

Dairy dept officials given power to check adulteration of milk

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Thiruvananthapuram: When Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 was implemented in the state nine years ago, it made the dairy development department (DDD), which is equipped with men and machinery to check quality of milk, toothless. Now, the state cabinet has accepted the request of the department to give powers to its officials under section 37 (2) of FSSA so that they could check issues of adulteration and use of chemicals in milk, which was reported during the recent drive.

In the special drive during Onam conducted by DDD along with food safety department to check transportation of adulterated and chemically contaminated milk from neighbouring states, three samples were found to be contaminated with chemicals and six substandard.

In the inspection conducted at Mee-nakshipuram checkpost on August 29 and September 2 respectively, presence

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of hydrogen peroxide was found in Malabar Milk of AR Dairy Food Product Ltd and sodium carbonate in Amman Dairy products (P) Ltd. Also, Venad Milk and Life Milk, samples of which were taken from Kumily checkpost, were found to lack the quality prescribed under FSSA.

The department, which was ripped off its powers post implementation of FSSA, had recommended food safety de-

partment to take necessary action. However, food safety department is still waiting to get results of the samples they collected from Palakkad and Idukki.

Recently, the DDD had sent a proposal to the secretary of animal husbandry department to give powers to quality control officers/ assistant directors and assistant directors of checkposts on par with food safety officials as per section 37 (2) of FSSA, which enables state government to assign qualified officials to work as food safety officials in specific jurisdiction.

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“Under MMP, we used to conduct inspections in sources and take samples. For food safety department, milk is one of the 700 odd food items,” said an official of DDD.