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Consumer Voice of the Natural Health Community

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Lunch Box Wars: consumer advocates want Dannon to more clearly label bug-based ingredients

Los Angeles, CA, September 17, 2013—Taken aback by Dannon’s blasé attitude about using an allergenic, bug-based extract and not just berries to color their yogurt, one of the nation’s most powerful natural health watchdog groups is pressuring the yogurt giant—and hundreds of other food companies—to come clean with consumers.

Citizens for Health, the consumer advocacy group best known for keeping dietary supplements legal and for protecting the integrity of organic labeling, wants Dannon and other food companies who use the insect-based dye carmine, also known as cochineal extract, in their products to more clearly label them or switch to plant-based alternatives.

“When consumers asked Starbucks to stop using bugs in their Frappacinos last year, the company responded with sensitivity and complied within 48 hours without any further prompting,” says Jim Turner, president of Citizens for Health and former food policy advisor for Ralph Nader. “It’s mindboggling that Dannon would so off-handedly dismiss the very same consumer request. They’re just crying out to be challenged.”

Citizens for Health has partnered with a national fitness guru to help get their message out. Michelle Dozois, creator of several multi-million-selling fitness DVDs, is using her influence in the health and fitness community to educate consumers further.

“Michelle is a leader in the health and fitness community, but also a mom who believes that her kids deserve better than bugs,” Turner says. “She can talk mom to mom.”

Dozois is asking people to sign a petition posted on the Take Action website at <http://takeaction.takepart.com/actions/berries-over-bugs-tell-dannon-get-insects-out-yogurt>. The petition was organized by the scientist-led advocacy group *Center for Science in the Public Interest* that first put Dannon in the spotlight this summer. “Our two groups work closely together,” Turner says, “and truth in labeling is an important shared value.”

“I’m not opposed to people eating insects if that’s what they want to do,” says Dozois, “I just don’t want to be tricked into putting bug-based extracts into my kids’ lunch boxes. I want Dannon and other food companies to clearly label bugs!”

Dozois is available for interview upon request.

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Media Contact: Chris Kelley, 406-333-9999, chris@polestarcom.com