

ANH launches health claims veto campaign in European Parliament

Last Friday, a short list of just 220 health claims was passed to the European Parliament for its scrutiny. Only two obstacles remain before the list becomes law. The first hurdle will be cleared if the Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) does not object to the proposed list. If a plenary vote taken by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) within 90 days is also positive, only these 220 health claims will be able to be used to indicate the beneficial value of commercial food and health food products across all 27 EU member states. Some 2,500 health claims that were rejected by the controversial Parma-based institution, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), will be banned within 6 months.

In response to this, Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl) has today launched a campaign aimed at informing MEPs – in particular, members of the ENVI committee – of the risks of accepting the 'general function' health claims list in its present form.

Calling on MEPs, ANH-Intl's executive and scientific director, Robert Verkerk PhD, said:

"MEPs, like European citizens, rightly want to ensure that misleading information is removed from the marketplace. But the inappropriate standards of proof of benefit required by European authorities mean that thousands of health claims, including such obvious examples as the effects of eating prunes on digestive health, have been thrown out. Also, evaluation of health claims for some groups of nutrients, such as botanicals and probiotics, has yet to be completed, so it would be premature to turn the proposed shortlist of 220 into EU law."

ANH-Intl has released a campaign pack that provides MEPs with detailed reasons why it believes the ENVI committee members should object to the proposed list when it comes to an internal committee vote on 9th February. Additionally, ANH-Intl will ask European citizens across the EU to urge their MEPs to vote against the list when it is considered in a plenary session of the entire Parliament, following the 3-month European Parliamentary scrutiny period.

The most recent successful veto of a regulatory proposal was in May 2010, when the European Parliament blocked the authorisation of the meat glue thrombin in the EU.

Ends.

For further information, please contact:

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NOTES TO THE EDITORS

MEP health claims veto campaign pack, download at:

http://www.anh-europe.org/sites/default/files/120130-MEP-NHCR-campaign-pack_Engl.pdf

EU citizen health claims campaign pack, download at:

http://www.anh-europe.org/sites/default/files/120131-EU-citizen-NHCR-campaign-pack_Engl.pdf

ANH Europe health claims veto campaign page:

English language: www.anh-europe.org/health-claims-veto-2012

French language: www.anh-europe.org/health-claims-veto-2012/FR

German language: www.anh-europe.org/health-claims-veto-2012/DE

European Food Safety Authority — general function claims under the EU Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation:

<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/topic/article13.htm>

About Alliance for Natural Health International and its European campaign

www.anh-europe.org

Alliance for Natural Health International is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to protecting and promoting natural and sustainable healthcare using the tools of 'good science' and 'good law'. It is an international alliance of consumers, practitioners, doctors, scientists and lawyers, as well as specialist natural health enterprises, all with a common goal of optimising human health using, as far as possible, approaches that are compatible with human physiology and our genetic backgrounds. The World Health Organization, and other leading health authorities, have confirmed that the major burdens on healthcare systems the world over are now caused by largely preventable, chronic diseases. Since prevention of these diseases needs to be mediated largely through dietary and lifestyle changes, the EU's Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation, and in particular its power to authorise and ban health claims, is of vital significance to European citizens' ability to make informed choices over the foods and ingredients consumed.

ANH-Intl was established by sustainability scientist, Robert Verkerk PhD, in 2002, and Dr Verkerk remains its executive and scientific director.