

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

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## India

**Post:** New Delhi

### **Nutritional labeling Requirement on Front of Packaged Foods Soon**

**Report Categories:**

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Exporter Guide

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and  
Standards - Narrative

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**Report Highlights:**

The Government of India's (GOI) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on a regulation that makes it mandatory for food business operators (FBOs) to specify dietary ingredients on the front-of-pack (FOP) of packaged food products. These food products will be benchmarked against the permissible or healthy limits of their consumption. With this FOP approach, FSSAI expects to help consumers make an informed choice on what they are consuming.

## General Information:

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is working on a new draft regulation relating to Packaging, Labeling and Claims. In the draft regulation, FSSAI also wants to include the FOP labeling approach as they believe it will help consumers make informed choices by providing information to consumers to compare different foods and make healthier choices.

The Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) information on the label enables the consumers to be aware of the amount of energy in the single serving of a food or a beverage. The rationale behind FSSAI's move in this direction is the fact that there is no scientific definition of foods high in fat, salt and sugar and it is difficult to categorize such products. FSSAI is working on norms to define the daily recommended intake of a nutrient or ingredient for a person in a day. These norms would make it mandatory for food business operators (FBOs) to mention the amounts of fat, salt and sugar in accordance to the recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) and also mention what part of the RDA is consumable on the package of that food product or per serving of the product.

FSSAI is using the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) drafted RDA for reference values. If Indian RDA value is not available for any nutrient, values provided in Codex/WHO Guidelines will be applicable.

Official sources have confirmed that some of the large MNCs have already started following this practice by including the information on nutritional values in terms of salt, sugar and fat per 100g serving. FSSAI also plans to include Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) information on the label to indicate the amount of energy in a serving of a food or beverage.

However, wholesale packs, raw agricultural commodities such as wheat, rice, cereals, spices, spice mixes, herbs, condiments, table salt, sugar, jaggery, or non-nutritive products like soluble tea, coffee, soluble coffee, coffee-chicory mixture, packaged drinking water, packaged mineral water, alcoholic beverages or fruit and vegetables, processed and pre-packaged assorted vegetables, fruits, vegetables and products that are comprised of a single ingredient, pickles, *papad*, or foods served for immediate consumption such as served in hospitals, hotels or by food services vendors or Indian sweet shops (*halwais*) will be exempted from GDA labels. For additional information, readers may refer to the 'nutritional information' section of clause 2.2.2 of the [Food Safety and Standards \(Packaging and Labeling\) Regulations, 2011](#).

FSSAI is considering the following three options in order to make it simple for consumers to judge the nutrient content of a product.

- (i) To develop a "star rating system" based on a scale of one to five
- (ii) To develop a "traffic light system" under which the benchmarking is based on whether the amount of ingredient in a particular food product is considered more than permissible (red signal), lower than permissible (green), or medium (orange)
- (iii) To specify the percentage of the daily permissible limit of a product

If FSSAI adopts the FOP labeling approach, the back of pack nutrition information will change accordingly. The current focus of FSSAI is only on packaged foods and may look at other categories in the future.

**Additional background material:**

On May 4, 2017, FSSAI uploaded a report on High Fat Sugar Salt (HFSS) that explains concerns about HFSS food products on their website. The link [May 2017 - FSSAI - Report of Expert Group on Consumption of Fat, Sugar and Salt and its effect on Indian Population](#) will take the readers' to the HFSS report on FSSAI's website. The contents of the report are self-explanatory. The HFSS report cites international examples (Australia and New Zealand) that follow either of the above options as a benchmark along with their benefits and shortcomings.