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Eliminating food fraud vulnerabilities

A directive issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on June 3, 2024, several fruit juice manufacturers in India are forced to be more vigilant about what they write or claim on their product packaging and labels

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Claims are popularly placed on the front of food packages (FOP) as FOP attracts a lot of consumer attention. Presence of claims on the front of a package work as a signpost and help consumers focus on summary information and make an informed choice. When marketers use food images to make consumers remember health claims along with text-based information, consumers make false interpretations based on food images and forget about the text-based message suggesting that the food is unhealthy. A study published in Elsevier in September 2023 examined the presence of claims on 230 food packages marketed in India and the extent of compliance with guidelines provided by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The results reveal that word claims (natural) and nutrient content claims are most popularly used on food packages. Still, a large number of claims used on food packages cannot be classified or verified due to the absence of clear definitions from the regulator. In addition to this, unhealthy foods carry claims and foods also contain claims which have been stated as prohibited. This calls for timely necessary actions on part of the regulator to protect the health of consumers.

A directive issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on June 3, 2024, several fruit juice manufacturers in India are forced to be more vigilant about what they write or claim on their product packaging and labels. For example, Dabur's fruit juice brand "Real" is one of the brands that might need to be bothered by this directive. According to the mandate, all Food Business Operators (FBOs) have been asked to remove any claim of ‘100 per cent fruit juices’ from the labels and advertisements of reconstituted fruit juices. All the FBOs have also been instructed to exhaust existing pre-printed packaging materials before September 1, 2024. Another such example is of so-called ‘Health Drinks’ and ‘Energy Drinks’ that have been enjoying impressive sales nowadays but are recently going through the same phase as "100 per cent fruit juices". The regulator has noted instances of food products licensed under 'Proprietary

Food' with the nearest category – Dairy Based Beverage Mix or Cereal Based Beverage Mix or Malt Based Beverage – being sold on e-commerce websites under the category ‘Health Drink’, ‘Energy Drink’, etc.

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