AHMEDABAD: Gujarat tops the country in fining meat and meat products sellers and slaughterhouses, according to records of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The food safety agency data shows that penalties worth Rs1,66,81,000 were imposed upon misbranded or adulterated food samples including meat and meat products in Gujarat in the year 2016-17.

In 2016-17, meat and meat products sellers and slaughterhouses in the country were fined a total of Rs4,49,43,648 of which 37.11% was collected from those in Gujarat. This is followed by Tamil Nadu where offenders shelled out fines worth Rs78,98,500.

In Gujarat, as many as 11,364 food samples including meat and meat products were received in 2016, and out of them, 839 samples were found adulterated and misbranded. FSSAI registered 46 criminal cases and 513 civil cases and obtained two convictions.

According to the figures of Union agriculture and animal husbandry ministry, Gujarat has 11 slaughterhouses with FSSAI registration which come under the jurisdiction local civic bodies. There are no slaughterhouses in Gujarat with central or state licences.

H G Koshia, commissioner of Food and Drug Control Authority
(FDCA) Gujarat, while confirming the huge fines collected from sellers of meat and meat products including slaughterhouses, said that adulteration and misbranding of meat and meat products is rampant in the state.

"We receive numerous complaints of misbranding where ingredients are shown different than they are mixed in the meat product. Besides, there are also issues of hygiene in meat shops or slaughterhouses on which the food safety officers randomly take actions," said Koshia, adding, "We also constantly receive complaints about meat or meat product labelled as of one particular animal but the seller is selling meat of another animal."

The FDCA commissioner said, "We have our food safety officers working in all districts of Gujarat and they have power to impose penalties up to Rs3 lakh. We have also established a food safety tribunal in Gandhinagar which enables us to implement food safety laws effectively."