

FSSAI advises e-comm platforms to ensure appropriate categorisation of food products sold on their websites

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued directives to all e-commerce food business operators (FBOs) to ensure proper categorization of food products available for sale on their platforms. FSSAI has observed instances where food products licensed under 'Proprietary Food', such as Dairy Based Beverage Mix or Cereal Based Beverage Mix or Malt Based Beverage, are being marketed on e-commerce websites under misleading categories like 'Health Drink' or 'Energy Drink'.

FSSAI has clarified that the term 'Health Drink' lacks standardization under the FSS Act 2006 or its related regulations. Consequently, FSSAI has urged all e-commerce FBOs to promptly rectify this misclassification by removing or reclassifying such drinks from the category of 'Health Drinks / Energy Drinks' and placing them under the appropriate category as stipulated by the existing regulations.

Proprietary Foods are food items that do not adhere to standardization in the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations or the Food Safety and Standards (Health Supplements, Nutraceuticals, Food for Special Dietary Use, Food for Special Medical Purpose, Functional Food, and Novel Food) Regulations, although they may contain standardized ingredients.

Moreover, the term 'Energy Drink' is only permitted for products licensed under Food Category System (FCS) 14.1.4.1 and 14.1.4.2 (Carbonated and Non-carbonated water based flavored drinks), as standardized under sub-regulation 2.10.6 (2) of Food Product Standards and Food Additives Regulations 2011, specifically for Caffeinated Beverages.

This corrective measure is aimed at enhancing clarity and transparency regarding the nature and functional properties of the products, thereby enabling consumers to make well-informed choices without encountering misleading information.