No need to mention cinnamon separately on food packages, states FSSAI

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There is no need to declare cinnamon separately on food packages containing the spice as either a compound or an ingredient. However, this declaration by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to the food safety commissioners of all states and Union Territories (UTs) added that the same would have to be mentioned on those packages that contained cinnamon as the only ingredient.

The step, which has brought huge relief to food business operators (FBOs), was taken into consideration after it was found that a few food safety officers (FSOs) were allegedly issuing notices to FBOs. The notices reportedly cited the non-declaration of cinnamon content on the packages of a number of products in which the spice, known in India as dalchini, was an ingredient. These included upma mixes, masala oats, masala poha and masala noodles.

Vivek Patel, partner, Bhavi Incorporation, Vadodara, said, “The apex food regulator’s clarification will benefit the traders. However, even if it is not mentioned on the package, it will not have an impact, as cinnamon is not a harmful ingredient.”

The Rajasthan-based Prakash Sharma, manager, Ramavtar Mahesh Chand, said, “We have not received any such notice from any authority. But clarification is needed. With FSSAI now making it clear that such a declaration is not necessary, it will increase the ease of doing business.”

The declaration of cinnamon was regulated under Clause 11 of the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, which stated, “Every package containing cinnamon shall bear the label of cinnamon.”

**Aflatoxin limit in areca nut**

Meanwhile, the apex regulator, through a gazette notification, has notified the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Third Amendment Regulations by fixing the limit for aflatoxin in areca nut.

As per the notification, under the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011, in Regulation 2.2 relating to crop contaminants and naturally-occurring toxic substances, in Sub-regulation 2.2.1, in the table relating to Aflatoxin, an entry mentioned areca nut or betel nut should be added and the limit that has been fixed is 15µg/kg.
Currently, in the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011, the limits for aflatoxin have been fixed for cereal and cereal products, pulses, nuts, dried figs and oilseeds or oil. In order to ensure food safety, the limit of aflatoxin in areca nut has been fixed.

Aflatoxins are a group of toxins produced by fungi (mainly Aspergillus flavus and Aspergillus parasiticus) that are found on agricultural crops such as maize (corn), peanuts, cottonseed and tree nuts.

Areca nuts are prone to the formation of fungal growth during various stages of its production, storage and transportation.