washupdate_1006:washupdate_0811.qxd 5/14/2010 4:21 PM Page 2

Muzzled Science

Why does the FDA appear to silence valuable natural health research?

Have you ever wondered why dietary supplement bottles seem to have so little information? You may find general guidance about what a supplement is intended to promote, but if you're looking for scientific studies that support the nutritional supplement, you're on your own. That's because the FTC and FDA go out of their way to muzzle the natural products industry, imposing strict regulations that forbid companies from sharing research findings with consumers.

This censorship issue caught the public's attention in 2006, when the FDA swiftly silenced American cherry growers who tried to share Harvard-based research that suggested cherries might promote joint comfort by modulating inflammation. Even though the research was strong, and cherries were already known to be loaded with health-promoting antioxidants and other beneficial phytochemicals, cherry growers—facing FDA threats of jail time and other penalties—were forced to stop sharing cherries' health benefits with consumers.

This year, the censorship issue has risen again. This time, the FDA-offending natural food is walnuts. One of the country's largest walnut producers published scientific evidence on its website that suggested walnuts may offer health benefits. Walnuts are a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are among the most beneficial nutrients for heart health, cognitive well-being, proper inflammatory response and countless other areas of wellness. When the walnut producer tried to share the extensive scientific research backing walnuts' nutritional benefits with consumers, the FDA immediately responded with a dire warning: Stop publicizing walnuts' health benefits—or *else*.

Free Speech = Health Freedom

Thankfully, there is a glimmer of hope that this unwarranted censorship by the FDA may come to an end. In March, the Free Speech About Science Act (HR 4913) was introduced to the House of Representatives by Congressmen Jason Chaffetz (R, UT) and Jared Polis (D, CO). This exciting new legislation, if enacted, would protect the natural products industry's free speech right to share scientific research findings with the public.

Legislation such as HR 4913 is urgently needed. The FDA's motivation in censoring scientific research about natural products is unfathomable. By keeping consumers in the dark about important findings that reinforce the health benefits of whole foods and natural supplements, the FDA seems to be actively denying Americans' access to information that could help their health. Further, by censoring important discoveries about natural health, the FDA appears to be actively discouraging Americans from adopting a prevention-minded lifestyle that includes healthy foods and nutrition. It seems that through fear, threats and intimidation, the FDA is trying to squash the natural health movement. In doing so, the FDA fails at its singular purpose: protecting our well-being.

Does the FDA's censorship of scientific research that could help you make healthy choices fill you with outrage? Write to your elected officials and ask them to support HR 4913. Let your elected officials know that freedom of speech is a non-negotiable American right, especially when it comes to sharing information that could help the well-being of millions.

As the FDA's nonsensical regulations bear down on the natural products industry, there has never been a better time for consumers to unite in the name of health freedom. Visit www.nha2010.com to join the Nutritional Health Alliance, and use its resources to communicate your support of health freedom to your local elected officials. For the sake of health freedom—and freedom of speech—join the NHA today! ❖

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