



All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing: Edmund Burke

Monday, October 4, 2010

# Big Pharma Scores Big Win: Medicinal Herbs Will Disappear in EU

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It's almost a done deal. We are about to see herbal preparations disappear, and the ability of herbalists to prescribe them will also be lost.

Big Pharma has almost reached the finish line of its decades-long battle to wipe out all competition. As of 1 April 2011—less than eight months from now—virtually all medicinal herbs will become illegal in the European Union. The approach in the United States is a bit different, but it's having the same devastating effect. The people have become nothing more than sinks for whatever swill Big Pharma and Agribusiness choose to send our way, and we have no option but to pay whatever rates they want.

Big Pharma and Agribusiness have almost completed their march to take over every aspect of

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health, from the food we eat to the way we care for ourselves when we're ill. Have no doubt about it: this takeover will steal what health remains to us.

### It Begins Next April Fools Day

In the nastiest April Fool's Joke of all time, the European Directive on Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products (THMPD) was enacted back on 31 March 2004.(1) It laid down rules and regulations for the use of herbal products that had previously been freely traded.

This directive requires that all herbal preparations must be put through the same kind of procedure as pharmaceuticals. It makes no difference whether a herb has been in common use for thousands of years. The costs for this are far higher than most manufacturers, other than Big Pharma, can bear, with estimates ranging from £80,000 to £120,000 per herb, and with each herb of a compound having to be treated separately.

It matters not that a herb has been used safely and effectively for thousands of years. It will be treated as if it were a drug. Of course, herbs are far from that. They're preparations made from biological sources. They aren't necessarily purified, as that can change their nature and efficacy, just as it can in food. It's a distortion of their nature and the nature of herbalism to treat them like drugs. That, of course, makes no difference in the Big Pharma-ruled edifice of the EU, which has enshrined corporatism in its constitution.

Dr. Robert Verkerk of the Alliance for Natural Health, International (ANH) describes the problem of requiring drug-like compliance on herbal preparations:

*Getting a classical herbal medicine from a non-European traditional medicinal culture through the EU registration scheme is akin to putting a square peg into a round hole. The regulatory regime ignores and thus has not been adapted to the specific traditions. Such adaptation is required urgently if the directive is not to discriminate against non-European cultures and consequently violate human rights.(2)*

Try to imagine facing your children or grandchildren when they ask why you didn't. How will you tell them that you really weren't that interested in their welfare? How will you tell them that it was more important to watch the latest fake reality show on television than to take the time to write a simple letter?

It is only by actively protesting that this travesty against our welfare can be stopped. If we sit back in apathy, then it will happen. Our right to protect our health and that of our children is hanging in the balance. If you care for your child's or grandchild's welfare, then you must act. Speak out, for now is the moment of truth. You can sit back and do nothing, or you can speak out. And then, once you have, talk to everyone you know. Tell them that it's time to act. There truly is no time to waste.

### Trade Law

To best understand how this can be happening, one needs to see that trade laws have been at the center of the moves to place all aspects of food and medicine under the control of Big Pharma and Agribusiness. If you've followed what's been happening in the United States regarding raw milk and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) claims that foods magically become drugs when health claims are made, you may have noted that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been part of the process.


Rather than treating food and traditional medicines as human rights issues, they have been treated as trade issues. That makes the desires of large corporations the focus of food and herbal law, rather than the needs and desires of people. It's this twisting that has resulted in the FDA's making outrageously absurd statements, such as claiming that Cheerios and walnuts quite literally become drugs simply because of health claims made for them.

The goal of it all is to make the world safe for the megacorporations to trade freely. The needs and health of the people simply are not a factor in their considerations.

### How to Fight This Encroachment on Our Health and Welfare

It's not a done-deal, at least, not quite. If you value your access to herbs, or if you care about access to vitamins and other supplements, please take action. Even if these issues seem

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meaningless to you, consider the people who do care. Should they be denied the right to the medical treatment and health maintenance of their choice?

The ANH has been active in fighting these encroachments. They are currently going to court in an attempt to stop the implementation of THMPD. We can hope that they'll succeed, but recent history shows that no legal maneuver is likely to stop this juggernaut. We cannot afford to sit back and wait for the results of their efforts. We need to see their endeavor as part of a whole, one in which each of us plays a role.

It's up to us—each and every one of us—to take action. If you live in Europe, please, send a letter or message to your Member of European Parliament. Go to this page to find out who is your MEP and the contact information. Then, send a letter that states, in no uncertain terms, that you strongly support the ANH's actions in trying to suspend the implementation of THMPD and that you hope they will also take a stand in support of the people's right to choose herbal treatments.

If you find it difficult to write such a letter, click here for a sample (in the universal .rtf format) suggested by ANH. Feel free to use it.

Posted by Saladin at 9:52 AM

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 **John said...**

You people in Europe really need to get rid of that EU thing.

October 4, 2010 12:03 PM

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