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BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05401

2/17/2023

Lake Champlain Chocolates response to National Co-Operative Grocers' Questionnaire following Consumer Reports article on heavy metals in dark chocolate:

1. *What practices does your brand currently employ to ensure that your products are safe and free of harmful heavy metals?*

LCC RESPONSE: Lake Champlain Chocolates (LCC) sources its bulk chocolate (couverture) from highly respected chocolate suppliers. LCC reviews the heavy metal testing protocols of our suppliers. These protocols include testing individual lots of cacao beans and chocolate liquor before being made into chocolate couverture (at which point it is blended with sugar and/or other ingredients). These protocols conform to the EU Commission* and FDA** maximum allowable levels for heavy metals.

2. *Do you all test finished products for heavy metals?*

LCC RESPONSE: We rely on the testing protocols of our suppliers who provide us with bulk chocolate couverture.

3. *What practices does your brand employ in your sourcing to ensure that your suppliers are testing for the presence of harmful heavy metals?*

LCC RESPONSE: LCC carefully reviews the testing protocols of our suppliers of bulk chocolate couverture.

4. *Does your brand currently offer any products that have reliably and consistently tested below California's Maximum Allowable Dose Levels for these metals? If so, which products?*

LCC RESPONSE: All of our products are compliant with CA Prop 65 except for our Restorative Moments Line of Chocolate Bars made with 70% dark chocolate.

5. *What changes in sourcing/testing are underway or planned as a result of Consumer Reports' research?*

LCC RESPONSE: There are no changes to the sourcing/testing we currently employ as a direct result of Consumer Reports' research. LCC has been working with its bulk chocolate couverture suppliers on this issue since 2018 and will continue to work with them to monitor heavy metal levels and continue to improve sourcing practices.

6. *Solving the heavy metal contamination issue is an industrywide issue. Is your brand working with any industry groups/brand coalitions to solve this challenge?*

LCC RESPONSE: Yes, Lake Champlain Chocolates has been an active member of the National Confectioners Association from 2013-2019. The NCA represented a collection of chocolate manufacturers through the 2018 *As You Sow vs Trader Joe's* settlement to set standards for levels of lead (Pb) and cadmium (Cd) in dark chocolate, which continue to reduce over time thus requiring the chocolate industry to continue to improve its harvesting and processing practices; and the Fine Chocolate Industry Association for the past 10 years until recently. FCIA has recently been affiliated with active MOCCA Project which published 13 guidelines for mitigation of cadmium in crops (including cocoa). In addition, we continue to push for traceability with suppliers to facilitate progress on social and environmental issues.

*EU Commission 488/2014: Cadmium

Less than or equal to 30% cocoa:

0.10 mg/kg max.

Greater than 30% and less than or equal to 50% cocoa:

0.30 mg/kg max.

Greater than 50% cocoa:

0.80 mg/kg max.

Cocoa powder:

0.60 mg/kg max.

**FDA: Lead (Pb): 0.1 ppm max.

MOCCA Project link: <https://mocca.org/en/mocca-ecuador-is-spearheading-regional-efforts-to-mitigate-cadmium-in-cacao/>