Dated: 27th September 2017 (Wednesday)

**FSSAI says progress of flour, rice fortification slow**

New Delhi: Food regulator FSSAI today said the availability of fortified milk and edible oil has improved but the progress is slow in fortification of wheat flour, rice and salt.

Fortification means deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in food to improve its quality.

The FSSAI has set standards for fortification of salt with iodine and iron; of vegetable oil and milk with Vitamin A & D; wheat flour and rice with iron, folic acid, zinc, vitamin B12, vitamin A and some other micronutrients.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is also understanding the challenges being faced by the food industry in promoting fortification of wheat flour, rice and double fortification of salt, its chief executive officer Pawan Kumar Agarwal said. He was speaking at a conference on Nutrition and Food Security organised by Assocham.

"We have received fairly good amount of success in getting the free-market availability of fortified oil and milk but in case of wheat flour, rice and double fortification of salts, the progress has been slow," Agarwal was quoted as saying by a statement issued by Assocham. He said the FSSAI is working with the food industry to "nudge them, persuade them to understand what are the challenges they are facing". The FSSAI is trying to figure out if industry faces any regulatory concerns while adopting fortification, Agarwal said.

"When we go-in for fortification as per standards, we have to be monitoring an evaluation of whether we are getting the results," he added.
Agarwal highlighted that a Food Fortification Resource Centre with the support of Tata Trust at FSSAI has been set up and a dedicated team is working to promote large-scale fortification of these five staples.

He conceded that despite government policy for fortification, the progress has been somewhat limited, except in few areas where excellence has been achieved largely based on initiatives of individual officers. "But by and large there had been a lukewarm response to it," Agarwal said.

In last one year, he said the FSSAI has made significant progress in terms of standards, but there is a long way to go as there are many challenges to make it happen.