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ALOE VERA
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Aloe and its Quality Control - Checking upon the Genuineness of Products

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Aloe is an extraordinarily beneficial plant remedy, but it has unfortunately been subject to misleading statements on product labels and in promotional literature.

Dilution with water and adulteration with cheap additives have been common. This newsletter examines this extremely important aspect of Aloe.



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ALOE AND ITS QUALITY CONTROL - CHECKING UPON THE GENUINENESS OF PRODUCTS

Introduction



It is the straightforward requirement of the consumer to be supplied with Aloe Extract which is genuinely from the Aloe plant and which has not been contaminated with anything else. The consumer can come to realise that some preservatives are needed, otherwise the Aloe vera Extract cannot possibly be stabilized for distribution and marketing. So far as that is concerned, he or she will always want to see the amount of preservatives kept down to the minimum needed and will also want to be sure that only the most benign preservative compounds are employed. So far as any other additives are concerned, the consumer would usually rather be without them, but, where they are used, the most important thing is that full information should be given so that it becomes clear to the consumer that certain named brands of Aloe are either diluted with water or adulterated with cheap non-Aloe solids, enabling rational purchase decisions to be made. The tendency, which has long been rather rife in this Industry, to sell very diluted products, or to sell products adulterated with cheap non-Aloe additives, without any clear label declaration, is to be deplored.

The essentiality of the preservatives is an important matter for the consumer to understand. If 100% pure Aloe vera juice was to go out for distribution it would rot or ferment long before reaching the point of sale. That means that any liquid product on the market which claims to be "100% Aloe vera" cannot be genuinely quite 100%, although it can be very nearly so. And any liquid product which claims "no preservatives" has got to be wrong unless it were canned or otherwise sterilized or was on very short term distribution - rather like fresh milk. The Industry is based almost entirely upon stabilizing the product for the market and hence the preservatives are unavoidable.

There is also the practice of describing a product as being "made with 100% Aloe vera". This will usually mean that some percentage of the total product will be composed of 100% Aloe vera, but there will be other ingredients as well and the Aloe vera component may be quite a small amount. This

could, and does, easily mislead the uninitiated.

This Newsletter should be read in conjunction with Newsletter No 8 on "The Crucial Importance of Correct Processing". One needs to bear in mind that an Aloe vera which has not been correctly processed, even though it has not been diluted or adulterated, may nonetheless be degraded in its biological activities. Because of that, any product tests that do not measure biological activity have distinct limitations from the standpoint of the consumer.

This field is one where the consumer understandably feels powerless because the laws which govern the sale of Aloe vera products in most countries are wholly inadequate to ensure that the consumer receives a good quality product. The consumer's recourse to Law is therefore usually going to avail him or her nothing. In the UK the Trades Descriptions Act may seem to provide blanket coverage by legislating against the false description of products generally. However, in practice

the regulatory agencies are inhibited by the lack of any nationally recognised standards for Aloe. In the absence of such statutory standards governing e.g. the water content of Aloe products, it seems that any effective action is unlikely.

This is a situation which leaves the policing of dishonest or misleading Aloe vera products largely to the Industry itself. That is difficult - inherently so - since it is the Industry itself which has been offending in these matters. Fortunately, there are operators in the Industry who fully realise that the Industry itself, more than anything else, needs the setting of standards. The Industry and the product can be brought into disrepute if the public is repeatedly charged good money for false or debased products. The remarkable qualities of Aloe will come to be seen as a myth by the great

majority of consumers who have never experienced them for themselves, simply because certain operators within the Industry are so unprincipled as to

continuously and deliberately sell diluted and debased Aloe products in place of the real thing. The only possible defence for the Industry - which cannot opt to bring in the Law as it would like to do, to control some of its own members - is to try to introduce the necessary voluntary controls for themselves

