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FSSAI aims to strengthen food safety standards and compliance with fortification

The government’s fortification program, aimed at addressing micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia prevalent in the Indian population

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) convened a significant meeting with stakeholders from the Fortified Rice Kernel (FRK) manufacturing sector and rice millers in Hyderabad. The meeting was chaired by CEO G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, with special guests including D.S. Chauhan, Commissioner & Principal Secretary to the Government of Telangana, along with other prominent officials from the Food Safety and Consumer Affairs departments.

During the meeting, CEO FSSAI highlighted the importance of maintaining stringent standards for FRK and the necessary compliance mechanisms to be adhered to during the fortification process. He reiterated the mandate for third-party audits to be conducted by all FRK manufacturers; failure to comply with these regulations will result in consequences for non-compliance.

The government's fortification program, aimed at addressing micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia prevalent in the Indian population, was also discussed. As the national food regulator, FSSAI has established standards for FRK and FRK premixes to ensure quality, making it mandatory to conduct batch-wise testing.

Recently, the Prime Minister launched 109 high-yielding, nutritionally fortified varieties of crops. The significance of bioavailability in FRK was also emphasised. Currently, over 900 companies are involved in FRK manufacturing in India.

Concerns regarding recent non-compliance reports from various stakeholders were raised, particularly regarding manufacturing practices and record-keeping. Special Guest D.S. Chauhan, Commissioner & Principal Secretary to the Government of Telangana, underscored challenges in implementing rice fortification programs, such as contamination, adulteration, and hygiene issues. He noted the presence of duplicate products, particularly concerning rice and tea, while commending the high quality of Telangana rice.

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