FSSAI calls for views on tolerance to max residue levels of pesticides

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has come up with a notice calling for suggestions & views related to tolerance to harmonisation of Maximum Residue Level (MRL) of pesticides. The notice suggests restriction on the use of insecticides directly on articles of food.

It suggests new standards for Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011. If implemented it will substitute the previous standards of the regulations.

It provides that nothing in this regulation shall apply to the fumigants which are registered and recommended for use as such on articles of food by the Registration Committee, constituted under Insecticides Act, 1968.

Experts welcome move

Experts welcome the move and call it an obligation to follow for better trade assessment. Dr V Sudershan Rao, scientist, food safety division, National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, said, “We have obligation under World Trade Organization (WTO) to harmonise with CODEX for easy export and import.”

He added, “WTO suggests to member countries to take CODEX standards as guidance standards as they are scientifically developed. In the exercise of harmonising our standards these principles play a significant role.”
Rao said, “These standards are very important as per health and hygiene issue, as risk assessment takes into consideration the public health.”

The notice has suggested specified insecticides which can be used in the food articles, but shall not exceed the MRL prescribed in notice.

It also stated that all these MRL or tolerance limit values are provisional for a period of five years and not fixed on the basis of actual data in the Indian context.

They may either be reviewed after five years, or as and when the relevant scientific data is made available to FSSAI.

According to the notice, the MRLs are fixed on different bases like the limits of quantification (LOQ).

If insecticides are registered under the Insecticide Act, 1968, but the label claims for the said commodities are not fixed, the MRL is to be fixed at LOQ.

MRL will also be fixed on the calculation of fats and according to the recommendation by 49th Session of Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR).