

COMPLAINT NUMBER	17/325
COMPLAINANT	M Honeychurch
ADVERTISER	Pawtect
ADVERTISEMENT	Pawtect, Digital Marketing
DATE OF MEETING	11 May 2018
OUTCOME	Settled – advertisement changed

Advertisement: The Pawtect website advertisement, www.pawtect.com, states: “Pawtect – a leading edge solution to controlling fleas and ticks for your pet. The technology behind Pawtect combines homeopathic and advanced computer software technology to stimulate our pet’s natural body processes and return them to a harmonious state.”

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complainant, M Honeychurch, said: On both the homepage (<http://www.pawtect.com/>) and Benefits page (<http://www.pawtect.com/pawtect-pendants/>) of Pawtect’s website, claims are made that their pendants “Effectively repels fleas, ticks and mosquitos”, “Protects your pet for up to 24 months” and “Minimises/eliminates skin irritations and allergies”. It also works “with your pets [sic] unique energy to strengthen their immune system and create a frequency barrier that repels fleas, ticks, sandflies and mosquito’s [sic]”.

The way the pendant apparently works is through “proven bio-energetic technology” by combining “homeopathic principles and advanced computer software technology”. It uses a “holistic energetic approach” and a “unique bio-energetic frequency combination which has been designed to control fleas, ticks and mosquito’s [sic]”. they also say that “Scientists have proven that each bug has a different frequency which repels it. The specific repelling frequencies for fleas, ticks, sandflies and mosquito’s [sic] have been incorporated into the computer program which then codes the Pawtect units.” and “the developers of the technology utilise homeopathic principles (like cures like) and the frequency of key homeopathic remedies”

These claims appear unlikely to be true, and have not been substantiated. They breach the ASA’s code of Ethics Principle 3, as they are likely to mislead consumers into believing that these pendants will help their pets.

Rule 2 has been breached, as this advert misrepresents the efficacy of both homeopathy and “frequencies” in protecting pets against parasites.

This advert is particularly worrying as pets, like children, are dependent on others to look after their health needs. Consequently pet healthcare is a market that is prone to abuse through the sale of ineffective products. It would be great to see Pawtect either provide robust evidence for the claims they are making, or stop making unproven claims that are likely to have a detrimental effect on the health outcomes of vulnerable animals.

I see that back in 2012 Pawtect said in response to a previous complaint (12/035) that “While scientific studies have been carried out in Europe on YCT Technology the study’s focus has been on the beneficial effects the technology has on cells as it relates to health and function. This is a very lengthy document and despite the time extension it was not possible for it to be translated into English within the timeframe”. Hopefully in the five years since that complaint, the translation has been completed and the study is now available in English - although I couldn’t find it anywhere on their website. There was apparently “Additional studies and

trials" that were "due to complete in approximately 12 weeks", but again I can't find any reference to these on the website.

I did, however, find testimonials on their website (<http://www.pawtect.com/testimonials/>) - which presumably are just as invalid now for the claims being made as they were back in 2012.

The relevant provisions were Code of Ethics - Basic Principle 4, Rule 2

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated claims about the benefits of Pawtect pendants, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website advertisement, removing or amending references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the website, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled – advertisement changed**

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 days of receipt of this decision.