

Breaking News on Cosmetics Formulation & Packaging - Europe

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L'Oreal accused of using banned chemicals

By Katie Bird

17/07/2008- **A former L'Oreal executive has accused the company of using ingredients in markets where they are banned and of selling products that contain unlawfully high levels of preservatives.**

Jerome Chevalier claims that he was harassed and ultimately dismissed by L'Oreal USA after he complained about the company's allegedly unlawful activities.

The former head of regulatory affairs has filed a suit against L'Oreal USA in Union County Court, New Jersey, asking for compensatory and consequential damages from the company and demanding reinstatement.

According to Chevalier, products from the company's Maybelline range containing dibutyl phthalate were being sold in South America, where the ingredient is banned.

In addition, he claims that the company exported a hydroflouorocarbon compound known as 152a to European markets - a move which was against its environmental policies.

He also maintains that the company's '100 percent Pureology' range labelled as vegan in fact contains a number of animal-derived ingredients.

After bringing these alleged discrepancies to the attention of the company's management he claims he suffered harassment and was treated as a persona non grata.

In addition, the lawsuit details a final incident occurring shortly before Chevalier was dismissed where he objected to the use of the preservative Kathon CG (INCI names: Methylchloroisothiazolinone and Methylisothiazolinone) at unlawfully high levels in products sold in Europe.

According to the EU Cosmetics Directive the substance can be used as a preservative as long as it doesn't exceed 0.1 per cent.

Chevalier was fired from the company in August 2007 and the lawsuit is claiming wrongful dismissal.

In addition, the lawsuit claims that Chevalier was discriminated against because he is French, and that other French colleagues at L'Oreal USA were also harassed or given alternative positions in France.

In a statement L'Oreal USA said it has investigated the complaint and 'unequivocally denies' the allegations. Although the company does not comment on ongoing litigation it said it intends to 'vigorously defend itself in this lawsuit'.

The company went on to assure the safety of all L'Oreal products.

"All the products marketed by the L'Oréal Group are in full compliance with FDA regulations as well as the European Union Cosmetic Directive and the requirements for safety in the more than 130 countries where its products are sold," it said in the statement.

Chevalier and his lawyer refused to comment on the case.

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