



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 7, 2006

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
HERBERT HADAD, MEGAN GAFFNEY,
HEATHER TASKER, BRIDGET KELLY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(914) 993-1900, (212) 637-2600

U.S. SETTLES CIVIL CHARGES AGAINST NATUREX, INC., A FRENCH IMPORT-EXPORT COMPANY

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that NATUREX, INC. ("NATUREX") has agreed to pay \$325,000 to settle civil charges brought under the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention Act (the "Act"), for failing to register with the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") as an importer and exporter of a regulated substance and for failing to notify the government of imports and exports of the substance. A consent decree incorporating the terms of the settlement was approved yesterday by United States District Judge CHARLES L. BRIEANT in White Plains federal court.

NATUREX, a French company with offices in Mamaroneck, New York, imports and exports substances that are used in the manufacture of spices. The substance at issue in the government's charges is benzaldehyde, also known as bitter almond essential oil. Benzaldehyde is a List I chemical under the Act, because it is used in the manufacture of controlled substances, and as such it is subject to notification and registration requirements under the Act.

According to the government's Complaint, prior to the initiation of the government's investigation, NATUREX failed to register with the DEA annually as an importer or exporter of benzaldehyde in compliance with DEA regulations. The Complaint further alleges that NATUREX failed to notify the Attorney General of 85 imports of benzaldehyde between January 2001 and January 2005, and 74 exports of the chemical between January 1999 and January 2005. NATUREX also failed to complete DEA forms memorializing these imports and exports and failed to maintain records as required by the Act.

Pursuant to the consent decree entered today, NATUREX has agreed to pay the government \$325,000 to settle these charges. Also pursuant to the consent decree, NATUREX is enjoined from further violations of the Act.

Mr. GARCIA said: "The purpose of the DEA's rules and regulations is to ensure that the import and export of potentially dangerous substances are reported to the DEA to minimize the possibility that the substances will be diverted for illegal use. Legitimate businesses must ensure that they have procedures in place to comply with the legal provisions governing the importation and exportation of such substances."

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the DEA.

Assistant United States Attorney DANIELLE GENTIN STOCK is in charge of the case.

06-083

###