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TEA Research body to add pest control protocols to FSSAI standards.



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Tea Research Association (TRA), the body that is responsible for the research development in tea production in India, is working to incorporate pest management protocols to make sure that the members meet the FSSAI regulations.

The action is being taken as many members were found violating the Maximum residue levels (MRLs) in teas.

The Tea Board India had informed that the tea sellers who do not conform to the FSSAI regulations wouldn't be allowed to participate in auctions.

The Chairman of the Federation of All India Tea Traders Association (FAITTA) had sent a circular to the Controller of Licensing in Tea Board Rajanigandha Seal Naskar, stating that tea purchased through auctions under Food Safety and Standards Act failed the tea test.

FAITTA added that they had hired an agency named M/S Eurofins Analytical Services India Limited to test the standards of tea purchased through auction sales by various buyers, and it was found that these tea had failed the FSSAI tasting parameters and were declared unfit for human consumption.

TRA has begun the talk with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture Government of India to bring in various compounds with MRL for the tea industry.

While conducting the tests, it was found out that a few of the samples that had failed were passed through labs with international standards in global proficiency tests. The noncompliance issue of most of the tea was due to the MRL detection level. FSSAI had revised these guidelines through a notification dated August 20, 2020.

FSSAI, in the press release, stated that "However, it is disturbing to note that some teas which are shown as non-compliant are mainly due to erroneous reporting of MRL values by certain labs. Two compounds such as Zineb and Mancozeb, which belong to the dithiocarbamate group of fungicides approved by FSSAI and Plant Protection Code of Tea Board of India, are tested for MRL values using the CS2 content of the sample," it said.

"All dithiocarbamate groups of fungicides measured by CS2 value should be in a group under dithiocarbamate, and their MRL values should be reported in a group accordingly. The grouping is done in all test reports done for EU countries. Moreover, it is difficult to find out the exact source of CS2 in the sample and only by using a robust blockchain and traceability system the exact source of CS2 can be found," it said.

The FSSAI further said that these kinds of reporting mislead the buyers and cause confusion in the tea industry. This is the reason tea prices are getting affected in the peak quality season.



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