



FOOD

Towards Uniform Vegan Labelling in India: Legal and Regulatory Implications of the 2026 FSSAI Amendment

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The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**, exercising its statutory mandate under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, has formally notified the Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Amendment Regulations, 2026. This amendment introduces a significant regulatory development in the domain of plant-based food labelling and consumer protection, and shall come into force on the first day of July, 2027.

The present article seeks to provide a comprehensive exposition of the background, legislative process, substantive provisions, and broader implications of this regulatory intervention, with a view to offering clarity to food business operators, legal practitioners, and consumers alike.

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Statutory Foundation and Legislative Process

The statutory foundation for the amendment is firmly rooted in **Section 92 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**, which empowers the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to make regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Act. Specifically, the Authority has invoked clause (v) of sub-section (2) of Section 92, which authorizes the making of regulations concerning standards for articles of food and other relevant matters.

The draft regulations were published as required under sub-section (1) of Section 92, vide notification number F.No. STD/SP-18/T(Vegan Foods), dated the twenty-first day of December, 2022, in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4. The copies of the Official Gazette containing the said notification were made available to the public on the twenty-third day of December, 2022, thereby triggering the *statutory period of sixty days* for the submission of objections and suggestions from persons likely to be affected by the proposed amendments.

Public Consultation and Regulatory Background

The Authority, in accordance with its statutory obligation, duly considered the **objections and suggestions received from the public** in respect of the draft regulations before finalizing the amendment. This consultative process is emblematic of the participatory approach mandated by the parent Act and reflects the regulatory intent to balance administrative efficiency with stakeholder engagement.

The original Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022, were themselves published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4, vide notification number F.No. Std/TF-Vegan Foods/Notif./FSSAI, dated the tenth day of June, 2022. The 2026 amendment thus operates as a *further amendment* to the existing regulatory framework, rather than an entirely new enactment, and must be read in conjunction with the principal regulations.

Substantive Amendment to Regulation 4

The substantive amendment introduced by the 2026 regulations is confined to **Regulation 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Regulations, 2022**, specifically sub-regulation (2) thereof. The existing provision has been substituted with a new sub-regulation that imposes a mandatory requirement for the display of a standardized logo on every package of vegan foods, subsequent to the obtaining of requisite approval.

This requirement marks a departure from the earlier regulatory position and introduces a *uniform visual identifier* that is intended to facilitate consumer recognition and prevent misrepresentation in the marketplace. The amendment is thus both a consumer protection measure and a tool for ensuring transparency and integrity in the marketing of vegan food products.

Prescribed Logo Design and Specifications

The logo prescribed under the amended sub-regulation comprises a **green-coloured “V” symbol**, with a small plant or sprout positioned at the top centre thereof, and the word “VEGAN” displayed prominently below the symbol. The entire design is enclosed within a green square border, thereby creating a cohesive and readily identifiable mark.

Dimensional Specifications

The technical specifications for the logo are meticulously delineated in the notification, with precise measurements provided in millimetres for each constituent element:

- Thickness of the arms of the “V” symbol: **7 mm**
- Width of the “V” at its top: **10 mm**
- Width of the text box containing the word “VEGAN”: **7 mm**
- Height of the text itself: **2 mm**
- Size of the plant or sprout symbol: **3.25 mm**
- Height from the base of the “V” to the plant: **3.3 mm**
- Gap between the base of the “V” and the “VEGAN” text: **1 mm**
- Outer border of the logo (height and width): **15 mm**

Colour Specifications

In addition to the dimensional specifications, the notification prescribes the exact colour values for the logo, stipulating a **CMYK colour model** with the following values:

- Cyan: **60**
- Magenta: **0**
- Yellow: **89**
- Key (Black): **0**

This bright green shade is not merely an aesthetic choice but serves a functional purpose in reinforcing the plant-based and environmentally conscious identity associated with vegan products. The precision with which the logo has been defined leaves little room for deviation or creative interpretation, thereby ensuring *uniformity of application* across all food business operators manufacturing, importing, or selling vegan food products within the jurisdiction of the Act.

Implications for Food Business Operators

The implications of this amendment are multifaceted and warrant careful consideration by all entities operating within the vegan food sector. For food business operators, the amendment imposes several **clear compliance obligations**:

- Redesign packaging and labelling materials to incorporate the prescribed logo, failing which products may be deemed non-compliant with the applicable food safety standards.
- Obtain prior approval from the Authority before the logo may be displayed, introducing an additional layer of regulatory oversight.
- Engage with the Authority’s approval processes well in advance of the effective date.

The lead time provided, with the regulations coming into force on the **first day of July, 2027**, affords a reasonable period for transition and adaptation. However, operators would be well-advised to commence preparatory measures at the earliest opportunity to avoid last-minute regulatory disruptions.

Consumer Protection Benefits

From a consumer protection perspective, the **standardized logo** serves as a reliable visual cue that enables purchasers to identify vegan products with confidence. It reduces the risk of inadvertent consumption of non-vegan ingredients and protects

against deceptive or misleading labelling practices.

This is particularly significant in a market where consumer preferences are increasingly influenced by ethical, environmental, and health considerations, and where the term “vegan” carries substantial commercial and moral weight. The amendment thus aligns with broader trends in food regulation, both domestically and internationally, towards greater *transparency and informed consumer choice*.

Alignment with Global Vegan Labelling Standards

The regulatory approach adopted in the 2026 amendment also reflects a growing **global consensus** on the need for standardized vegan certification marks. Several jurisdictions have implemented or are in the process of developing similar visual identifiers for vegan and plant-based products, recognizing that uniform labelling standards are essential for cross-border trade and consumer trust.

India's adoption of a mandatory logo places it within this emerging international framework, while simultaneously addressing domestic regulatory concerns specific to the Indian food market.

Conclusion

The **Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Foods) Amendment Regulations, 2026**, constitute a measured and purposeful regulatory intervention that addresses a discernible gap in the existing framework governing vegan food labelling in India. By mandating a standardized logo with precise technical specifications, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has sought to enhance consumer protection, promote market transparency, and establish clear compliance benchmarks for food business operators.

The amendment, grounded in the statutory powers conferred by Section 92 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and preceded by a due process of public consultation, reflects a balanced approach to regulatory development. As the effective date of the first day of July, 2027, approaches, stakeholders across the vegan food value chain would do well to familiarize themselves with the amended requirements and take proactive steps to ensure full compliance, thereby contributing to a more robust and trustworthy food safety ecosystem in the country.

For further details write to contact@indialaw.in

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