FSSAI IN NEWS

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Manufacturers agree to fortify edible oil with Vitamin A&D: FSSAI

NEW DELHI: All major edible oil manufacturers and processors have agreed to fortify cooking oil with Vitamin A & D within the next three months, the food regulator FSSAI said today.

Fortification means deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in food to improve its quality.

This decision is the outcome of a meeting convened by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently here. Over 130 persons, including the representatives of the edible oil industry and its associations, and academia attended this meeting among others.

The FSSAI is promoting food fortification in a big way and had last year issued standards for fortification of salt with iodine and iron, of vegetable oil and milk with Vitamin A and D, wheat flour and rice with iron, folic acid, zinc, vitamin B12, vitamin A and some other micronutrients.

"All major edible oil manufacturing and processing sector decides to fortify the edible oil with vitamin A and D within the next three months," FSSAI said in a statement.

"During the deliberations industry partners, including Patanjali, resolved to adopt fortification of all their edible oil variants as an industry norm and have agreed to initiate fortification within 8-12 weeks," it added.
As per the National Institute of Nutrition, there is a high prevalence of vitamin A and D deficiencies amongst Indian population. Almost 50-90 per cent of the Indian population, across all socio-economic groups, suffers from vitamin A and D deficiencies.

FSSAI said the fortification of edible oils with vitamin A and D, offers the most feasible and cost-effective intervention, as India has a fairly high consumption of edible oils, ranging from 12-18 kg per annum per person.

The country imported 14.5 million tonnes of vegetable oils in the 2015-16 oil year (November-October) to meet its domestic demand.

"Food fortification has a great potential to enrich the nutritional quality of various foods. It is encouraging to see such a traction and commitment within the food industry to initiate fortification of foods. This would indeed help India to improve the nutritional status of millions of people, both the poor and the rich." FSSAI's CEO Pawan Agarwal said..

The regulator also discussed the issues related to the sale of loose edible oil and the industry was advised to adopt small packaging of edible oil to discourage sale of loose oil.

At the behest of governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat, entire edible oil industry is already selling only fortified edible oil across these States.

Several state and UT governments like Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, etc. have started providing fortified oil through the public funded programmes like the PDS, ICDS and MDM.

"Edible oil processors also decided to come out with oils in small pouches in order to ensure effective ban on loose oil sale in the country," the statement said.