FSSAI to introduce web-based system for food inspection

NEW DELHI: Food regulator FSSAI will soon introduce a technology-based system to ensure that food safety inspection and sampling are conducted in a transparent and objective manner, its CEO Pawan Agarwal said today.

Addressing a FICCI conference on retail, FMCG and e-commerce, he said the regulator is modernising food testing labs as part of its efforts to ensure safe and hygienic food is made available to the people.

Agarwal said the enforcement of food safety law is done by states and there are no food inspectors in the central agency.

"We recently held a meeting with states' food commissioners. We are introducing a new food safety inspection and sampling system using web-based approach. This will ensure that inspection and sampling is done in a transparent and objective manner," he said.
Agarwal said many food businesses face challenges at the field level with enforcement agencies and therefore there is a need to adopt transparent inspection system.

The FSSAI CEO said that there are 90 government food labs in the country and 135 labs have been set up by the private sector.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) seeks to provide a robust framework of food safety in the country and is setting up standards for food products and practices, he said.

In food standards, Agarwal said a lot of progress has been made and standards for 80-85 per cent products are already in place while norms for the remaining are being finalised.

On standard food practices, he said the FSSAI is far behind but it is working with food professionals to develop food safety management practice.

Agarwal also stressed on increasing awareness level among consumers, saying that "consumers should demand best standards from food business operators".

He said compliance and enforcement would become meaningless if there are robust standards and food businesses are able to meet those norms and supply safe food to people.