

Food for thought 烟草律师进军食品行业

Vocabulary: law 词汇: 法律

Victory for the lawyers who **took on** the big US tobacco companies and won has **whet their appetite** for more. Now they are challenging the food industry.

About ten years ago, Don Barrett and his colleagues forced the tobacco companies to admit they knew cigarettes were **addictive** and pay the **medical costs** of victims. The **settlement** cost the industry \$200bn.



He is now among more than a dozen lawyers who have **filed cases** against some of the US food industry's biggest **players**.

Mr Barrett's **case** is that companies are **misrepresenting** their products, promoting them as "natural" or "healthy", when in fact, he says, they are no such thing.

In an interview with the BBC's Susan Watts, he says: "People **assume** that if a product is **legal** to sell, then these people are telling the truth about this product... that's what they thought about cigarettes."

The lawyer's mission is to make companies stick to **the letter of existing laws** which, he says, **regulators** have been too weak **to enforce**. He says that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has merely been writing warning letters.

Around two thirds of Americans over the age of 20 are now obese or overweight, according to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Hidden sugars in processed food, Mr Barrett says, are part of that problem, and **mis-labelling** is key. He cites one example: yoghurt from a food company which lists "evaporated cane juice" as an ingredient, an **euphemism** for "sugar".

His **lawsuits** are **class actions**, where the class is defined as every person who purchased one of the **misbranded** products in the previous four years.

"If it cost a dollar and 25 cents, then the customer **is entitled** to his dollar and 25 cents back," he explains. "And there's a four-year **statute of limitations**, so **the damages** in each of these **cases** is how much have they sold of this **misbranded** junk in the last four years."

Barrett **claims** that some 25% of products are **misbranded** in the US. So the scale of **the damages** in these cases could easily match the many billions of the tobacco suits.

词汇表请参看答案与词汇部分

Quiz 测验

阅读短文并回答问题。

1. What did the US tobacco companies had to admit about a decade ago?
2. Look at the article. What does Mr Barrett say companies do wrong?
3. Is the following statement true, false or not given? *Two thirds of Americans are now obese or overweight.*
4. What expression in the article means the use of a mild word instead of one that could be hurtful, offensive or, in the case in the article, too revealing?
5. What expression means 'to have the right to' something?

Exercise 练习

请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。从每个表格中选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. Supermarkets tend to implement the _____ of the law and not sell spirits to underage customers even if they seem to be mature and responsible.

alphabet	number	letter	settlement
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2. Tonight's movie about Victorian explorers might _____ my appetite to visit Patagonia.

whet	wait	win	wet
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3. A judge in Rome has closed a tax evasion case against former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi under the _____ of limitations. The case dates back to the 1990s.

case	code	statute	damages
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4. Mary has decided to sue the hospital for _____ after the surgeons operated on her left leg. The injury was in her right one.

lawsuit	mis-labelling	damages	loss
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5. The tourists have _____ a case against the travel agency because their hotel wasn't booked and they ended up sleeping in the park.

entered	entitled	filed	complained
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Answers and Glossary 答案与词汇

Quiz 小测验

1. What did the US tobacco companies had to admit about a decade ago? That they knew cigarettes were addictive.
2. Look at the article. What does Mr Barrett say companies do wrong? The lawyer says that they misrepresent their products when they say that these are 'natural' and 'healthy'.
3. Is the following statement true, false or not given? *Two thirds of Americans are now obese or overweight.* False. The data is about Americans over 20 years old and excludes children and teenagers.
4. What expression in the article means the use of a mild word instead of one that could be hurtful, offensive or, in the case in the article, too revealing? Euphemism.
5. What expression means 'to have the right to' something? To be entitled to.

Exercise 练习

1. Supermarkets tend to implement the letter of the law and not sell spirits to underage customers even if they seem to be mature and responsible.
2. Tonight's movie about Victorian explorers might whet my appetite to visit Patagonia.
3. A judge in Rome has closed a tax evasion case against former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi under the statute of limitations. The case dates back to the 1990s.
4. Mary has decided to sue the hospital for damages after the surgeons operated on her left leg. The injury was in her right one.
5. The tourists have filed a case against the travel agency because their hotel wasn't booked and they ended up sleeping in the park.

Glossary 词汇表

to take on (someone or something)	挑战
to whet (their) appetite	刺激食欲
addictive	上瘾的, 使成瘾的
medical costs	医疗费用
a settlement	和解协议
to file	递交
a case	一个案子
a player	一个选手 (这里指食品公司)
to misrepresent	误导, 歪曲
to assume	认为
legal	合法的
the letter of the law	法律条文
regulator	监管机构
to enforce	执行
to mis-label	贴错标签
an euphemism	委婉语
a lawsuit	诉讼
a class action	集体诉讼
misbranded	贴错标签的
to be entitled to	有权要求
the statute of limitations	诉讼时效
the damages	损失
to claim	声称