FSSAI relaxes labelling norms for instant noodles for another 6 months
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In a recent development on the labelling front, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has considered the request to further the use of print packaging material with respect to labelling for instant noodles for the next six months.

In September 2017, the country’s apex regulator, through its gazette notification, prescribed new standards for instant noodles. The new regulation required a specific food category, instant noodles, to be printed on the label in place of the existing food product category, noodles (proprietary food).

As per the directive, FSSAI received various representations requesting the permission to continue the use of the current print packaging material for another six months. Thus, after due consideration, the apex regulator has allowed the use of the existing labels under proprietary food up to June 30, 2018.

However, it has instructed all the food business operators (FBOs) to comply with the standards prescribed for instant noodles specified in the gazette.

Nilesh Lele, secretary, Association of Food Scientists and Technologists (India) [AFST(I)], said “Defining the standards for instant noodles is a welcome move, and will make it a level playing field for all.”

“Such extensions for the usage of the old packaging material is always beneficial to businesses, else that material will become redundant,” he added.

“FSSAI may also decide on a standardised time frame, where a fixed time has been given to use the old packaging material whenever such labelling-related notifications come into effect,” Lele said.
As per the gazette notification, under the Sub-regulation relating to macaroni products, the standards for instant noodles had been added.

Instant noodles (not applied to noodle seasoning) are defined as, “The product prepared from wheat flour, or rice flour, or flour of any other cereal, millet and legume covered, or in combination thereof, or flour from tubers and water as the main ingredient, with or without the addition of herbs, condiments and seasonings, spices, iodised salt, sugar and wheat gluten by kneading the dough and extending it, and starches, dried fruits and vegetables, or their products or extracts, nuts, edible protein and egg powder, meat, poultry, marine or their products (whose standards are prescribed in these regulations) may be added, if required.”

Direction on caffeinated beverages

Meanwhile, FSSAI also issued a directive regarding further extension to food business operators (FBOs) adhering to the standards for caffeinated beverages. With this directive, FSSAI noted it to be the last extension.

In December 2016, a gazette notification was issued prescribing the standards for caffeinated beverage, and a transition period of six months (i.e., upto July 2017) was given to FBOs to comply with the standards. However, a further extension was granted till December 2017 to exhaust the existing stock manufactured domestically or imported in accordance with the requirement specified.

As per the recent directive, various representations were received requesting a further extension to the deadline for enforcement of regulation as products are still available in the market and continue to be fit for sale till the period of expiry of the product. Thus, after due consideration, it was decided to extend the deadline by another six months, this being the last extension in the matter.