

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/054
COMPLAINANT	S Glover
ADVERTISER	Manuku Doctor
ADVERTISEMENT	Manuka Doctor Print
DATE OF MEETING	24 February 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The newspaper advertisement for Manuka Doctor honey had the text “Manuka Doctor Export Quality Multifloral Manuka Honey manukadoctor.co.nz.” There was a photo of two jars of the honey, one 250g and one 500g. The labels on the jars said “Manuka Doctor Manuka Honey Multifloral 40+ MGO. New Zealand Manuka Honey - Tested Certified Multifloral.”

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complainant, S Glover, said: I believe this advertisement is misleading potential customers that this product is what is commonly considered to be ‘manuka honey’. The word ‘manuka’ appears 7 times in the advert, the word ‘multifloral’ only three times. ‘Multifloral’ is in a lighter font (and much smaller print on the product label) suggesting that it is unimportant. The term ‘Export Quality’ is meaningless. Finally, the prominent display of 40+MGO on the product label implies this is high (casual readers might assume this is a percentage) and no explanation for the term or its significance is included in the advert. In reality this product has a very low UMF (Unique Manuka Factor), less than the lowest grade of 5+ UMF.

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(b), Rule 2(g)

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must be truthful, balanced and not misleading.

Rule 2(b) Truthful Presentation: Advertisements must not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust or exploit their lack of knowledge. This includes by implication, inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, unrealistic claim, omission, false representation or otherwise. Obvious hyperbole identifiable as such is not considered to be misleading.

Rule 2(g) Food and Beverage Claims: Food and Beverage claims must be factual and able to be substantiated and must not be misleading.

The Chair noted the Complainant’s concerns the advertisement was misleading potential customers that the product was manuka honey.

The Chair said the advertisement did not reach the threshold to be misleading because the product being advertised was described several times as “multifloral manuka honey” not simply “manuka honey”. The advertisement also includes the website address for the advertiser so that a consumer is able to find out more about the product if they wish.

The Chair said while the advertisement states the MGO grade (the amount of methylglyoxal, the naturally occurring compound in manuka honey) is “40+”, this is a factual statement. The Advertiser does not state whether this is a high or low rating or imply any reference to the alternative UMF methylglyoxal grading system. If the level of methylglyoxal is important to a consumer, they could interpret the grade or consider the matter further as this is a print advertisement.

The Chair said the advertisement was not in breach of Principle 2, Rule 2(b) or Rule 2(g) of the Advertising Standards Code.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.