FSSAI IN NEWS

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FSSAI flags off 9 mobile food testing labs, to offer 53 more

New Delhi, Aug 22 () Regulator FSSAI today offered nine mobile testing labs to eight states and 53 more units are lined up for other states and UTs with an overall cost of Rs 19 crore to strengthen food testing infrastructure.

FSSAI's CEO Pawan Agarwal announced plans to launch a food safety index to judge all states and Union Territories on parameters like testing infrastructure, enforcement, surveillance and consumer grievance cell, among others.

The authority's Chairperson, Ashish Bahuguna, today flagged off the mobile labs called 'Food Safety on Wheels' here. These labs are multi-purpose vehicles for food testing, public education and awareness.

"FSSAI has completed 11 years of its operations. On this occasion, we are flagging off nine mobile food testing labs equipped with basic infrastructure for quick testing to detect common adulterants in various food commodities," Agarwal told reporters.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) will provide 62 such mobile units, each costing over Rs 30 lakh, to all the states and Union Territories, he said, adding that the next lot will be launched in November.

"We will provide at least one unit to each state and UT and more in respect of bigger states," Agarwal said. The regulator is providing guidelines and operational manuals to the states on how to run these mobile units. "Through these units, 24 tests can be conducted on milk, 9 on edible oil, 17 on spices and 11 on other foods," Agarwal said.

Asked about the FSSAI's programme to strengthen the existing labs, he said the regulator will modernise 45 labs across the country with a cost of about Rs 12 crore each.
"We have provided amount to 23 states. We have signed MoUs with 11 states. The process for tendering of equipment has started," Agarwal said.

On the food safety index, he said: "We will show states mirror on where they stand on food safety aspects. This will have positive competition among states."

The regulator, Agarwal further said, is launching Indian food laboratory network to connect all food labs in the country to a centralised lab management system. This system will provide an end-to-end solution where samples collected by field units will be coded and tested in FSSAI-notified labs and the results will be available in a central database. This data will be available for enforcement and food import controls in a seamless manner.