Press Release

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A clear regulation from the Government is necessary for disposing of used cooking oils to ensure health safety

The Government of Bangladesh is working to promulgate policy on trans-fat and use of edible oil in restaurants as well as raise stakeholder awareness on the issue, said Abdul Kayowm Sarker, Chairman of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA). The policy will address the issues of proper use of edible oil and trans-fat content in food.

Speaking as a Chief Guest at the stakeholder dialogue on Policy of Developing Collection System for Used Cooking Oil in Bangladesh on January 11, 2021, he said that according to Food Safety Hygiene Regulation 2018, in section 7(a), nobody can use any by-products of food preparation. Used cooking oil is a kind of waste product at restaurants and food industries, hence it must not be applied for further use as it violates the Food Safety (Hygiene) Regulation, 2018. In particular, we are interested in implementing the testing methods into our regular checks at restaurants and other food business operators in order to monitor the exact amount of used cooking oil as well as other criteria, said he. Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and Muenzer Bangla Private Limited- a subsidiary of Muenzer Bioindustrie of Europe organized the virtual dialogue on Policy of Developing Collection System for Used Cooking Oil in Bangladesh on January 11, 2021. Abdul Kayowm Sarker, Chairman, BFSA joined the meeting as chief guest.

The BFSA Chairman said that BFSA is keen to develop a strategy for recycling of used cooking oil so that these oils can be safely used for further value addition and safe waste disposal. We will cooperate with scientific and logistic supports to any steps, which has proper logical, scientific and environment friendly methods and that will come through a proper way, he said.

Monzur Morshed Ahmed, Member of BFSA said, there are many health safety issues regarding the use of used cooking oil. On the other hand, used cooking oil can be used as value added products taking the environmental aspects into account. There should be guideline from government for collecting used cooking oil and developing a clear strategy for collecting it.

While welcoming the participants, BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum who moderated the program underscored the need for initiating policy support by the government for formal collection systems of used cooking oil in Bangladesh. We require a formal policy prescription from our government to transition from existing informal channels for re-used cooking oil towards formal channel for collection of used cooking oil and its recycling, said she. Bangladesh imports over three million tons of edible oil while only a negligible portion is collected as used cooking oil mostly by informal actors that they sell back to cheaper restaurants.

Dr. Latiful Bari, Chief Scientist, Food Analysis & Research Centre for Advanced Research of Sciences gave a presentation on “Developing Collection System for Used Cooking Oil in Bangladesh.” He said that reusing cooking oil increases the cholesterol, creates peroxides acid, causes cancer and so on. Cooking oil with high percentage of polar compounds is the prime cause for some of the worst diseases.

During his presentation, Harald SIGL, Head of Corporate Communications & Public Affairs at Muenzer Bioindustry, Austria/Europe said that it is indispensable to have a clear legal regulation on the collection of Used Cooking Oi. “It is an urgent necessity to stop reselling Used Cooking Oil on the foodstuff and product market by law. I think we all agree on this mission. So it is consequently necessary to create a structured and also regulated collection system”, said Sigl.

Waste should only be disposed by certified disposing companies. Especially liquid waste may only be handled by those companies who are able to show and prove the whole material flow and can assure, that Used Cooking Oil is going into technical applications. “This is the only possibility to prevent this poison to go back to the food chain again”, said he.

Fahad Saleh, Chief Operating Officer of Muenzer Bangla, gave a presentation on Münzer‘s National Used Cooking Oil Collection Mission for Bangladesh. He said that they prevent the health hazards of UCO by informing their partners through visual quality standards inspection, specific quality checks and providing scientific quality results. “We will provide the needed testing method for our partner-restaurants. This will raise the awareness and help owners and chefs to handle and dispose Used Cooking Oil properly”, Mr. Saleh said.

Md. Masud Alam, National Food Safety Consultant, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) stated that ensuring food safety of for food sold by street vendors is one of the prime objectives of FAO. Waste management is one of the core issues of FAO’s initiative to ensure proper disposal of waste.

Syed Muhammad Shoaib Hasan, CEO, HIFS Food and President of BAPA informed that BSTI permitted use of used cooking oils when the acid level does not exceed level 4 parameter. In this regard, quick testing facility can be helpful to assess the state of used oil.

Md. Abdur Rahim, Joint Secretary (Export-2 Section), Export Wing, Ministry of Commerce said that they will consider allowing used cooking oils in export if there can proper recommendation from stakeholders.

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Sincerely

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