Report Highlights:

The Government of India’s Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) notified the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Fourth Amendment Regulations, 2020 in the Official Gazette of India. The amendment regulations relate to standards for a range of meat products such as canned/retort packaged meat products; comminuted/restructured meat products; cured/pickled meat and/or smoked meat products; dried/dehydrated meat products; cooked/semi-cooked meat products; fermented meat products; marinated meat products, and fresh/chilled/frozen rabbit meat. The implementation date is July 1, 2021.
General Information:

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this report was retrieved from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India’s (FSSAI) website http://www.fssai.gov.in/. The Office of Agricultural Affairs, USDA and/or the U.S. Government make no claim of accuracy or authenticity.

On August 14, 2020, FSSAI published in its website the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Fourth Amendment Regulations, 2020. The regulations amendment relates to standards for canned/retort pouch meat products; comminuted/restructured meat products; cured/pickled meat and/or smoked meat products; dried/dehydrated meat products; cooked/semi-cooked meat products; fermented meat products; marinated meat products; and fresh/chilled/frozen rabbit meat. The implementation date for these amended regulations is July 1, 2021.

FSSAI first notified its draft amendments on this subject on June 4, 2018 and invited the World Trade Organization member countries to offer comments on the draft amendments. For details, please refer to GAIN IN8065.

The full text of the current notification published in the Indian Gazette is pasted below and is available on FSSAI’s website at:


FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 9th July, 2020

F.No. Stds/ M&MPIP (3)/SP/FSSAI-2018 - Whereas the draft of the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Amendment Regulations, 2018, were published as required by the subsection (1) of section 92 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (34 of 2006), vide notification of the Government of India, in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India number F. No. Stds/ M&MPIP (3)/SP/FSSAI-2018, dated the 24th December, 2018, in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4, inviting objections and suggestions from the persons likely to be affected thereby, before the expiry of the
period of thirty days from the date on which the copy of the Official Gazette containing the said notification were made available to the public;

And whereas copies of the said Gazette were made available to the public on the 3rd January, 2019;

And whereas objections and suggestions received from the public in respect of the said draft regulations have been considered by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 92 of the said Act, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India hereby makes the following regulations further to amend the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011, namely:-

Regulations

1. (1) These regulations may be called the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Fourth Amendment Regulations, 2020.

(2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette and Food Business Operator shall comply with all the provisions of these regulations by 1st July, 2021.

2. In the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011, in regulation 2.5, in sub-regulation 2.5.2 relating to Meat and Meat Products,

(A) for clauses 1 to 6, the following clauses shall be substituted, namely:

"1. Canned or Retort Pouch Meat Products.-

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to thermally processed shelf stable products designated as canned or retort pouch meat products.

(2) Canned or retort pouch meat products means the meat products packed in hermetically sealed containers or pouches which have been thermally processed at specified temperature, pressure and time combination followed by rapid cooling to render the product shelf stable.

(3) It may be processed by any of the following process, namely:-

(a) Canning or retorting: Meat or meat product is packed in air tight cans, retort pouches or any other containers suitable to the products and processed in thermal processing equipment to specified temperature, pressure and time combination to render the product commercially sterile. The sealed containers shall not show any changes on incubation at 35°C for 10 days or 55°C for 5 days.

(b) Retort pouch or containers: Retort pouches or containers are flexible laminates made of metal or plastic foils. They can withstand high temperature processing and are used as an alternative to cans for production of shelf stable-meat products.

(c) Commercial sterility: It is a condition achieved by application of heat which renders the product free of viable forms of microorganisms having public health significance as well as other microorganisms of non-health significance capable of reproducing in the food under normal non-refrigerated conditions of storage and distribution. F value required for achieving commercial sterility of different product will be different based on pH of the product, consistency and composition. F0 value of the product to be canned or retort processed must be standardised prior to production and marketing of the products.

(4) Explanations.- for the purpose of this sub-clause,-

(a) F Value means the common parameter used for measuring lethality of the heat treatment.

(b) F0 value indicates minutes required destroying a stated number of microorganisms at a defined temperature; usually 121 °C.

(5) These products may contain only those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardised food under these regulations.

(6) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(7) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.
2. Comminuted or Restructured Meat Products.—

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to raw or cooked comminuted or restructured meat products which have been packed in any suitable packing material. This category describes several processing steps (e.g., grinding, cutting, dicing, sectioning, flaking, chunking, slicing, mincing, chopping), ingredients, machinery and cooking methods for processing of comminuted or restructured meat products including mechanically deboned or separated meat products. It is broadly classified into comminuted or emulsion and restructured meat products.

(2) Comminuted meat products means boneless meat which has been subjected to particle size reduction by cutting or grinding or dicing or chopping or milling or marinated, or both and with or without additives. This category also includes meat emulsions or batters which are finely comminuted meat products containing true solutions, gels, emulsified fat and air. An emulsion is defined as mixture of two immiscible liquids, one of which is dispersed in the form of small droplets or globules in the other liquid.

(3) Emulsion is a process by which particle size is reduced for incorporation of meat raw materials into finished products. Comminuted or Emulsion meat products are made by chopping meat and water with the addition of common salt (NaCl) until a fine, protein-rich slurry is formed. This matrix is then capable of binding fat, water and other non-meat ingredients. After cooking, the salt soluble proteins are coagulated and this results in an immobilisation of the fat, water and other constituents. The basic structure of a meat emulsion is a mixture of finely divided meat constituents dispersed as a fat-in-water emulsion, where the discontinuous phase is fat and the continuous phase is water containing solubilised protein components. After cooking, these products can also be smoked.

(4) Restructured meat products means meat or meat products that have been ground, flaked, or chopped and formed into steak or chop or any other shape with a texture that is closer to that of an intact steak than that of ground meat.

(5) Restructured meat products are prepared by flaking, grinding or chopping meat so that it is formed into stake or chop like products with texture closer to intact meat. Chunked, ground, diced or flaked meat pieces are used in restructured products wherein the meat pieces bind each other with proteins extracted through mechanical action using tumbling or blending or massaging. Alternatively it can be restructured using a small amount of meat emulsion or non-meat binders along with salt, phosphates and other ingredients.

(6) These products shall be prepared from meat, mechanically deboned or separated meat or edible by products from meat animals or poultry.

(7) These products may also contain those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardised food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:

(a) Trimmings, fat, skin, edible by-products, mechanically recovered meat (MRM) or mechanically deboned meat (MDM). There is no limit on usage of MRM derived from poultry. However, for MRM derived from other food animal, the usage limit is limited to 20% of the meat portion of the product.

(b) Water, herbs, sugar, spices, preservatives, condiments, stabilizers, hydrolysed vegetable protein;

(c) Carbohydrate and protein binders such as:

(i) milk powders, caseinate, whey powder, egg protein, vegetable protein products;

(ii) meat, flour, fibres or starch prepared from cereal, grain, potato or sweet potato;

(iii) rusk, bread, biscuit or bakery products;

(iv) sucrose (sugar and brown cane sugar), dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, glucose syrup (including corn syrup);

(v) Other Dairy products and analogues;

(d) Fats, oils and fat emulsions;

(e) Fruits, vegetables, Fruit and vegetable juices, Fruit and vegetable nectars and protein products derived from vegetable sources such as soya beans;

(f) Cereal and cereal products;

(g) Egg and Egg products;
(h) Sweetening agents including honey (Excluding artificial Sweeteners).

(i) Salt and salt substitutes, Black Salt, Herbs, Spices, Masalas, seasonings and condiments, Vinegar, Mustards, sauces and like products, Yeast and like products, Soybean based seasonings and condiments;

(j) Water soluble hydrolysed protein;

(k) Carrageenan, Gellan gum, Guar gum, Gum Arabic (Acacia gum), Karaya Gum, Konjac Flour, Cellulose gel, Processed Eucheuma Seaweed, Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose, Xanthan gum;

(8) The final product shall comply with the following requirements, namely:

(a) These products shall have minimum of 50% meat (including lean meat, fat and edible offals). Lean meat portion shall not be less than 25% of the total formulation.

(b) These products shall have a maximum fat content of 30% for pork, 25% for rest of the food animals and 15% for birds and rabbits.

(c) Extenders or binders are allowed up to a level of 5.5% in the finished products. Meat products containing more than 5.5% binders or extenders or more than 2.0% isolated soy proteins must be labelled as “Imitation”.

(d) Moisture content of the finished products shall not exceed four times the protein content plus 10 percent (4P + 10), i.e., 10 percent added water.

(e) Low fat products shall not contain more than 10% fat, while extra lean products shall be less than 5% fat.

(9) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(10) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(11) The product can be chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4 °C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 18 °C.

3. Cured or Pickled and Cooked or Smoked Meat Products, or both.

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to cured or pickled and cooked or smoked meat products, or both which have been packed in any suitable packing material. This category describes several processing steps (e.g., curing or pickling, salting, cooking, smoking) that preserve and extend the shelf life of the meat and poultry products.

(2) Cured meat means the product prepared after curing meat with common salt, nitrate or nitrite and adjuncts for the purpose of preservation and obtaining desirable colour, flavour and shelf life.

(3) Meat pickle is traditional, shelf-stable ready-to-eat products which are prepared using common salt, vinegar and edible vegetable oil, seasoned with spices and condiments.

(4) Smoked meat means the product prepared by exposing the cured or cooked meat to smoke produced by hard wood for flavor and preservation. Alternatively, liquid smoke (oil-based, water soluble or dry powder) shall be applied to meat through dipping or drenching, auto-smoking (spraying) or directly mixing with meat formulation.

(5) In curing, smaller meat pieces or bigger cuts either deboned or bone-in shall be dipped in or injected with curing solution. There are two types of curing methods; wet and dry. In wet curing, the meat cuts are either dipped in curing solution or injected with curing solution using multi-needle injector or hand stitching or arterial injection followed by dipping or tumbling. In dry curing, all the curing ingredients are rubbed over the meat surface and stored for a long time under temperature and humidity control.

(6) Cured meat may be steamed or pressure cooked or smoked. Alternatively cured meat may be subjected to maturiation and drying or smoking. Smoking is done through the addition of either traditional vapors or liquid smoke to meat. There are two types of smoking; natural wood smoke and liquid smoke. Natural wood smoke is generally produced from non-resinous hardwood sawdust, woodchips, or logs. The smoke may be produced from an electronically controlled smoke generator or from a variety of much simpler versions, ranging from log burning to human power controlled smoke generators.

(7) For the purpose of pickling, boneless or bone-in meat cubes or chunks shall be subjected to cooking, followed by light frying, added with vinegar, seasoned with pre-processed spice mix, condiments and covered with heated and cooled oil.

(8) It shall contain meat, curing ingredients consisting of food-grade salt (NaCl or Potassium chloride), Nitrates and phosphates and for pickled meat product it shall contain vinegar also.
(9) These products may also contain those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardized food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:

(a) Carbohydrate and protein binders such as:-

(i) milk powders, caseinate, whey powder;

(ii) hydrolysed vegetable protein, soya or caseinate;

(iii) Sugar, sucrose (Sugar and Brown cane sugar), dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, glucose syrup (including corn syrup), honey, treacle or molasses;

(b) Herbs, Spices, seasonings and condiments; Saffron, Vinegars, Mustards, sauces and like products; Yeast and like products, Soybean based seasonings, Juniper berries and Smoke or smoke essences.

(10) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(11) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(12) The product can be in chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4 °C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 18 °C (except pickled meat products).

4. Dried or Dehydrated Meat Products.-

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to dried or dehydrated meat products which have been packed in any suitable packing material. This category describes several treatment methods (e.g., curing, salting, pickling and drying) that preserve and extend the shelf life of the meat and meat products.

(2) Dried or dehydrated meat products means the meat or meat products in which part of free water has been removed by evaporation or sublimation. Meat products preserved by dehydration are conveniently divided into two groups based on water activity ($a_w$) levels; “low-moisture” and “intermediate-moisture” meat products. It may be of following types, namely:-

(a) Low-moisture meat products: Meat products having an $a_w$ of less than 0.60 and containing less than 25% moisture.

(b) Intermediate-moisture foods: Meat products having an $a_w$ between 0.60 and 0.85 and containing less than 50% moisture.

(3) Dehydration method of preserving meat lowers the moisture content of the product to a point at which the activity of food-spoilage and food poisoning microorganisms is inhibited. Moisture removal may be accomplished by low-temperature drying (48.88 – 49.0 °C) or high temperature drying (93.33 °C). Drying of meat shall be done through salting or solar or mechanical or vacuum or freeze drying to achieve the desired moisture and water activity level.

(4) These products may also contain those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardized food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:-

(a) Food-grade salt (NaCl or Potassium chloride), Nitrites and phosphates;

(b) Trimmings, fat, skin, edible by-products, mechanically deboned meat (MDM) or mechanically recovered meat (MRM);

(c) Carbohydrate and protein binders such as:-

(i) milk powders, caseinate, whey powder, egg protein, vegetable protein products;

(ii) hydrolysed vegetable protein, soya or caseinate;

(iii) meal, flour, fibres or starch prepared from cereal, grain, potato or sweet potato;

(iv) rusk, bread, biscuit or bakery products;

(v) sucrose (sugar and brown cane sugar), dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, glucose syrup (including corn syrup), honey, treacle or molasses;

(vi) Other Dairy products and analogues;
(d) Black Salt Herbs, sugars, spices, Masalas, seasonings and condiments, Saffron, preservatives, stabilizers, Vinegars, Mustards, sauces and like products, Yeast and like products, Soybean based seasonings and condiments, Juniper berries;

(e) Fats, oils and fat emulsions;

(f) Fruits, vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, fruit and vegetable nectars and protein products derived from vegetable sources such as soya beans;

(g) Cereal and cereal products;

(h) Egg and egg products;

(i) Sweetening agents including honey (Excluding artificial Sweeteners);

(j) Water soluble hydrolysed protein;

(k) Carrageenan, Gellan gum, Guar gum, Guu Arabic (Acacia gum), Karaya Gum, Konjac Flour, Cellulose gel, Processed Eucheuma Seaweed, Sodium Carboxymethyl Cellulose, Xanthan gum;

(l) Smoke or smoke essences;

(5) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(6) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(7) The product can be in chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4 °C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 180°C (except low-moisture meat products).

5. Cooked or Semi-Cooked Meat Products.-

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to cooked or Semi-cooked meat products which includes cooked (including cured and cooked) and heat treated meat products.

(2) Cooked meat means the meat or meat product subjected to heat treatment, wherein minimum thermal core temperature of 75 °C is achieved.

(3) Semi cooked meat means partially heat treated meat or meat product that will require additional cooking before consumption.

(4) Process of preparation of cooked or semi cooked meat products involves marination or mixing of meat (bone-in or boneless) or meat mince with different ingredients like brine, spices, binders, fat, additives etc., may be additionally coated, and heated to particular temperature time combination. Cooking improves sensory qualities and extends shelf life by destruction of spoilage organisms and enzymes. Cooking can be achieved by dry heating (roasting, braising, frying), moist heating (braising, braising or water cooking, oven heating, steam cooking) or using electromagnetic energy (microwave cooking). Core temperature and end point temperature are the important indicators of doneness which needs to be standardised for different types of products. After cooking, these products can also be smoked.

(5) These products may contain only those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardised food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:-

(a) Common Salt (Sodium chloride or potassium chloride), or salt substitutes (including nitrates).

(b) Carbohydrate and protein binders such as,

(i) milk powders, caseinate, whey powder, egg protein, vegetable protein products;

(ii) meal, flour, fibres or starch prepared from grain, or potato or sweet potato;

(iii) bread, biscuit or bakery products;

(c) Sucrose (sugar and brown cane sugar), dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, glucose syrup (including corn syrup);

(d) Fats;

(e) Vegetables;

(f) Cereal and cereal products;

(g) Herbs, Spices, seasonings and condiments;

(h) Water soluble hydrolyzed protein.
(6) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(7) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(8) The product can be in chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4 °C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 18 °C.

6. Fresh or Chilled or Frozen Rabbit meat.-

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to fresh or chilled or frozen rabbit meat which includes raw rabbit whole carcases, pieces, cuts or edible offals that have been packed in any suitable packaging material.

(2) Rabbit meat means the edible portion of domestic rabbits (Oryctolagus cuniculus).

(3) Fresh rabbit meat means rabbit meat that has not been treated in any way to ensure its preservation.

(4) Chilled rabbit meat means fresh rabbit meat subjected to chilling in such a way that the product is maintained at temperature of 0 - 7 °C.

(5) Frozen rabbit meat means chilled rabbit meat subjected to freezing in such a way that the product is maintained at temperature of -18 °C or below.

(6) Rabbit meat edible offal means edible by-products derived from slaughtered rabbit which includes brain, liver, gut, pouches and lungs.

(7) Rabbit meat may be categorised in to following five types, namely:-

(a) Fresh or Chilled or Frozen carcases;

(b) Fresh or Chilled or Frozen cuts, which may be of the following sub-types, namely:-

(i) Fore legs;

(ii) Ribs;

(iii) Loin;

(iv) Hind legs;

(c) Fresh or Chilled or Frozen Edible Offals

(8) Final product shall have moisture content between 72.5 % to 75.0 %, protein content between 20.0 % to 23.0 % and fat content between 1.0 % to 6.0 %.

(9) Rabbit meat shall be stored at 4±1 °C for short term storage and -18±1 °C for long term storage. The chilled material shall be consumed within 2 to 4 days under normal refrigeration conditions of storage. Frozen meat shall be consumed within 10 months.

(10) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B."

(B) after clause 11, the following clauses shall be inserted, namely:-

(12) Marinated Meat Products.-

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to marinated meat products which have been packed in any suitable packing material. This category describes several processing steps (e.g., curing or salting, injection, massaging or tumbling, coating fixation by frying or heating, cooking, smoking) that preserve and extend the shelf life of the meat and poultry products in addition to improving the colour, tenderness, yield and functionality of the product.

(2) Marinade means a mixture of non-meat ingredients such as salt, phosphates, acids, tenderisers, sugar, seasoning and flavouring agents, in the form of liquid solution or powder that is applied to uncooked meat for marination.

(3) Marinated Meat means the meat mixed with the marinade for suitable time period base on the method of marination in order to improve colour, flavor, yield, tenderness and other functional properties of meat.

(4) Marination means the process of applying an aqueous solution or powder composed of ingredients such as salt, phosphates, acids, tenderisers, sugar, seasoning and flavourings to meat products.

(5) Marination shall be done by applying marinade, aqueous solution or powder to bone-in cuts or boneless meat by soaking, blending, tumbling or massaging or mechanical injection for suitable time period base on the method of marination.
(6) These products may also contain those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardised food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:-

(a) Potassium chloride, Phosphates, Nitrites;
(b) Organic acids (acetic, lactic and citric acid), Wine, beer, fruits or fruit juice, curd, buttermilk, salsa and soy sauce;
(c) Binders: hydrocolloids, gelatin, soy and milk proteins and modified food starches;
(d) Sugar, sucrose (Sugar & Brown cane sugar), dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, syrup (including corn syrup), honey, treacle or molasses;
(e) Herbs, Spices, seasonings and condiments;
(f) Ascorbates, Monosodium glutamate;
(g) Xanthan gum and Guar gum.

(7) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(8) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(9) The product can be in chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4°C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 18°C.

(13) Fermented Meat Products

(1) The standards specified in this clause shall apply to fermented meat products which have been packed in any suitable packing material. Fermentation is a preservation method caused by microorganisms which lowers pH and water activity resulting in unique and distinctive properties.

(2) Fermented meat product means the meat product produced by action of selected fermenting microorganisms such as lactic acid bacteria or yeast, or both, in the presence of salt by the process of fermentation, ripening and drying. It may contain non-meat ingredients such as sugar, spices, seasonings and condiments.

(3) Starter culture means the culture of microorganisms which are used for initiating fermentation in meat product.

(4) Fermented meat products are produced by application of pretested microbial starter culture, with or without use of optional ingredients. Meat can also be fermented using back slopping without using starter cultures. Mixed meat is allowed to ripen or ferment in ripening chamber. Fermentation reduces pH to a level of 4.3 to 5.5 due to acidulation produced by microbial activity and reduces water activity due to presence of salt and drying.

(5) These products may also contain those ingredients which are either standardised or permitted for use in the preparation of other standardised food under these regulations and includes but not limited to the following ingredients, namely:-

(a) Curing ingredients consisting of Sodium chloride, Nitrites and Phosphates;
(b) Carbohydrate and protein binders such as,—
   (i) milk powders, caseinate, whey powder, egg protein, vegetable protein products;
   (ii) meal, flour, fibres or starch prepared from grain, or potato or sweet potato;
   (iii) bread, biscuit or bakery products;
   (iv) cereal products;
(c) Herbs, spices, seasonings and condiments; vinegar;
(d) Water soluble hydrolysed protein.

(6) The product may contain Food Additives as per Appendix A.

(7) The product shall conform to the microbiological requirement given in Appendix B.

(8) The product can be in chilled or frozen form. In chilled form product shall be stored and transported at or below 4°C and in frozen form it shall be stored and transported at or below minus 18°C.

ARUN SINGHAL, Chief Executive Officer
[ADVT.-III/4/Exy./172/2020-21]

Attachments:

No Attachments.