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IFBA Calls for Science-Based Dialogue on Food Ingredients and Products

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The Ind Food and Beverage Association (IFBA) has called for a responsible, science-based, and regulatory-led conversation about food ingredients, including palm oil, amid renewed public discussion about the use of vegetable oils in food products, especially frozen desserts. The organisation emphasised that all edible oils and fats, including palm oil, are safe for use in food products when they comply with prescribed food safety standards.

The statement comes at a time when Indiaâ??s packaged food market is experiencing strong growth, valued at $129.18 billion in 2025 and projected to reachÂ $238.83 billionÂ by 2034 at a CAGR of 6.24 per cent. Driven by rising disposable incomes, rapid urbanisation, expanding modern retail and quick commerce networks, and growing demand for convenience-led foods, the sector continues to evolve under a robust regulatory framework. Within this broader growth story, Indiaâ??s frozen dessert market is also witnessing robust growth, having reached a value of Rs 333.71 billion in 2025 and projected to grow toÂ Rs 634.05 billionÂ by 2034 at a CAGR of 7.39 per cent, according to IMARC Group.

IFBA noted that public dialogue around food ingredients should distinguish between ingredient safety based on product labelling and overall dietary balance, rather than misinformation. During its previous World Food Day programme, organised

in collaboration with NIFTEM-Kundli, IFBA strongly urged consumers to choose foods and ingredients based on science-led evidence instead of misleading claims and advertisements. Myths and misleading information around A1/A2 ghee, protein supplements, processed foods in general and palm oil was busted with science-based evidence during an expert panel discussion during the program. It is pertinent to reiterate that palm oil has a balanced fatty acid profile, is naturally free from trans fats and hydrogenated fats, and provides beneficial nutrients such as vitamin A and antioxidant-rich forms of vitamin E viz. tocopherols and tocotrienols, making it a valuable part of a meal when consumed as part of a balanced diet.

Deepak Jolly, Chairperson of IFBA, said, â??Indiaâ??s nutrition conversation should focus on balanced diets, portion control, eating in moderation, maintaining an active lifestyle and reading food labels. The ICMR-NIN Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024, underline the importance of dietary balance and reaffirm the role of diverse food ingredients and their bioactive compounds in supporting health. The guidelines recommend consuming a variety of oilseeds, nuts, millets, legumes, leafy vegetables, marine fish and seafoods and eggs to meet daily requirements of fats, essential fatty acids (Omega-3, Omega-6) and fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K). Thus, singling out refined edible oils in isolation does not help consumers to make informed choices.â?•

Commenting on the issue, Asim Choudhary, Former Director, FSSAI, said, â??Indiaâ??s food safety regulations recognise foods made from animal fats such as ice cream, milk fat spreads, yoghurt and butter, and those made using vegetable oils and fats like frozen desserts, vegetable fat spreads and non-dairy beverage creamers. The standards are prescribed for such food categories. Consumers should make informed choices based on product category.â?•