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September 3, 2009

High-caffeine energy drinks get canned

The New South Wales government is taking action to ensure that two energy drinks that claim to have up to ten times the allowed caffeine levels are removed from sale, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said.

“It’s simply unacceptable that these products, clearly marketed at youths, have appeared in the market so the Government has taken immediate action to get these illegal products off the shelves,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The Food Authority is working to get the so-called energy drinks ‘Fuel Cell’ and ‘Cintron’ off shop shelves as they both exceed the caffeine level legally permitted in the Food Standards Code.

“Furthermore, the Authority is also conducting a thorough survey of these products to ensure they comply with the law.

“So far it has identified about 70 beverages that come under this category and is testing them to verify the caffeine levels stated on the labels.

“It appears that some drink manufacturers have exploited a regulatory loophole by being registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) as a therapeutic good, despite containing caffeine levels in excess of those permitted under the Food Standards Code.

“The NSW Government is working closely with our Federal colleagues at the TGA to have these goods taken off their register and once this happens the Food Authority will be able to take appropriate action.

“The NSW Government believes this is especially important and relevant in protecting the health and wellbeing of younger members of our community who tend to consume energy drinks.

The Authority is also aware of a Red Bull product imported from New Zealand. This product is registered in New Zealand as a dietary food supplement and is, as such, outside the scope of the Food Standards Code. The Food Authority has raised its concerns about the product with its New Zealand counterpart.

In June Minister Macdonald wrote to his Federal and state counterparts to request that the whole issue of caffeinated energy drinks be considered at the next meeting of the Food Regulation Ministerial Council in October.
