

Closeout for M99070037

On July 16, 1999, an NSF Division Director¹ forwarded an e-mail complaint to OIG and a case was opened. The complainant² alleged that the subject³ supplied false and misleading information to NSF for use in a press release.⁴ In part, the press release refers to an NSF award⁵ made to the subject. There are two specific assertions in the press release which the complainant considers "totally false."

The first assertion is that the two active ingredients⁶ of the subject's product⁷ are naturally occurring substances. The complainant does not dispute the accuracy of this assertion, but instead maintains that one of the active ingredients cannot possibly be produced in 100% purity, with the byproduct impurities being non-naturally occurring substances. However, regardless of its purity, there is no dispute that the active ingredient at issue is a naturally occurring substance.

The second assertion is that the active ingredients do not pose a threat to the environment. The complainant is of the opinion that the subject's product is a potential threat to the human and animal environment. However, the subject had obtained unconditional registration for its product from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) well before the appearance of the press release. This registration indicates that EPA has determined the subject's product "does not pose an unreasonable risk to human health or to the environment."

OIG concludes that the complainant's allegations about the press release attest to a scientific disagreement about the composition and safety of the subject's product, rather than misconduct in science. This inquiry is closed and no further action will be taken.

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4 Footnotes Redacted

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