

Wednesday, 10 June 2020

QCI Celebrates the World Accreditation Day 2020

Role of credible, competent accreditation for improving food safety highlighted

The World Accreditation Day (WAD) is celebrated on 9th June every year to highlight as well as promote the role of accreditation in trade & economy. The theme for WAD 2020 is "Accreditation: Improving Food Safety", as decided by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) and National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), the two accreditation boards of the Quality Council of India (QCI), organised a Webinar to commemorate the event, in which all concerned stakeholders participated.

Chairperson FSSAI, Ms. Rita Teotia, the Chief Guest in her inaugural address said "FSSAI has recognized the role of credible, competent accreditation for inputs in decision making. This is because NABCB and NABL have worked closely to support Government and Regulators to ensure that the data provided by accredited conformity assessment bodies is robust, reliable, trustworthy in decision making, compliance testing and standards setting. Accreditation also facilitates world trade and economic growth". She also mentioned about the different areas wherein FSSAI is working closely with NABCB and NABL, which is enabling FSSAI to share the regulatory burden and helping in compliance monitoring using the services of the accredited conformity assessment bodies. In her address, she highlighted many areas including the need to institutionalize the virtual assessments, the accreditation of state food testing laboratories, encouraging accredited laboratories to undertake Proficiency Testing (PT), increasing the number of accredited Reference Materials Producers (RMPs), developing Rapid Test Kits for food analysis, and an accreditation scheme for its certification, and an Integrated System for information exchange as relevant to the food sector.

Secretary, D/o Food & Public Distribution, Mr. Sudhanshu Pandey said that food safety is a right of all individuals of the country and FSSAI has made significant contributions in the last few years. He informed that the 6 National Standards Conclaves conducted by the Dept. of Commerce have supported tremendously in enhancing the quality ecosystem and in sensitizing the relevant stakeholders in the country. He said that accreditation has a very important role to play in the quality ecosystem, and urged QCI to mount a quality campaign to support it. He also highlighted the need for development of conformity assessment infrastructure and consumer empowerment in the country.

Chairman QCI, Mr Adil Zainulbhai, in his Key Note address emphasized that accreditation is an important tool to help improve quality, but the ultimate goal is to improve quality of product and services in food sector as well as other areas. He also stressed upon the need to ramp up capability and capacity to help improve quality in food services in India.

Secretary General, QCI, Dr. R. P. Singh, speaking on the occasion highlighted the need for six point programme for future: Scaling up conformity assessment system in different parts of country; encourage PPP model of FSSAI to work forward for "Saajha Nivesh, Saajha Vikas, Saajha Vishawas: Work in direction of Certified in India and accepted globally; Informal Market formalization. The other two points include initiating "Rashtriya Gunavatta Abhiyan" which will help in crowd sourcing to check quality issues in local market through double blinded system and to develop a robust Market Surveillance and Rapid Alert System with all Regulators on one single e-platform.

In the WAD Webinar, two technical sessions were also conducted. The first session focussed on Regulator's perspective on food safety and was Chaired by Dr. D. K. Aswal, Director NPL and Chairman NABL. The second technical session, chaired by Mr. Shyam Bang, Chairman NABCB, focussed on Industry's Perspective on food safety. Eminent speakers from Government, Regulators and Industry spoke on some of the key areas relating to food sector. Action points were deliberated to look at path forward by speakers who were experts in their field and both the accreditation boards will be working forward with industry and regulators to build in the quality campaign. Around 700 participants attended the webinar live, and more than 1500 persons have viewed the programme during the day.