

# Las Vegas TRIBUNE

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*"I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."--Voltaire*

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## **Your Supplements Are Under Attack!**

**Lynnea M. Bylund**

A controversial new EU regulation that has threatened to outlaw thousands of mineral supplements and bankrupt health food stores was upheld recently.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission sounds like one of those shadowy, sinister organizations conjured up by one-world-government nuts to scare people.

The Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization created this commission in the early 1960s to set standards for food safety and to "harmonize" the laws of member nations. The commission was endorsed by U.N. Resolution 39/248, which says:

"When formulating national policies and plans with regard to food, governments should take into account the need of all consumers for food security and should support and, as far as possible, adopt standards from the ... Codex Alimentarius."

The Codex Alimentarius Commission consists of delegates from 163 member nations representing 97 percent of the world's population. It meets every two years, either in Rome or Geneva. Between meetings, the commission is governed by an executive committee that directs the activities of its many committees.

Of immediate concern is the ongoing effort to bring dietary supplements in America under the control of standards set by this commission. Dietary supplements generate a \$17 billion industry in the United States, which affects more than 150 million consumers, according to Congressional findings (H.R. 2485). Proposed procedures and standards could virtually destroy this market and deprive millions of Americans of the supplements they want to use.

The European Union Directive on Dietary Supplements, which becomes law in August, severely restricts the types and quantities of supplements that may be legally sold. Most forms of vitamins C and E, for example, are not available, or are available only in extremely small doses. If current plans proceed on course, American consumers are in for a shock.

The European Court of Justice approved the Food Supplements Directive even though the court's own Advocate-General advised that the Directive was invalid under EU law.

The ruling - greeted with surprise - is a defeat for a concerted campaign by more than a million British health food customers and shops. They have argued that the law, which will come into effect on August 1, will impose an unprecedented level of regulation on mineral supplements and could threaten the existence of small suppliers.

The Alliance For Natural Health (ANH), a group backed by the British Health Food Manufacturers' Association, have contended that it is unfair for health food manufacturers to bear the cost of applying for approval for products they have been selling for many years.

How can this little-known international commission control what consumers buy in the United States?

An even less-known agency, deep within the bowels of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for U.S. participation in the Codex Commission and designates delegates to each of the commission's committees. Barbara O. Schneeman is the delegate to the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses.

The effort to regulate dietary supplements has been under way for more than a decade. In 1994, Congress adopted the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act, which kept supplements beyond the reach of the drug police.

In the past, Codex recommendations have been non-binding.

Now, however, the Codex Alimentarius Commission is teaming up with the World Trade Organization to bring international enforcement to the dietary-supplement battle.

Ironically, it was primarily the U.S. that brought the WTO into existence in 1994, as the successor to GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The WTO agreement specifically requires that the member nations including the U.S. conform its laws to meet the requirements of WTO decisions. Failure to conform results in stiff financial penalties.

The Codex Commission and the European Union want the WTO to enforce Codex standards, which fly directly in the face of the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act.

Pascal Lamy of France was just selected as director general of the WTO. Lamy served as a member of the French Socialist Party's steering committee and was chief of staff and representative of the European Commission for President Jacques Delors. Since 1995, he has served as a member of the Central Office of the Mouvement Européen (France) and as a member of the European Commission, responsible for trade.

The Codex Commission met in Rome earlier this month to adopt the final rules on dietary supplement use. The Codex Alimentarius Commission's reach is much broader than dietary supplements. Its committees are also working on standards for pesticide residue, labeling of all kinds of foods, food additives and nutrients, veterinary medicine and drugs, as well as standards and methods for analysis.

The function of this organization is to establish standards for all food worldwide and to enforce those standards through the power of the World Trade Organization.

Few people know that there is such a thing as the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It was created to promote food safety in international trade. It is on the brink of becoming an Orwellian bureaucracy far worse than the worst fantasies of the one-world conspiracy theories.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is neither fantasy nor theory; it is real.

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