

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	19/174
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	M Honeychurch
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Herbal New Zealand
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Herbal New Zealand, Digital Marketing
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	19 June 2019
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Settled – advertisement amended

**Advertisement:** The Herbal New Zealand digital marketing advertisement for Spirulina capsules, [www.herbalnewzealand.co.nz](http://www.herbalnewzealand.co.nz), describes the health benefits of the blue-green algae spirulina including cell damage protection and weight management benefits.

**The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.**

**Complainant, M Honeychurch, said:** Herbal New Zealand makes therapeutic claims about its NZ Spirulina Capsules (<https://herbalnewzealand.co.nz/spirulina-capsules/>), saying that the product "can protect your cells from damage that can drive chronic inflammation. It also has weight management benefits due to its high-protein content. The pigment found in spirulina known as phycocyanin has antihypertensive effects that support blood pressure level that helps reduce the risk of developing stroke, heart disease, and diabetes. Other benefits of spirulina are healing wounds, improving digestion, detoxifying heavy metals, cleansing the colon, helping with allergies, increasing endurance, and decreasing muscle damage caused by exercise."

These claims have not been backed up by evidence, and it's likely that no good quality evidence was available to the advertiser when they made the claims. The claims therefore breach the ASA's Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code Rule 2(a), as the claims are not valid and have not been substantiated.

**The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 2, Rule 2(a)**

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated therapeutic claims about the benefits of spirulina products, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website, 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 amended**

#### **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](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 days of receipt of this decision.