Fruit juices, cereals, cereal-based foods, bakery products will soon have fortification standards

NEW DELHI: Fruit juices, cereals, cereal-based foods and bakery products will soon have standards for fortification. Safe foods will have a logo of declaration set by national food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), CII National Committee on Nutrition chairperson Vinita Bali told ET.

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The committee, which includes large packaged food companies like Kraft Heinz, Britannia, ITC, Kellogg, Cargill and GSK Consumer, is working with FSSAI to set the standards, Bali, formerly managing director at biscuits maker Britannia, said. “We are looking to strengthen regulatory monitoring to ensure quality and safety of fortified foods and promote a national logo for easy recognition of safe foods,” she said. Bali added that standards are being set for consumer staples including salt, oil and milk.

“We intend to create an enabling environment by issuing fortification standards for multiple foods.” The logo for easy recognition of ‘safe’ foods could be yellow, similar to the existing red and green logos to identify vegetarian and non-vegetarian packaged foods.

“We are focusing on fortifying staples like wheat flour, milk, rice and oil. This will be followed by packaged food,” said FSSAI chief executive Pawan Kumar Agarwal. FSSAI also plans to work with packaged foods companies on advertising campaigns to increase consumer awareness about fortification, he added “Big players have come on board despite fortification not being mandatory in India. This is unique as most countries had to make it compulsory,” he said. Companies come forward when there is a competitive advantage in doing something. In such a case, there will be competitive disadvantage in not working towards fortification, he added.
FSSAI IN NEWS

FSSAI has been driving large-scale fortification of consumer staple foods such as wheat flour, rice, milk, oil and salt to combat widespread malnutrition in the country.

Packaged foods makers across the world are working to supplement foods with healthier ingredients, not only under directives from governments but also to compete in categories with multiple players. Over the last one year, Nestle, PepsiCo and Cargill have announced global initiatives to package their foods such as noodles, seasoning, salty snacks and edible oils with nutrients such as iron, grain and vitamins.