



Breaking News on Supplements & Nutrition - North America

AAHF claims Senate victory for supplement choice

By Guy Montague-Jones, 19-Nov-2009

The American Association for Health Freedom (AAHF) has claimed victory in the Senate after an amendment to the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act loosened the language on international regulatory harmonization.

Yesterday the Senate HELP Committee approved unanimously the food safety bill but not before making amendments that raised a cheer from the US dietary supplements industry.

One area of particular concern to supplement makers was the language surrounding the Codex Alimentarius – a UN and WHO initiative concerned with the harmonization of international food and supplement safety laws into a global standard.

Harmonization fears

Originally the bill required the development of a plan *"to harmonize requirements under the Codex Alimentarius"*. Supplement manufacturers took objection to this because in the words of the AAHF *"a global standard is very likely to reflect European standards which are extremely hostile to dietary supplements."*

Senator Orrin Hatch supported this position at the committee hearing saying some of his constituents feared the Codex would restrict their ability to purchase supplements.

Amended version

Hatch and the AAHF are therefore celebrating the decision to change the wording of the bill to require only a plan *"on whether and how to harmonize requirements under the Codex Alimentarius"*.

The AAHF called this *"a very important legislative victory"*. Gretchen Dubeau, executive director of AAHF, told NutraIngredientsUSA.com, *"We are grateful to Senator Harkin for clearly stating that that the HELP Committee does not intend the US to commit itself to the concept of mandatory Codex harmonization."*

But Dubeau added a cautionary note saying, *"while we applaud the amended language, we look forward to working with bill sponsors to ensure that every protective measure is taken to prevent any precedent that could lead to future harmonization."* The language of the rewrite keeps open the option of adopting some Codex rules. The AAHF warned supplement users and makers to remain vigilant and be prepared to fight the same battle again.

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