

An Overview of Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006.

From 5th August 2011 onwards the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 and seven other acts related food items which were in force in the country are repealed and the new '**Food Safety and Standards Act 2006**' has come into force and has been implemented. The integrated food safety law was passed by the government recently. Rather than having seven separate food laws for meat, milk, edible oil, fruits and vegetables, etc, the integrated food law lay down uniform standards and a central mechanism on safety. The Centre, states, municipalities and panchayats will implement it. The Food Safety & Standards Rules, 2011 would replace the 50-year Prevention of Food Adulteration Act from the 5th of August of 2011.

The new law will see the repeal of seven existing laws and executive orders.

- 1. Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954;**
- 2. Fruit Products Order, 1955;**
- 3. Meat Food Products Order, 1973;**
- 4. Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Orders, 1947,**
- 5. Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order, 1998;**
- 6. Solvent Extracted Oil,**
- 7. Deoiled Meal and Edible Flour (Control) Order, 1967**
- 8. Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992**

In the past the act was under different ministries of food, health, drugs and excise. Every one made amendments according to their requirements but the new food safety and drugs act is simple and there are no complexities in it.

The important aspect of the new Act:

Licensing & Registration of Food Business :

The existing licenses granted by FDA department under the Prevention & Food Adulteration Act and other above mentioned seven acts are get to be converted into the license under the Food Safety & Standards Regulations within one year from 05.08.2011 and no fees will be charged for the remaining period upto which the earlier license is valid.

Quality Control System :

1. Effective enforcement to check adulteration and improve food safety structures in the manufacturing unit are key goals of the government.
2. Food safety management system is to be implemented in the unit and periodical food safety audit will be carried out by government authorities.
3. The new law is a scientific law which tries to promote food safety.

Food Safety Officers :

The Food Safety authority would set standards for various food items, govern the licensing system and punish violators of food laws. The new law provides for food safety commissioners in every district at the level of additional district magistrates. The commissioners would be assisted by food safety officers, earlier known as food inspectors. Food laboratories will be strengthened to check food quality.

Speedy justice :

Unlike the past legacy of more than 1 lakh court cases pending under the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act, the new law provides for compounding offences, adjudication and time-bound trial. The existing cases would be disposed when special courts and appellate tribunals are formed. Much of the pendency relates to PFA procedure violation by petty offenders and could be disposed off with fines.