

Talking Points

March 12, 2008

Experts and Bottled Water Industry Confident that Technical and Safety Measures Used to Produce and Process Bottled Water are Effective in Protecting from Pharmaceutical Contamination

Recent articles published by Associated Press (AP) on March 10-11, 2008 report that trace amounts of pharmaceuticals have been found in some U.S. municipal drinking water systems. The articles also included incorrect statements about bottled water that may confuse or concern consumers, media, and other stakeholders. The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) provides the talking points below to help members respond to customer, media, or other inquiries.

- **Bottled water and drinking water expert Stephen C. Edberg, Ph.D., ABMM, Yale University School of Medicine concurs with IBWA's position on bottled water safety:** "The technical and safety measures used to produce and process bottled water are extremely effective in protecting the product from these and other substances that were reported in the article, should they be present in source water to begin with. This report raises no concern for the safety of bottled water."
- **Bottled water is not just tap water in a bottle** and that the safety and quality of bottled water produced in accordance with US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards do not pose a health risk due to pharmaceuticals or other substances. Bottled water is comprehensively regulated as a packaged food product by FDA and bound by FDA's quality, safety, inspection, and labeling requirements, making bottled water a safe and healthy packaged beverage.
- **Bottled water companies use a multi-barrier approach to bottled water safety**, from source to finished product, that helps prevent possible harmful microorganisms or chemicals, such as pharmaceuticals, from contaminating the finished product as well as storage, production, and transportation equipment. A multi-barrier approach utilized one or a combination of source protection, source monitoring, reverse osmosis, distillation, filtration and other purification techniques, ozonation or ultraviolet (UV) light. The combination of FDA and state regulations, along with a multi-barrier approach and other protective measures, means that consumers can remain confident in choosing bottled water.
- **FDA and state governments recognize both groundwater and municipal water systems as legitimate and valid sources for bottled water production.** There are specific labeling and other standards to help ensure that consumers are aware of the type of bottled water they choose.
- **Bottled water companies that use municipal source water treat and purify the water** by employing processes such as reverse osmosis and distillation before it is bottled and delivered to consumers as a packaged food product. These processes are effective in removing pharmaceuticals and other substances, if they are present in the source water to begin with.
- **Bottled water products, such as mineral water, spring water, or artesian water, come from well-protected, underground water sources** that are not under the direct influence of surface water, such as rivers or lakes, which are the source for many community water systems.
- **In addition to federal and state regulations, members of the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) are required to adhere to standards in the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice.** In several cases, these requirements are stricter than FDA and state bottled water regulations. The IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice is enforced through a mandatory, annual, unannounced plant inspection by an independent, third-party organization.
- **IBWA members are required to employ a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) approach to quality assurance.** This practice scrutinizes every step of the production process – from source to finished product – that are critically important to the safety of the product and puts in place systems to help ensure that all safety and quality control processes are functioning effectively.

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