

Qatari shampoo ban to continue as talks fail

A Qatari ban on two international shampoo variants has not been lifted as the local authorities and a delegation from the manufacturing company are discussing the issue

- By Habib Toumi, Bahrain Bureau Chief
- Published: 11:31 July 23, 2010

Manama: A Qatari ban on two international shampoo variants has not been lifted as the local authorities and a delegation from the manufacturing company are discussing the issue.

Qatari media reported that a high-level delegation from Procter & Gamble Arabian Peninsula (P&G) on Thursday failed to convince Qatari officials that P&G's banned shampoo brands met the quality standards set by the country.

Unnamed sources told *The Peninsula* that data provided by Qatari officials was related to the results of tests on the banned products that found that they contained "very, very marginal" levels of 1,4-dioxane, a chemical that can cause cancer, beyond the permissible limits.

Qatari authorities said the decision to recall the two Head & Shoulders variants (Lively & Silky and Shine) must be strictly followed by all shops. "The ban is still in place", Dr Mohammed Saif Al Kuwari, head of labs at the Ministry of Environment, said in a text message sent to *The Peninsula*.

However, a Procter & Gamble source told the newspaper that they were confident they would convince the Qatari authorities about their shampoo quality standards.

"As a precautionary measure we are withdrawing the two variants of shampoo from the shelves for the time being. We are confident of convincing the Qatari officials about the globally-accepted quality standards of our products in the next round of discussions", a Procter & Gamble source told *The Peninsula*.

P&G said that in its meeting with Qatari officials it provided an assurance about the safety of its Head & Shoulders products as well as other products sold under its various brands.

"We are very pleased with the results of the meeting, which we feel has been a real success in reassuring the Qatari authorities over the safety of our P&G products," said Yassin Attas, External Relations Director, P&G Arabian Peninsula, said.

"Furthermore, we have successfully collaborated with the government in order to meet

the safety standards set by Qatari regulations, thus ensuring that we will continue to uphold the high standards that we have always maintained regarding the quality and safety of our products."

During the meeting, P&G presented evidence that it conducts rigorous testing on all raw materials and finished products, and agreed to do further testing to ensure that its products, including the two Head & Shoulders variants in question, meet GCC safety standards, which are strongly influenced by European safety directives, Attas said. In addition, the P&G and Qatari regulators agreed upon a process to resolve the current confusion and misinformation regarding trace levels of the chemical 1,4-dioxane present in cosmetic products, he said.

"Procter & Gamble works closely with suppliers to control and monitor levels of 1,4-dioxane in key ingredients to be sure that they are well below recognised safe levels and are in compliance with all national and global regulations. All P&G products undergo stringent safety testing and evaluation before being released in the market. Furthermore, the company continually monitors the safety and use of its products even when they are out in the market," he said.

© Gulf News 2010