



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

LETITIA JAMES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DIVISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
HEALTH CARE BUREAU

April 15, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Michael Essig
Sustainable Forestry Solutions
166 Petticoat Lane
Bloomingburg, NY 12721

Re: CEASE AND DESIST NOTIFICATION

Dear Mr. Essig:

The New York State Office of the Attorney General (“OAG”) is extremely concerned by Sustainable Forestry Solution’s marketing claims that your Japanese knotweed products are a means of curing or treating the 2019 novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”). Specifically, in a March 30, 2020 Facebook post, you offered your products for sale as “important medicine to combat the Corona Virus.”¹ In addition, in a posting underneath your March 24, 2020 YouTube video entitled, “How to Harvesting Japanese Knotweed NATURAL ANTIVIRAL MEDICINE COVID CORONA QUERTICIN REVESTEROL !!”, you similarly describe the products you sell as “important medicine to combat the Corona Virus.”

The 2019 novel coronavirus poses serious consequences to public health, and consumers are concerned as to how they can best protect themselves and their families. These claims may mislead consumers as to the effectiveness of Sustainable Forestry Solutions’ products in protecting against the current outbreak. The World Health Organization (“WHO”) has noted that there is no specific medicine to prevent or treat this disease. Therefore, any misrepresentation on the internet that your products are effective at combatting and/or treating COVID-19 violates New York law.²

¹ In a YouTube video dated March 24, 2020, you state that Michael McKraut is the name of your Facebook account. See https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=TZL_u0_mKmw.

² Current studies in humans demonstrate that resveratrol and quercetin have low bioavailability in the body – as such, the compounds are often metabolized and rapidly eliminated from the body, raising concerns that many of the beneficial effects documented in cell or animal studies may not be achievable in humans. See Smoliga, J. M., Baur, J. A., & Hausenblas, H. A. (2011). Resveratrol and Health—A Comprehensive Review of Human Clinical Trials. *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research*, 55(8), 1129–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mnfr.201100143>. See also Li, Y.,

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You are hereby advised to immediately cease and desist from making any such misleading claims as they violate New York's consumer protection statutes, Executive Law § 63(12) and General Business Law Article 22-A §§ 349 and 350, which prohibit fraudulent and deceptive business practices and false advertising.

Within the next **ten business days**, please contact the undersigned to confirm that you have so complied. Your failure to comply with this directive may result in further action by this office. Please be advised that the Office of the Attorney General is authorized pursuant to Executive Law § 63(12) and General Business Law Article 22-A to bring suit to enjoin any deceptive acts and practices, and to seek restitution, damages, and penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation (§ 350-d).

Very truly yours,

/s/ Lisa Landau

Lisa Landau

Chief, Health Care Bureau

Yao, J., Han, C., Yang, J., Chaudhry, M., Wang, S., Liu, H., & Yin, Y. (2016). Quercetin, Inflammation and Immunity. *Nutrients*, 8(3), 167. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu8030167> (In a randomized, double-blinded, placebo-controlled clinical trial, 1002 subjects were given 500 or 1000 mg/day of either quercetin or a placebo for 12 weeks. For the group as a whole, quercetin supplementation resulted in no significant influence on rates of upper respiratory tract infections compared to the placebos.)