

Sports Nutrition Supplements As Convenient Scapegoats

By Amanda Darlington, Director, Government Relations, CRN and Steve Mister, President & CEO, CRN

Sports nutrition supplements are having a difficult year—the COVID-19 pandemic has closed down gyms, cycling, barre and CrossFit studios around the country while also taking a bite out of the sales of these products that are regularly sold and consumed at these locations. But in addition to the financial consequences faced by many retailers from the pandemic, a far greater threat is facing the industry: state legislation premised on junk science, faulty logic and misinformation combined to disrupt the availability of these products in stores across the country.

Dietary supplements promoted for bodybuilding have long been a convenient scapegoat for critics. In some cases, that derision was warranted as more than one unscrupulous marketer has overpromised the ability to deliver overnight results. Who doesn't remember the cartoon ads of a weaker character who, after a few weeks on a muscle building supplements, shows up on the beach with bulging muscles ready to take on the bully? Anyone who sticks to a consistent workout regimen knows from experience that scoops of protein powder are exactly what they purport to be—a supplement to a healthy, active lifestyle, not a substitute for one.

The newest threat to these products, however, involves the unscrupulous use of science by critics who suggest an association between eating disorders and dietary supplement usage without the research to support it. Nearly identical legislation has been introduced in four states that

would impose age restrictions on the sale of sports nutrition products. The restrictions are broad enough to include protein powders, creatine, beta alanine, BCAAs (branched-chain amino acids) and most pre- and post-workout products. Proponents of the bills argue the false narrative that these products cause body dysmorphia and become a gateway to future steroid use.

At CRN, we have spent a great deal of effort tracking down these allegations and looking for reputable research that would support either of these contentions. It just doesn't exist. While several published studies have explored these possible connections, none of them offer validation. While several observational studies have suggested correlations between the use of bodybuilding supplements and body-image disorders or steroid use, the inherent limitations of observational findings require the full discussions of those results to carefully disavow any causal connection.

We've all heard the logical fallacy of false causality: Ice cream consumption is higher in warmer weather, and crime rates also rise in summer; therefore, ice cream consumption must cause higher crime rates. Silly, right? But that faulty logic is at the heart of this legislation. The proponents argue that because some young people who have used sports nutrition supplements demonstrate a higher risk for using steroids or developing eating disorders later in life, those conditions must have been caused by the supplements. But the research they rely on consistently cautions these relationships

are by association only, not causal—just like ice cream and crime.

Further, well-conducted research demonstrates the benefits of these ingredients to address the increased nutritional needs of teen athletes. Sports nutrition products can help replenish fluids and electrolytes, provide extra energy, improve or reduce recovery time, and help improve athletic performance overall. While industry acknowledges that adulteration is a concern in this product category, the majority of products in this space are safe and beneficial. We'll address illegal products tainted with steroids and illicit substances in a moment.

Despite the credible research supporting sports nutrition products and the lack of evidence from critics to support their arguments, activists continue to urge for age restrictions on these products anyway. Every company in the supplement industry should be concerned. This misguided effort to put age restrictions on some people equals limited access for everyone. What starts as a defined category of restricted products quickly extends to other supplements.

Here's how this plays out: age restrictions on safe and beneficial sports nutrition supplements will coerce retailers to demand photo identification to make these sales and punish retailers who fail to check IDs with fines. It will demand in-store signage warning of "gastrointestinal impairment, tachycardia, hypertension, myocardial infarction, stroke, severe liver injury, organ failure and other serious injuries"—a parade of horrors that is just not supported by scientific evidence.

Retailers' natural response to the legislation will be to place these products behind-the-counter or in restricted cabinets, or to remove them from their stores entirely to be sure they don't inadvertently violate the restrictions. Consequently, if the products are out of reach, consumers of all ages would be less able to compare brands and ingredients, less able to read labels before making a purchase, and less informed about which products meet their needs.

The legislation does not—nor could it effectively—prevent teens from driving across the state lines to stores in neighboring states, or limit online sales. Meanwhile in-state retailers lose those sales to the dark corners of the internet where most of the adulterated and mislabeled products FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) has identified originate—online retailers with a questionable website and shoddy products.

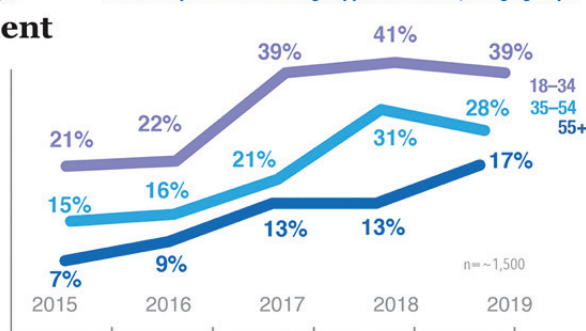
Sports Nutrition & Weight Management

63% of supplement users have overall confidence in the safety and quality of sports nutrition dietary supplements, while 53% report confidence in the safety and quality of weight management supplements.

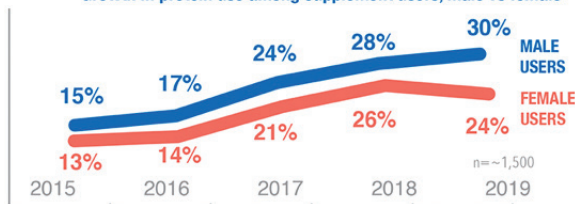
Who takes protein?

Protein remains the most popular ingredient in both the sports nutrition and weight management categories, especially among males and the 18–34-year-old age group. Protein use continues to be higher among males than among females.

Growth in protein use among supplement users, all age groups



Growth in protein use among supplement users, male vs female



MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Don't expect quick fixes! If you are taking dietary supplements and experience immediate or dramatic effects, similar to what you might experience from a drug, that may be a signal that you are taking a spiked product. For your own safety, stop taking the product and seek the counsel of a healthcare practitioner.

Which brings us to the actual problem of illegal products marketed as supplements but containing undisclosed ingredients: anabolic steroids, SARMs (selective androgen receptor modulators) and human growth hormones. These adulterated products are already illegal under federal law and most states' laws. Repeated investigations by FDA have demonstrated that products promoted for muscle enhancement disproportionately attract unscrupulous firms who mis-market their products as supplements. States truly interested in curbing this problem should devote resources and commit

their law enforcement to work with FDA to prosecute the makers of these products when they are discovered; not carding 17-year-old high school athletes buying post-workout powders at the grocery store.

2020 has been a rough year for retailers. The pandemic and the resulting recession from weeks of closures and shelter-at-home orders have devastated retailers' profits and even their ability to stay afloat. These bills—the age restrictions, the fines, the required signage, the attendant capitulation to just stop selling these products altogether, and the maligning of these products—

are solutions in search of a problem. And that's a new problem that is harmful to everyone.



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IngredientNews

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FrieslandCampina Ingredients Launches Biotis

Netherlands-based FrieslandCampina Ingredients announced the launch of Biotis, a new range of health benefit solutions aimed at supporting health and wellness throughout all life stages.

The Biotis portfolio has been developed to work with the body's natural processes, supporting all the essential functions needed for a healthy, active life, from maternal health, through to sleep, immunity and gut health. Biotis

is designed to help brand owners develop attractive foods, drinks and supplements with compelling health benefits.

Biotis Gut Health is the first part of the range to be unveiled. With recent studies suggesting 37 percent of consumers want to improve their digestive health (FMCG Gurus Report), the need is growing for holistic healthy gut solutions. By encouraging a healthy microbiome, Biotis Gut Health focuses

primarily on improving digestive health. Research by FrieslandCampina Ingredients suggests Biotis GOS provides a superior prebiotic effect and improves gastrointestinal health in adults.

Further details of Biotis solutions for sleep, immune, and maternal health will be unveiled throughout 2020.

For more information, visit www.frieslandcampinaingredients.com or <https://biotis.com/>.

AMATEA Organic Guayusa Extract Receives GRAS “No Comment” Letter

Texas-based Applied Food Sciences (AFS) takes a step in furthering the safety and validation of its AMATEA organic guayusa extract by presenting its GRAS (generally recognized as safe) dossier to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for review. AMATEA is a branded guayusa extract that uses a patented

extraction process to highlight the caffeine and antioxidants naturally occurring in guayusa leaves to provide premium, organic energy. The industry generally regards the FDA's merited “no further comment” response as the best response from the FDA and an acknowledgment of the reliable safety data in support of the ingredient.

The FDA's “no comment” indicates that the FDA has reviewed AFS's safety data and does not disagree with their conclusion that AMATEA is safe for the intended use in food and beverage applications set out in the dossier.

For more information, visit <https://appliedfoods.com/>.

Ingredion Launches NOVELOSE 3490 Dietary Fiber

Illinois-based Ingredion Incorporated launched a dietary fiber in the U.S.—NOVELOSE 3490. The dietary fiber, originally launched in the Asia Pacific region, is recognized by Monash University (Australia) as a low FODMAP (fermentable oligo-, di-, mono-saccharides and polyols) certified product in the U.S. and enables food manufacturers

to develop high-fiber bakery and snack products that help support digestive wellness.

NOVELOSE 3490 dietary fiber is a versatile, affordable resistant starch that can be used in a wide variety of bakery and snack applications—without compromising taste, texture or appearance. The insoluble dietary fiber is derived

from tapioca and is classified as a type 4 resistant starch (RS4). NOVELOSE 3490 is recognized by the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) as a dietary fiber and can provide fewer calories when replacing a portion of the flour in baked goods.

For more information, visit www.ingredion.us.