



Specialty Olive Oil Distributor and Related New York Retail Stores Sued for False Olive Oil Attacks and Misleading Marketing

Follows a suit filed against Dr. Oz last month for false olive oil attacks

NEW YORK – December 19, 2016 – Importer and bulk specialty olive oil distributor Veronica Foods, along with seven related specialty retail stores across the state of New York, was sued today by the [North American Olive Oil Association](#) (NAOOA). According to the filed Complaint, in their efforts to promote the Veronica Foods products they carry, defendants made false, misleading and scientifically unsubstantiated statements about olive oil sold in supermarkets, claiming it lacks the health benefits consumers expect. The Complaint alleges that defendants have published statements that supermarket olive oils “hold no health benefit,” and that conversely their products are the “freshest and finest” and are healthier than other olive oils.

In fact, there are proven health benefits from using every type of olive oil, including both extra virgin olive oil and olive oil. All olive oils are high in heart-healthy monounsaturated fat, and primarily for this reason, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a qualified heart health claim for olive oil in 2004 based on more than 70 clinical studies conducted in several countries.

“Rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific research has consistently shown that all types of olive oil have significant health benefits, not just those available in specialty retail stores,” said Eryn Balch, Executive Vice President of the NAOOA. “Because the health benefits are proven across the category, we don’t want consumers to be misled into making a false choice between buying a more expensive olive oil or not buying olive oil at all.”

Additionally, the Complaint details how Veronica Foods introduced a new “Ultra Premium” standard for olive oil, which it touts as the highest standard in the industry. As the Complaint states, however, the Ultra Premium designation “is false and misleading in that consumers are led to believe that the olive oil was certified, sponsored or approved by a third party.” In fact, the Ultra Premium designation is merely a self-certifying commercial trademark created, marketed and owned by Veronica Foods, which can be used only by Veronica Foods and those retailers that sell its olive oil products.

The Complaint also goes on to say, “...numerous statements have been made by Defendants that mislead consumers into falsely believing that the recognized health benefits of olive oil can only be achieved by consuming olive oil bearing [Veronica Food’s Ultra Premium] standard and certification.”



The NAOOA offers its own Quality Seal program. In contrast to the Ultra Premium seal, which can only be used on Veronica Foods' own products, the NAOOA seal may be used by participating companies whose submitted production samples and randomly collected off-the-shelf samples pass testing by independent International Olive Oil Council (IOC) labs. The IOC was chartered by the United Nations more than 50 years ago to establish trade standards for quality and purity, and to oversee the production and quality of olive oil around the world.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York. In addition to Veronica Foods, which is based in Oakland, Calif., the named retail defendants include D'Avolio, Inc. (Williamsville, N.Y.), O Live Brooklyn, LLC (Brooklyn, N.Y.), The Crushed Olive of Babylon, Inc. (Babylon, N.Y.), The Crushed Olive of Huntington, Inc. (Huntington, N.Y.), The Crushed Olive of Sayville, Inc. (Sayville, N.Y.), The Crushed Olive of Stonybrook, Inc. (Stony Brook, N.Y.), and The Crushed Olive of Wading River, Inc. (Port Jefferson, N.Y.).

Today's lawsuit follows NAOOA's move last month to sue Dr. Oz for false olive oil attacks made on his show. More information on that suit is available [here](#).

About the North American Olive Oil Association

Established in 1989, the North American Olive Oil Association is a trade association of marketers, packagers and importers of olive oil in the United States, Canada and their respective suppliers abroad. The association strives to foster a better understanding of olive oil and its taste, versatility and health benefits. For more information, visit www.AboutOliveOil.org and www.OliveOilConference.com.

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