

Not as alarming as milk, but food adulteration worrying

Govt Study Found 13% Samples Across Country Contaminated

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New Delhi: After milk, the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has found that contamination is in fact, quite common among other food items across the country.

In 2010, the FSSAI picked up over 1.17 lakh samples of food articles and tested them. Around 13% of the samples overall were found to be adulterated.

Earlier, a study had found that 68.4% of milk samples across the country were adulterated.

A comparative analysis of food samples has shown adulteration rates as high as 40% in Chhattisgarh, 34% in Uttarakhand, 29% in Uttar Pradesh, 23% in Rajasthan and 20% in West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh. Besides, nearly 17% of the food samples tested in Bihar and Chandigarh, 16% in Nagaland, 15% in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, 14% in Haryana, 12% in Tamil Nadu and 10% in Maharashtra were adulterated.

Interestingly, adulteration



UNPALATABLE

Food adulteration rate in 2010

Chhattisgarh	40
Uttarakhand	34
Uttar Pradesh	29
Rajasthan	23
West Bengal	20
Bihar	17
Punjab	15
Tamil Nadu	12
Maharashtra	10
Karnataka	5
Delhi	4

2001-2002

rates in Delhi were low at 4% while in Karnataka it was just 5%.

A comparative analysis of food adulteration rates over the last

three years has shown a steady increase. In 2008, 94,000 samples were examined of which over 8,300 were found to be adulterated (8.79%). In 2009, 1.13 lakh samples were examined of which 11.14% were adulterated. In 2010, 1.17 lakh samples were examined of which over 14,000 samples (12.65%) were adulterated.

This has now made the health ministry's working group propose the setting up of a National Food Science and Risk Assessment Centre (NFSAC) during the 12th Five-Year Plan. The project is slated to cost around Rs 155 crore. The Centre will be on the lines of the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Centre for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition in the US.

The NFSRAC will be the repository of all food standards and will carry out all risk assessment-related work and analyse food surveillance data received from labs.

The working group report said that the centre will carry out food safety risk analysis training and control regulatory research.