

FSSAI in fast lane for notifying guidelines

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The country's apex food regulator is hastening the notifying of guidelines for proprietary foods, health & dietary supplements, food additives and nutraceuticals.

These items are not covered under the food safety regulations of 2011, which operationalises the Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006.

The move to crunch the time required to notify guidelines, which would have otherwise taken at least six to eight months, is expected to go a long way in minimising the confusion and litigation that has been the bane of food safety guidelines in its current form.

The 2011 guidelines cover only 377 items, implying only

RELIEF FOR FOOD COMPANIES

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■ Draft guidelines that cover about

12,000 ingredients and additives have been put up on the FSSAI website for comments from industry

■ The last date for doing so is next month for nutraceutical majors

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these are standardised. This saw the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) at loggerheads with packaged food and health care majors.

In August this year, the Supreme Court intervened to scrap an "arbitrary" product approval advisory process that FSSAI had devised to clear non-

standardised food and health care products. Since then, FSSAI, under new chairman Ashish Bahuguna, has been at work, talking to companies and industry representatives, persons in the know said.

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the FSSAI website for comments from industry. The last date for doing so is next month for nutraceutical majors. Food companies have till early December, sources said. Then, FSSAI will prepare the final guidelines, to then go for law ministry approval.

Officials say the final guide-

lines could be notified as early as January next year, bringing India uptodate with international standards under the Codex Alimentarius. The latter is a collection of internationally recognised standards, codes of practice, guidelines and other recommendations on foods, production and safety.

While India is a signatory to the Codex, its norms are yet to be followed here, safety experts said. The draft guidelines, says R K Sanghavi, chairman, nutraceutical sub-committee, Indian Drug Manufacturers Association, would align India with international standards

"The proposed regulations are positive from the point of view of companies, as well as consumers as there will be specific regulations and standards which were hitherto absent," he said.

Regulatory