

WHAT IS THIS CODEX THING ALL ABOUT?

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This summer, the group called Codex will meet in Europe to ratify a final position on nutritional supplements.

Codex, from everything I've read, is a body created under the United Nations. However, the World Trade Organization (WTO) seems poised to accept Codex's recommendations.

WTO is the organization formed as a result of GATT, a "free trade" treaty signed on to by many nations, including the US.

I have written about the pernicious aspects of WTO many times. Suffice it to say, one of WTO's aims is to "harmonize" trade among nations.

What would this mean in the arena of nutritional supplements?

It would mean that all nations that are part of WTO would agree to engage in trade on more or less the same basis. If England can only sell 35 specifically named supplements to other countries, the US would only sell those 35 supplements to other countries, and so on and so forth. All nations under WTO would only sell those 35 supplements to one another. We're talking about international trade here. Across borders.

I'm oversimplifying, for clarity. In fact, no one is sure that Codex will come right out and recommend that 28 or 35 or 56 specific supplements are the only products that can be sold across borders.

From every account I've read, it's likely that Codex, this summer, will set certain STANDARDS that then govern which supplements should be traded across national borders.

For example, "demonstrated safety" would be one such standard. Another one would be "proof for any health claims made."

What would these standards mean? They would mean that a company selling, for instance, an amino acid formulation would have to conduct studies to prove safety and to justify any health claims made.

Studies? Like drug companies run for their new drugs?

It appears so. Yes.

But these are VERY expensive clinical trials. Yes. A small or even medium-size or even big supplement company would surely go broke trying to put on these studies for each product it sells.

Suppose you own an outfit that sells a super-green food. And you now have to undertake a bunch of studies with human volunteers---double-blind studies, for example---to prove that this green food is safe and actually produces the health effects you assert are there.

You won't be able to afford the studies. You'll go broke trying.

Okay. Wait a minute, though. WTO only has treaty power among its signatory nations in the area of INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

Which means that if you are the head of a US company that makes this green food, and you want to sell it to retailers in Canada or England or France, you'll have to carry out the studies successfully. But if you just want to sell your green food inside the US, DOMESTICALLY, you're off the hook. No studies necessary. There is a US law on the books that makes it easy for you to sell the green food domestically. That law more or less puts the onus re safety and health claims on the US government. The government, not you, has to do the proving. The government has to prove your green food is unsafe or is not living up to health claims you are making.

And now we come to the debate that is going on among activists and reporters and lawyers and trade organizations representing the supplement industry.

Are we just talking about upcoming restrictions on INTERNATIONAL TRADE? Or are we somehow also talking about DOMESTIC SALES?

Technically speaking, the issue is clear. We are only talking about international trade. That's what WTO covers and that's all it covers.

Of course, to take the US as an example, there are supplement companies that sell their products outside the US. Those sales could and would be affected by the upcoming Codex decision this summer and a follow-up decision by the WTO to accept the Codex standards.

But again, what about domestic sales inside the US? What about domestic sales within Canada by Canadian companies?

Here is my assessment. You have to understand that this whole nutritional arena is a target of drug companies and their allies. These repressive forces have a long-term goal. They want to rule in both the international and domestic areas. They ultimately want to convert all nutritional supplements to new definitions that make these products into drugs. Drugs that conform to all the multi-million-dollar testing procedures laid out by, for instance, the FDA.

Okay? LONG-TERM GOAL.

The drug companies have been, are, and will continue to be, BUYERS OF NUTRITIONAL COMPANIES. As in, takeover.

Why? It's obvious. Nutritional products are in direct competition with drugs. And the trend shows that more and more people are handling their health with supplements.

If you think short-term, you don't care about any of this, if you're an American citizen. Next fall, you're not going to see a sudden and drastic reduction in available supplements when you go to the health-food store.

BUT...there is a long-term strategy here. The FDA has been sending representatives to the Codex meetings in Europe. The FDA likes Codex. The FDA is working with Codex. The FDA does not like the present nutritional supplement laws in the US. The FDA is on the same page with the drug companies.

At the same time, activists who fight for the right to choose nutritional supplements freely have also been attending Codex meetings in Europe. And these activists, who have legit credentials to get into the meetings, have been routinely ignored by the chairman of the meetings. A few delegations from nations who side with these activists have also been ignored.

Not a good sign.

Not at all.

Let me give you a loose analogy. Fifteen years ago, genetically-modified (GM) food was still more or less in the experimental phase. Big chemical companies were working in test fields to see what would happen to crops, food crops, grown with inserted genes. Not many people cared. Not many people even knew what was going on. But now, we have millions of acres of food crops grown with these inserted genes. GM food is everywhere. It's very, very difficult to escape it. Nigh-on impossible. The genes drift. They get into crops that are supposed to be GM-free. They get into weeds. They get into every nook and cranny. Of course, fifteen years ago, we were assured this couldn't happen.

Codex is one arm of a bigger effort. And whether you like it or not, believe it or not, the operation is to convert the vast majority of nutritional supplements into drugs--- by a process of redefinition.

Along the way, all sorts of things are planned to happen. Lowered potencies of supplements. Banned supplements here and there. Re-classification of some supplements into drugs. Higher prices for supplements, as doctors write patients scripts for them.

Now, there are those who claim that in the US and Canada, for instance, the laws that are currently on the books will protect consumers from draconian actions by their own governments, when it comes to the purchase, the DOMESTIC purchase of nutritional supplements.

Therefore, there is no problem.

Technically, for the moment, this may be true.

However, the FDA certainly intends to revisit the US laws. It is engaged in that process right now.

The enemy does not sleep.

Perhaps, even as we speak, there are certain loopholes in the US and Canadian laws which will remove protection from consumers who want to buy all sorts of supplements from companies in their own countries.

The upshot is: those laws can be changed; they can be revoked; government agencies can work to frame new regulations that seem to be in SUPPORT of the "good" laws but are actually undermining them.

And however it plays out in the very, very short-term, you can be sure that the goal of the drug companies and their government partners is the crashing of the supplement industry.

Only the very naive claim that a law will protect them against incursion.

Realistically speaking, the drug cartel and its allies will have a hell of a battle as they attempt to take over the nutritional-supplement industry. But if you think this means you can rest easy, you are mistaken.

Codex is on the march. Other similar players are on the march. I'm not an expert on the overall scene in Europe, but I do know that, in recent years, there has definitely been a reduction in the availability of supplements without a doctor's prescription. And the EU is working hard toward a further drastic reduction.

Recently, I wrote a long piece in an attempt to awaken the nutritional companies. Most of them are asleep at the wheel. They are sure all will be well. They are badly represented by their own trade associations. They have no PR force that means anything.

If you are a consumer, you can reach out to some of these companies yourself.

To say we are protected and have no worries is a massive mistake. One which we will see has a price.