



Pleasant Stone Farm

Herbs and Dietary Supplements

"Your natural health store devoted to your total well being"

130 Dolson Ave., Middletown, NY 10940 - 845-343-4040 ^{3 9 4 2 03} MAR 27 19 55

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Dockets and Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5830 Fishers Lane, Rm 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Ephedra and whether DSHEA provides the FDA with sufficient powers to handle this or similar situations.

I feel uniquely qualified to comment. Prior to opening Pleasant Stone Farm, a natural health store, in Middletown, NY, I enjoyed a 35 year career as a newscaster and talk host on major stations in New York City where I had first hand exposure to the power of the media to persuade and sell. I am one of the majority in the herb and dietary supplement industry who feels tainted by charlatans and crooks who are hiding behind the label of "dietary supplement" to sell worthless cures and special potions to a gullible and sometimes desperate public.

There is no question that ma huang is one of the more powerful herbs in use today. There is also no question that the herb is being grossly abused. Unfortunately, these abuses have brought harm to many people. In my store I sell several products that contain ephedra, but they are not products developed for weight loss, sex enhancement, sports performance or other abuses. The products I sell are for respiratory conditions. Ma huang is very effective as a bronchial dilator and sinus supportive herb. I sell the twigs from my herbal apothecary. Chewing the twigs or adding them to a cup of tea can bring relief to those who suffer restricted breathing problems. We never sell this herb to people under age. Many herbs are abused. Nutmeg and sage are two examples. But can we outlaw nutmeg and sage because they can be abused? Not without settling for a very bland Thanksgiving Dinner. Neither should we outlaw ma huang because of abuses. Daniel Boone, the famed American frontiersman, was killed by sweet potatoes. He abused them at a fair, when he ate more than his body could process in a contest. Because a great American foundered on sweet potatoes is no reason to outlaw them. With or without DSHEA there will be abuses. With or without DSHEA there will be charlatans selling modern day "snake oil" products to a pandered public.

What is the answer? The answer lies within DSHEA, and the current administration is to be supported for beginning to implement the provisions of DSHEA that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for crooks to sell their cures and substandard products. Give us **Good Manufacturing Practices**, crack down on label and content claims, and give DSHEA a chance by using all the powers it provides the agency. Previous administrations have not had a respectful attitude toward DSHEA. It would not be prudent to dismantle DSHEA when it is finally being implemented. Certainly the abuse of ephedra is not sufficient reason. Please, use the powers of DSHEA to deny those who market these abuses the shield of a dietary supplement classification. This probably will not stop the abuses, but they will not be able to work through health food stores. I feel that I speak for the majority who think DSHEA is important for those who are committed to natural health. Weight loss, sex enhancement, and other gratification products do not belong in health food stores. Neither do the so-called quick flushes that help abusers of drugs trick the urine tests. I do not sell these products in my store, and I am paying the rent and meeting the payroll without them. Please, support America's herbalists and health food stores by using all of the powers of DSHEA. If that does not work, I promise you our support for new laws if they are needed in the future.

Thank you.

Gene Ladd
CEO

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