Cow milk standard changed; lesser fat and solids now acceptable

Desi cow’s milk has lesser fat content as compared to the Jersey cow

The Food Safety and Standards authority of India (FSSAI) has changed the regulatory standards of cow milk, making it uniform for the entire country as opposed to the state-wise standards earlier.

The new standards that came into effect on August 2, have reduced the earlier set standards of “milk fat” and “milk solids not fat.” While earlier the minimum fat content of cow’s milk was different for different regions. The highest standard for milk fat was set for Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh at 4 per cent and the lowest in Mizoram and Orissa at 3 per cent.
This figure has now been made the same for the entire country set at 3.2 per cent. On the other hand the standard for milk solids which was set at 8.5 per cent all over the country has been brought down to 8.3 per cent.

The director of FSSAI, Pawan Agarwal said that the changes are part of the continuously evolving system of standards and added, "Today we don't require the variation across states. That's why the new standards are uniform for the country now." He said that the new standards will make sale of milk easier for cow milk sellers.

Veena Shatrugna, former deputy director of National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, says that the new standard eases the selling process for cooperatives. Cow milk has 4.48 per cent fat content, so the change may be to accommodate desi cow’s milk, which has lesser fat content as compared to the Jersey cow, Shatrugna says. "There must be a demand from the owners of desi cows to recognise this as the ideal composition for cow's milk," she adds.

Cooperatives found it difficult to meet the older standards as the cows have to be fed special fodder to increase milk fat content. While Agarwal says that the new standard will not impact the nutritional value of milk, Shatrugna believes it can make a difference when milk is diluted to give to babies.