The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has decided to cover such packaged foods as bread, breakfast cereals and pastas under the ambit of the fortification programme.

The apex food regulator is actively working on the standards for packaged food products, which people eat on a regular basis.

It is expected to come up with the standards for such packaged foods shortly, first for the stakeholders and businesses and then for general comments.

“In a couple of months’ time, the standards will be out,” said Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI.

He added, “The apex regulator is working on the fortification standards of some of the packaged foods that people eat commonly. The matter is being considered by a working group on fortification, which would examine and bring out the details of the food products and the respective standards.”

“We’re working on the fortification standards for packaged food, and the standards for such food like bread, pasta and breakfast cereals would be out for comments shortly,” Agarwal said.

“The working group on the fortification will meet soon. Following that, the recommendations and standards would be placed before the stakeholders or
businesses for their comments,” he added.

He expected that the clarity on the packaged food fortification was expected to come soon, after which the road for packaged food fortification would be clear.

Operationalise standards for fortification
Meanwhile, the apex food regulator has issued a notification for the operationalisation of the fortification standards and regulations for foods, such as milk, edible oil, rice, wheat, and salt. The notification specifies the nutrients and maximum limit of the micronutrients.

Agarwal said, “We have finalised the fortification standards. We received over 100 inputs, which were examined by the working group.”

“Two major suggestions were incorporated. Firstly, we stipulated the maximum limits of the standards, and now we have given the range of the nutrients. Secondly, the specification of vitamin and micronutrients clause was also added with the standards. These were the main changes incorporated in the new draft,” he added.

Meanwhile, according to the operationalised regulations, there would be general obligation for quality assurance on the manufacturers and packers of fortified foods, and they have to submit evidence of the steps taken in this regard.

The food business operators (FBOs) also have to ensure compliance with the Food Safety Standards Regulations, 2011, and the packaging and labelling requirements.