Companies begin fortifying Milk with Vitamin A, D to combat deficiencies

Milk producers were asked to include the micronutrients by the FSSAI, India’s top food regulator.

Milk suppliers in India have begun fortifying their product with Vitamin A and D after the country’s food regulator laid down new guidelines to combat common their deficiencies.

Around 70-90% of Indians are estimated to have insufficient or deficient levels of Vitamins A and D, studies have shown, prompting the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to ask milk producers to add 770 IU of Vitamin A and 550 IU of Vitamin D per litre of milk.
“Fortification of milk can act as a complementary strategy and help reduce the gap and can act as a vehicle to carry Vitamin A and Vitamin D,” said Pawan Aggarwal, CEO-FSSAI.

The additions are being made across all range of milk sold: skimmed milk, double toned milk, toned milk and standard.

“The fortification will help provide 15-30% of the daily requirement for these vitamins. National-level consultations were conducted to make the industry aware of the standards and were requested to take up the fortification of milk for public good.”

India is today the largest producer of milk at approximately 160 million metric tons per annum. The per capita availability of milk is approximately 357 ml.

Milk is a complete food and is a good carrier of Vitamin A and Vitamin D.

But, due to the processing needs and the current insufficiency/deficiency in the population, not enough of these vitamins are delivered through food. Many of FSSAI’s development partners have taken the initiative forward.

TATA Trusts have supported the states of Jharkhand and Assam to start the fortification of their milk variants. Mother Dairy took the initiative to fortify its complete range and today sells about 25 lac liters per day (LLPD) of fortified milk,” he said.

“Today, including Mother Dairy, 5 more states and a couple of private dairies are already fortifying milk, totalling to 10% of the total 410 LLPD fortifiable
milk in the country. Another 5 states are in advance stages to launch the fortified milk in next 2 months which will take the total fortified milk to 20% of the 410 LLPD. With this the fortified milk will reach about 50 million people in the country.” The plan is to fortify about 50% of the country’s milk by 2019 and 80% by 2021.

“The landscape analysis of the private dairies is being done by Tata Trusts and very soon the campaign will start to include them in this initiative,” Agarwal said. “Fortification is a complementary strategy to build the nation and provide nutrition security to the population of the country.”