Big firms like ITC, HUL & Cargill to fortify wheat flour

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New Delhi: Food regulator FSSAI today said major wheat-flour brands like ITC, HUL, Cargill and Patanjali would begin to fortify wheat flour with iron, folic acid and vitamin B-12.

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

To address malnutrition, the FSSAI is promoting food fortification in a big way.

It had last year issued standards for fortification of salt with iodine and iron, of vegetable oil and milk with Vitamin A and D, wheat flour and rice with iron, folic acid, zinc, vitamin B12, vitamin A and some other micronutrients.

"Market leaders like the ITC, General Mills, Hindustan Unilever, Patanjali, and Cargill have agreed to start fortification of their flagship brands of wheat flour (atta) such as Aashirwaad, Pillsbury, Annapurna, Patanjali and Nature Fresh respectively," the FSSAI said in a statement.

They have already initiated the process and their fortified wheat flour would
begin to be seen in the market in different regions by July/August and then scale up pan-India by December 2017, the regulator said.

The FSSAI said that the decision is the outcome of a series of meetings convened by it over past two months with related businesses, including medium and small industry players and development partners such as GAIN who have been associated with fortification of wheat flour over the past few years.

FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said: "Fortification Standards and a logo for fortified foods released by FSSAI recently, has provided a rallying point for food businesses to take up fortification on a large scale".