

PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON MILK FORTIFICATION

Another leap to scale up milk fortification

New Delhi, 5th September, 2018: The growing concern of micronutrient deficiencies in India can be strategically addressed through the cost effective, scientifically proven, globally recognised strategy - Food Fortification. Milk fortified with key micronutrients namely Vitamin A and D from vegetarian source is an effective way to deliver these key micronutrients to the population without changing their dietary pattern. 30 % of the Milk is handled by organized industry in India. Since the operationalisation of standards for fortification by FSSAI, 21.53% of fortifiable milk in the organised sector is fortified. Currently approximately, 78 LLPD (Lac Litres per Day) of milk is getting fortified through 13 State Dairy Cooperatives, reaching 52 million people across country and around 15 LLPD of fortified milk through private dairies. To encourage fortification of staples, FSSAI has recently issued Gazette notification of Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018 dated 2nd August 2018. The new standards have a range of limits with a lower and upper limit of Vitamin A and D.

In order to scale up milk fortification, Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC), FSSAI in collaboration with TATA Trusts and NDDB held a 'National Consultation on Milk Fortification' on September 5th, 2018 at Vivanta by Taj - Ambassador, New Delhi. The objective of the consultation was to encourage larger number of dairies in India to adopt milk fortification. As part of the consultation, the early adopters of milk fortification were also felicitated. Among Private dairies, Creamline Dairy Products Ltd received felicitation as an early adopter with a capacity of 2LLPD. Mother Dairy was felicitated as they pioneered milk fortification by fortifying approximately 30LLPD of their pouch milk and bulk vending milk across Delhi NCR and other regions. Jharkhand Milk Federation and Maahi Milk Producer Company were also felicitated for their outstanding work and success of milk fortification. The Managing Directors and CEO's of these companies shared their experiences with the industry on Milk Fortification and their partnership with Tata Trusts and NDDB.

Dairies such as Chanakya Dairy, VRS Foods (Paras Dairy), Heritage Foods, Creamline Dairy, Kwaliti Foods, Hatson Agro product, Britannia, Nestle, Dairy Power Ltd, Goma Foods Pvt Ltd, Sunfresh Agro Industries Pvt Ltd, Milk Mantra are the brands which have proactively adopted fortification and launched fortified milk in the open market. Major cooperative Federations like Orissa State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Ltd., Madhya Pradesh State Cooperative Dairy Federation Ltd., Jharkhand State Cooperative Milk Producers Federation Ltd. and Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation Ltd. Chattisgarh state cooperative dairy federation Limited, Pradeshik Dairy Cooperative Federation Limited, West Assam Milk Union Limited etc. have also shown a remarkable work in last few months.

The consultation brought together around 35 private dairies and 10 State Cooperatives. Presentations were made by representatives from Tata Trusts, NDDB and FFRC – FSSAI on the various engagement with the Industry on Milk fortification and new standards were discussed along with the packaging and labelling requirements. An open house discussion happened around food fortification as a strategy, cost of fortification, and sources of vitamin, quality assurance etc. Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI in his remarks addressed several concerns about fortification. He informed that the standards for fortification are set by scientific panel of eminent scientists and public health specialists who have decades of experience in the sector. The levels of fortification have been fine-tuned basis the scientific evidence. Also, keeping in mind the sensitivity of the Indian population, the regulation prescribed that the fortification must be done only from vegetarian sources. Also, the cost of fortification is minimal for all the staples, especially for milk which is less than 3 paisa / litre and does not have effect on the price of the fortified milk. Fortification is, tried and tested strategy that has been implemented for decades in developed countries having successful results. He also informed that fortified staples merely provide 30-50% RDAs and therefore, is a complimentary strategy in addition to dietary diversification and supplementation. One of the leading weekly peer-reviewed general medical journal 'The Lancet' has identified fortification as one of the most effective strategy in combating micronutrient malnutrition.

Making an addition to the existing enabling environment, the regulator recently introduced the process of 'Endorsement for fortification'. It is a simple process based on self-compliance wherein FBOs fortifying their product, shall undertake an endorsement by logging into the Food Licensing Registration System (FLRS) with their existing username and obtain an endorsement. The step was well appreciated by the industry members.

The consultation ended with all the participating milk processors assuring their support to achieve increased percentage of fortified milk by the end of this year.