of Cleanliness Drive at premises of FSSAI, FDA Bhawan
on 2nd October 2014



fssai

FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

(Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi - 110002

PORTAL: fssai.gov.in FSSAI HELPLINE: 1800-11-2100

 www.facebook.com/fssai