



Inspiring Trust, Assuring Safe & Nutritious Food

Press Note

INDUSTRY GEARS UP FOR RICE FORTIFICATION

New Delhi, 10th April, 2017: An estimated 2 billion people suffer from vitamin and mineral deficiencies worldwide, which have a devastating impact on the population. Impaired cognitive and motor development among children, growth retardation, reduced immune response, less capacity to do physical work, and increased mortality and morbidity among mothers, adults and newborns, it has an impact beyond health.

Rice is a staple food consumed by 65 percent of the Indian population. As India progresses, fortified rice can prove to be an effective vehicle towards reducing the malnutrition burden. There are global and Indian scientific studies demonstrating the safety and effectiveness of extruded fortified rice consumption by women and children which significantly improved their vitamin and mineral status. There are many more studies that support the acceptability and safety of extruded fortified rice conducted in over 25 countries globally.

The process to fortify rice has two steps – first, to produce Fortified Rice Kernels (FRKs) and then blending these kernels with traditional rice in ratio ranging from 1:50 to 1:200. There are about five kernel suppliers available in India and another four are in the process as the demand for fortified rice will increase. Blending of the FRKs can happen at the warehouse or at the miller, equipment for which is readily available and already in use. The technology to fortify rice is available in India through PATH, DSM and IIT Kharagpur.

Over the last couple of years, several initiatives have also been spearheaded by the industry and development partners to provide fortified rice through the open market as well as safety net programs. Government of India with the support from PATH and WFP has tested the implementation of distributing fortified rice through various welfare schemes, especially through Mid-Day Meal in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, via telemedicine centres in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha respectively. In Karnataka, fortified rice is being given to 450,000 children in 2600 schools in 3 districts every day. The Government of Karnataka has included this program in the budget this year and will be expanding efforts to four more districts reaching an additional 400,000 children every day.

After the launch of fortification standards for staple foods including rice, FSSAI is continuing its efforts to support fortification across the country in both the open market and the government funded food schemes. In a recent consultation at FSSAI in collaboration with PATH and WFP, key rice industry players, technical experts along with policy leaders and state representations came together to deliberate on the challenges, next steps, and phasing of rice fortification over the next six months. In agreement with these efforts, major

rice brands have agreed to begin fortification of rice with vitamins and minerals with iron, folic acid, vitamin B12.

As the cost of fortification is minimal (between 30 and 80 paisa per kg), FSSAI in collaboration with all the key stakeholders have agreed to make efforts to target both safety net as well as open market channels to ensure better nutrition to each and every household. A joint agreement between all stakeholders was reached to align communication and marketing messages to promote “consumer facing” awareness, including promotion of the national logo for fortified foods, symbolizing better nutrition and helping consumers make an informed choice.

Industry players like DCP India Pvt. Ltd, Adani Wilmer, K.K.R group (Nirapara), Pattabi Agro Pvt Ltd. committed to bring out fortified rice in the open market within 3 months. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI who chaired the consultation stated that “Rice is one important staple that has capacity to change the nutrition profile of the nation, owing to its consumption. Rice is consumed by more than half of India’s population. Reaching even half of those people would mean providing better nutrition to 470 million people. Rice also has the highest uptake in government safety net programs- 3.2 crore MT. Fortified rice is an efficient way to reach out to the rich and the poor”. He applauded the enthusiasm and determination of all stakeholders committed to improving the health of the nation.