

Ban on mustard oil blending

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In news

Recently, FSSAI has asked states to effectively enforce the decision to ban blending of mustard oil with any other cooking oil.

Key highlights

- In March 2021, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had prohibited the blending of mustard oil for production of Multi-Sourced Edible Vegetable Oils (MSEVOs) with effect from June 8.
- In this regard, FSSAI has issued an order on June 8 asking all the Commissioners of Food Safety of States/UTs and Central Licensing Authority to carry out an inspection drive
- According to the FSSAI regulations, blending of two edible oils is permitted, provided the proportion by weight of any edible vegetable oil used in the blending process is not less than 20 per cent.

Blending of edible oil in India & its impact

- The Union health ministry had allowed blending in edible vegetable oil in a notification in 1990.
- In 1998, Delhi and other north Indian states witnessed the dropsy epidemic, a disease that caused swelling in the body due to the build-up of fluid in tissues.
- Researchers believed consumption of mustard oil caused the disease.
- Upon investigation, it was found to be adulterated with *Argemone Mexicana*, a kind of weed that grows with yellow flowers.
- Several studies have found mustard oil unsafe for consumption. The United States Food and Drug

administration's website claims it has erucic acid, which can cause heart disease if consumed above the prescribed limits.

- Following the Union health ministry 1990 notification allowing for the blending of edible vegetable oil, the FSSAI rolled out regulations in this regard in 2006.
- Producers and other companies involved in blending were regularised through the Agriculture Produce (Grading and Marking) Act (AGMARK). It also made it mandatory to write the kind of oil used for blending over the packet.
- Later it oil industries started to blend mustard oil with cheap palm oil upto 80 percent
- As a result, profits of mustard farmers dried up, which discouraged them from cultivating the crop

Significance of the current move

Non-blended mustard oil was introduced in the market from June 8. The price is pegged between Rs 150-160. The decision to stop its blending offers a ray of hope to farmers as well.

Technology Mission on Oilseeds (TMO) policy

- It was started by the then Rajiv Gandhi government in 1986.
- The aim of this policy was to improve production and agricultural land for mustard.
- This policy also helped India to become self-reliant in mustard oil production during 1990-91