NEWS | FSSAI

# FSSAI CAC meeting underscores importance of strengthening food safety

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) held its 44th meeting of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) on 22nd August 2024 under the chairmanship of CEO G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, who proactively discussed the formation of an inter-ministerial committee to address concerns over pesticide usage.

CEO, FSSAI proposed that each state shall establish this inter-ministerial committee, which will focus on reducing pesticide use, implementing control measures, and developing strategies to monitor and regulate pesticide application at the farmer level. This initiative is aimed at ensuring agricultural practices remain safe and sustainable, thereby protecting consumers from potential health risks associated with pesticide residues in food.

Rao also emphasised on the ongoing interstate zonal council meetings, focusing on filling vacant posts of Food Safety Officers (FSOs) and Designated Officers (DOs), and the urgent need to upgrade food testing laboratories. He encouraged States to submit proposals for establishing new microbiology laboratories to enhance testing capabilities.

He further emphasised the need to identify key locations within states where mobile labs- Food Safety on Wheels (FSWs) can be deployed. These mobile labs will be instrumental in raising consumer awareness and disseminating crucial information about food safety practices. The FSW vans, equipped with testing equipment and RAPID kits, quickly assess food quality and safety parameters in line with Food Safety and Standards Regulations. Results are available within hours, enabling prompt corrective actions to ensure the safety of food products for public consumption.

CEO, of FSSAI concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to work together in ensuring that food safety remains a top priority, reflecting the collective effort to provide safe and nutritious food to consumers across the country.

The meeting saw the participation of more than 50 officials, including Commissioners of Food Safety (CFS), representatives from States and Union Territories (UTs), senior officials from FSSAI, and members from the food industry, and agriculture sector.

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