

Supplement Industry News

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Industry Reacts to FDA Weight Loss Recalls

In response to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) expansion of the nationwide recall of 69 tainted weight loss products that contain undisclosed ingredients, the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) and the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) have expressed great satisfaction.

"It is unfortunate that some of these products have been marketed as dietary supplements," said Steve Mister, president and CEO of CRN. "Under law, what is in the dietary supplement bottle should be listed on the label and products that break the law have no business being on store shelves. CRN supports the Agency's decision to demand removal of these adulterated products from the market.

It is particularly concerning that

some of these weight loss products illegally contain pharmaceutical drugs, which can be especially dangerous and put consumers at risk," Mister continued. "Regardless of how it is marketed, if a weight loss product contains a drug ingredient, it is a drug under federal law."

AHPA also announced that it commends the latest FDA efforts to recall and warn consumers about products marketed as dietary supplements that contain undeclared, active pharmaceutical ingredients.

"We applaud this good work by FDA," said AHPA President Michael McGuffin. "AHPA's mission to promote the responsible commerce of herbal products can only be accomplished when the FDA and other government agencies actively enforce the law against outliers."

NMI Research Shows New Trends in 2009

Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) recently reported, in its annual trends report, that the overarching concept across health, wellness and sustainability in 2009 is that of 'recalibration' and formed the basis of all of NMI's trends for this year.

According to NMI, consumers are beginning to make long-term changes to their lifestyle in a trend that represents realistic and tangible steps rather than sporadic and short-lived initiatives. In short, sustainable, moderate, consistent and practical are the daily mantras of what NMI calls the "Small Steps, Big Changes" movement.

NMI reported that consumers included their own personal health as a microcosm and reflection of the health of the planet and increasingly, consumers' values are resonating with companies that are able to fuse both a personal and planetary perspective into their brand/company offerings.

Consumers are also expressing a desire to eliminate anything toxic from their lives and are seeking to control things that are within their sphere of influence. From alternative fuels to alternative apparel, choices

and options challenging the status quo across industries are being embraced, NMI said.

In a similar trend, rather than simply evaluating consequences or treating symptoms, NMI reported that consumers are beginning to ask not only "what," but "why?" From increased interest in a company's supply chain to a recognition that lifestyle, environmental factors and issues related to vascular inflammation are the fundamental components of aging and disease, consumers are taking a closer and more informed look at the underlying causes of health and sustainability.

Further, NMI reports that a new definition of beauty is emerging, valuing natural beauty at any age, without the aid of invasive procedures or plastic surgery.

NMI also noted an emerging desire to conserve energy on both a personal and planetary level. As a result, NMI reported that in all areas of consumption, consumers indicated a desire for products with greater meaning, and given the economic downturn, this trend is expected to continue to grow across categories.

Associations Criticize Harvard Study

The American Association for Health Freedom (AAHF) and the Alliance for Natural Health (ANH) have together sharply criticized research published on January 7 in *The Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, which claims that vitamins don't prevent cancer.

The ANH has released its critique on the study by Dr. Jennifer Lin and colleagues at the Harvard Medical School, which concludes that the lack of effects demonstrated could have been predicted before the start of the eight-year study involving over 7,600 women with heart disease or high risk of it who averaged 60 years of age.

"This study was destined from the outset to obtain a negative result," said Dr. Damien Downing, medical director of ANH, a medical doctor who has practiced nutritional and environmental medicine for over 25 years.

ANH's critique shows that the study has no bearing on the effects of the three vitamins used—vitamins C and E and beta-carotene—on cancer prevention in healthy people. "Many of the risk factors associated with heart disease and cancer are shared, and nearly 80 percent of the women in the study were overweight or obese, therefore likely to have been much more susceptible to cancer than a non-diseased, healthy population. Some may even have been pre-symptomatic," added Dr. Robert Verkerk, scientific advisor of ANH.

ANH also emphasized that the dosages and forms selected for the study did not equate with those that would be most likely to yield a positive result. Synthetic vitamin C was only 500mg, vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol only) was 600IU every other day and synthetic beta carotene was 50mg every other day, all at very low doses. And compliance among study participants in actually taking the vitamins was poor, especially in taking all three vitamins; as few as half the participants appear to have done so.

In addition, "Most people who are keen to prevent cancer don't just take these three vitamins," Verkerk pointed out. "They take a whole range of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, most of which have been independently verified to have powerful anti-cancer effects."