

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/135
ADVERTISER	Abeeco Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Manuka Honey of NZ, Website
DATE OF MEETING	1 July 2020
OUTCOME	Settled -advertisement amended

Advertisement: The website advertisement for Manuka Honey of NZ <https://manukahoneyofnz.com/collections/anti-viral-respiratory-immune-support>, makes statements under the heading “Anti-viral and Immune Support” including “Manuka Honey of NZ has a great range of natural products that have proven to be effective anti-viral support.”

The Chair ruled the complaints were Settled.

Complaint 1: This website specifically mentions Covid-19. It makes the therapeutic claim that, "Manuka Honey has shown to be a natural and proven defence against nasty viruses ... Whether you're fighting off the common cold, influenza or even more nasty viruses, Manuka Honey of NZ has a great range of natural products that have proven to be effective anti-viral...support. A defence as they describe it is prevention. This is I believe a breach of the ASA's Therapeutic Codes principle 2 and rule 2(a) that advertisements are truthful and “claims shall be able to be substantiated.” The claims regarding Manuka honey are unlikely to be backed by any reliable evidence. This is I believe a breach of the ASA's Therapeutic Codes principle 2 and rule 2(a) that advertisements are truthful and “claims shall be able to be substantiated.” The claims regarding Manuka honey are unlikely to be backed by any reliable evidence.

Complaint 2: <https://manukahoneyofnz.com/collections/anti-viral-respiratory-immune-support> I feel the company is really trying to take advantage of the covid-19 situation and play on consumers' fear - potentially using this fear to drive more purchase.

Quote from website:

"Whether you're fighting off the common cold, influenza or even more nasty viruses, Manuka Honey of NZ has a great range of natural products that have proven to be effective anti-viral and antibacterial support."

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 2(a)

Principle 1: Social Responsibility: Therapeutic and Health advertisements shall observe a high standard of social responsibility particularly as consumers often rely on such products, devices and services for their health and wellbeing.

Principle 2: Truthful Presentation: Advertisements shall be truthful, balanced and not misleading. Advertisements shall not mislead or be likely to mislead, deceive or confuse consumers, abuse their trust, exploit their lack of knowledge or without justifiable reason, play on fear. This includes by implication, omission, ambiguity, exaggerated or unrealistic claim or hyperbole.

Rule 2 (a) Truthful presentation: Advertisements shall be accurate. Statements and claims shall be valid and shall be able to be substantiated. Substantiation should exist prior to a claim being made. For medicines and medical devices, therapeutic claims must be consistent with the approved indication(s) (for medicines) or the listed intended purpose (for medical devices).

The Chair noted the Complainants' concerns the website advertisement was making unsubstantiated therapeutic claims and playing on consumers fear of Covid-19.

The Chair accepted the complaints to go before the Complaints Board, for adjudication as to whether the advertising breached the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code. As part of the self-regulatory process, Advertisers have the option of amending their advertising to comply with the Advertising Codes.

The Advertiser reviewed the website content subject to complaint and amended the statements subject to complaint to support compliance with the Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the advertisement, 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: Complaints **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. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.