Press Note

While the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 is coming into force from 1st April, 2019, the FSSAI has issued a direction advising the enforcement official that these regulations may be considered as ‘Enabling Regulations’ and not to be considered for prosecution particularly for small original producers and producer organizations during initial phase of its implementation.

As per the FSS (Organic Foods) Regulations, any food offered for sale as ‘organic food’ should comply with the provisions laid down under either the National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) administered by the Ministry of Commerce or the Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India) operated by the ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare or any other system or standards that may be notified by the Food Authority from time to time.

Meanwhile, various representations have been received regarding challenges faced by organic food business operators including small original producers in light of the fact that a large number of producers and producer organizations in the country are not certified under any of the two systems of certification i.e. NPOP and PGS-India.

While efforts are being taken on to simplify these systems (NPOP and PGS) to make it responsive for small producer and producer organizations and also to address other implementation challenges, FSSAI has taken this measure of not prosecuting small original producers and producer organizations during initial phase of the implementation of these regulations till 1st April, 2020.

Further, this direction enables direct sales of organic food by all original producers and producer organizations to the end consumer irrespective of the turnover prescribed earlier (i.e. annual turnover of not more than Rs. 12 lakh) and without any certification i.e. NPOP/PGS-India. The aggregators/intermediaries having turnover of organic produce not exceeding Rs 50 lakhs/ annum can also collect organic food from small producers and sell it to the end consumer directly. Also commodities which are in conversion under NPOP or PGS-India may write “In conversion to Organic” on the labels.

However, irrespective of these exemptions, it should be ensured that the safety of the organic products (limits of contaminants and insecticide residues) is complied as specified in the relevant Regulations.

A review of these regulations would be taken up after six months of its implementation.

************