

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1012
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24th JULY, 2026**

**USE OF PROHIBITED HORMONES, CHEMICALS IN FRUITS AND
VEGETABLES**

†1012. DR. ANAND KUMAR:

Will the **Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note that there has been a rise in the use of prohibited hormones, chemicals or other harmful substances in recent years to increase crop-yield, enhance the size or cause premature ripening of fruits and vegetables, thereby adversely affecting the health of consumers and posing a risk of various diseases, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of such cases reported along with the punitive action taken by the Government against the guilty during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to further strengthen the system of sampling, testing and monitoring of fruits and vegetables and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to promote safe and scientific agricultural practices and to create awareness among farmers, traders and consumers in this regard?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) to (d): Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is mandated to lay down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption. The implementation and enforcement of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 is a shared responsibility between the Central and State Governments.

Increasing or enhancing crop-yield pertain to agricultural practices which fall outside the statutory mandate of FSSAI. However, FSSAI vide Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions On Sales) Regulations, 2011 prohibits the use of carbide gas in ripening of fruits by mandating that *"No person shall sell or offer or expose for sale or have in his premises for the purpose of sale under any description, fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas, commonly known as carbide gas; provided that fruits may be artificially ripened by use of Ethylene gas at a concentration upto 100 ppm (100µl/L) depending upon the crop, variety and maturity"*. Sub regulation 2.3.6 of the same regulations provides for Sale of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables which states that *"The Fresh Fruits and Vegetables shall be free from rotting and free from coating of waxes, mineral oil and colours. Provided that fresh fruits may be coated with bees wax (white and yellow) or carnauba wax or shellac wax at level not exceeding Good Manufacturing Practices under proper label declaration as provided in Regulation 2.4.5 (44) of Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) regulations, 2011."*

In order to ensure the safety of food products through testing, FSSAI has notified a network of 259 National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited food testing laboratories comprising laboratories of State/UT Governments, Government institutions, and NABL for the analysis of food samples. FSSAI has also notified 24 Referral Food Laboratories for the analysis of appeal samples. FSSAI provides financial and technical assistance to the State Food Safety Authorities to strengthen their food testing infrastructure. To strengthen the laboratory capacity, FSSAI regularly conducts training programmes for its notified food testing laboratories including training programs on analysis of fruits and vegetables.

Further, the FSSAI has published manuals on Methods of Analysis of various food commodities including Fruit and Vegetable Products, which serves as a comprehensive guide for the testing and analysis of fruits and vegetables products.

Since, 98% of the food businesses are under the regulatory control of the State Food Safety Authorities, vide the advisories dated 03rd April 2023, 21st November 2023, 16th May 2025 and 16th April 2026, Food Safety Commissioners of all the States/UTs have been directed to intensify inspections and maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets/mandis

within their respective jurisdiction. States/UTs undertakes Special Enforcement Drives to ensure strict monitoring of the sale of fresh fruits to prevent the use of unauthorized or prohibited artificial ripening agents, synthetic colours, and non-permitted wax coatings.

Food Business Operators (FBOs) found in contravention of the provisions of the FSS Act, 2006, and Regulations made thereunder face penal actions as per the provisions outlined in Chapter IX (Offences and Penalties) of the Act, specifically Section 48-67 of the FSS Act, 2006. However, as per Section 18(3) of FSS Act, 2006 *“The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any farmer or fisherman or farming operations or crops or livestock or aquaculture, and supplies used or produced in farming or products of crops produced by a farmer at farm level or a fisherman in his operations.”*

Details of inspections, seizure made & regulatory action taken for FY 2022-23 to 2024-25 is annexed at **Annexure**.

**Detail of inspections and seizure made against artificially ripened fruit
(in violation of the Food Safety & Standards Regulation)**

Year	Inspections conducted over the past five years to detect the use of artificial ripening agents in fruits	Samples analyzed	Non-conforming samples (found artificially ripened with non-permitted agents)	Seizures/destructions made (in kgs)
2022-23	14185	704	9	10182
2023-24	17180	1450	45	19582.2
2024-25	20365	1953	54	42395.46