

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

ALYSSA MAYS,
*individually and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,*

Plaintiffs,

v.

HAIN CELESTIAL GROUP, INC.,

Defendant.

CASE NO.:

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff ALYSSA MAYS (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated, by her undersigned attorneys, against Defendant, HAIN CELESTIAL GROUP, INC. (hereafter “Hain” or “Defendant”), alleges the following based upon personal knowledge as to herself and her own action, and, as to all other matters, alleges, upon information and belief and investigation of her counsel, as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is a consumer class action brought individually by the Plaintiff individually and on behalf of all persons in the below-defined proposed Class, all of whom purchased one or more of certain baby foods manufactured by Hain.¹

¹ The products at issue are all baby foods sold by Defendant that contain one or more of the following ingredients: organic barley flour, organic chopped broccoli, organic date paste, organic cinnamon powder, organic brown flax milled, organic yellow papaya puree, organic whole what fine, organic red lentils, organic oat flakes, organic oat flour; organic vitamin pre-mix, organic brown rice flour, organic whole raisins, organic soft white wheat flour, organic spelt flour, organic barley malt extract, organic yellow split pea powder, medium grain whole rice, organic butternut squash puree, and organic blueberry puree, and include, Stage 1: Baby Chicken & Chicken Broth, Stage 2: Sweet Potato and Chicken Dinner; Stage 2: Chicken & Rice (the “Products”). Discovery may reveal additional products at issue.

2. Hain manufactures, markets, advertises, labels, distributes, and sells baby food products under the brand name Earth's Best throughout the United States, including in this District.

3. Hain states that "it ensures a high degree of attention to both ingredient and product quality and safety – from procuring, handling, storing, blending, and packaging through distributing Earth's Best® products to our consumer."²

4. Hain further states it "ensures the best ingredients for our food and ultimately the best food for your children."³

5. Hain does not list heavy metals as an ingredient on the Products' labels nor does it warn of the potential presence of heavy metals in the Products. Hain also does not disclose that the ingredients of its supposedly organic Products contain inorganic arsenic.

6. Unbeknown to Plaintiff and members of the Class, and contrary to the representations on the Products label, the Products contain heavy metals, including inorganic arsenic, cadmium and lead at levels above what is considered safe for babies, which, if disclosed to Plaintiff and members of the Class prior to purchase, would have caused Plaintiff and members of the Class not to purchase or consume the Products.

7. As a result, the Products' labeling is deceptive and misleading.

8. Plaintiff and the Class, as defined below, thus bring claims for consumer fraud and seek damages, injunctive and declaratory relief, interest, costs, and attorneys' fees.

THE PARTIES

9. Plaintiff Alyssa Mays is a citizen of the State of Ohio and is a member of the Class defined herein. She purchased the Products, including Stage 1: Baby Chicken & Chicken Broth,

² See <https://www.earthsbest.com/why-earths-best/>.

³ *Id.*

Stage 2: Sweet Potato and Chicken Dinner, and Stage 2: Chicken & Rice. Plaintiff purchased the Products primarily from Kroger in Mount Orab, Ohio from around March of 2020, until she became concerned about the presence of heavy metals in February 2021.

10. Prior to purchasing the Products, Plaintiff Mays saw Defendant's nutritional claims on the packaging, including "Earth's Best," "organic" and "nurturing baby the purest way," which she relied on in deciding to purchase the Products. During that time, based on Defendant's omissions and the false and misleading claims, warranties, representations, advertisements and other marketing by Defendant, Plaintiff Mays was unaware that the Products contained any level of heavy metals, including inorganic arsenic, and would not have purchased the food if that was fully disclosed, or she would not have paid as much for the Products if that information was fully disclosed. She stopped purchasing the Products in February 2021, when she became aware that the Products contained heavy metals. Plaintiff Mays was injured by paying a premium for the Products that have no or de minimis value—or whose value was at least less than what she paid for the Products—based on the presence of the alleged heavy metals.

11. Defendant Hain Celestial Group, Inc. is an American food company with its headquarters located in Lake Success, New York.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

12. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005 (hereinafter referred to as "CAFA") codified as 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2) because the claims of the proposed Class members exceed \$5,000,000 and because Defendant is a citizen of a different state than most Class members.

13. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant regularly sells and markets products and conducts business in this District and/or under the stream of commerce doctrine by allowing products to be sold in this District, including the Products.

14. Venue is proper in this Court because a substantial portion of the events complained of took place in this District and this Court has jurisdiction over the Defendant.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

15. The market for baby foods is exploding. The baby foods market worldwide is projected to grow by \$22.7 billion by the year 2025.⁴

16. Along with the exploding baby food market is a surge in popularity of baby food products that are organic and otherwise ‘healthy’ for babies.⁵

17. Defendant manufactures, markets, advertises, labels, distributes, and sells Products, both in the past and currently. Defendant has advertised and continues to advertise the Products through television commercials, print advertisements, point-of-sale displays, product packaging, Internet advertisements, and other promotional materials.

18. On the label of each of the Products, Hain prominently boasts that the Products are derived from ingredients that are: (i) “Earth’s Best,” (ii) “organic” and (iii) “nurturing baby the purest way:”

⁴ https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/338658/baby_foods_and_infant_formula_global_market?utm_source=dynamic&utm_medium=BW&utm_code=b559sk&utm_campaign=138612+++Global+Baby+Foods+and+Infant+Formula+Market+Assessment+2020-2025&utm_exec=jo ca220bwd.

⁵ *Id.*



19. Defendant's packaging of the Products also does not disclose the presence, or risk of, heavy metals.

Explore Litigation Insights

Docket Alarm provides insights to develop a more informed litigation strategy and the peace of mind of knowing you're on top of things.

Real-Time Litigation Alerts



Keep your litigation team up-to-date with **real-time alerts** and advanced team management tools built for the enterprise, all while greatly reducing PACER spend.

Our comprehensive service means we can handle Federal, State, and Administrative courts across the country.

Advanced Docket Research



With over 230 million records, Docket Alarm's cloud-native docket research platform finds what other services can't. Coverage includes Federal, State, plus PTAB, TTAB, ITC and NLRB decisions, all in one place.

Identify arguments that have been successful in the past with full text, pinpoint searching. Link to case law cited within any court document via Fastcase.

Analytics At Your Fingertips



Learn what happened the last time a particular judge, opposing counsel or company faced cases similar to yours.

Advanced out-of-the-box PTAB and TTAB analytics are always at your fingertips.

API

Docket Alarm offers a powerful API (application programming interface) to developers that want to integrate case filings into their apps.

LAW FIRMS

Build custom dashboards for your attorneys and clients with live data direct from the court.

Automate many repetitive legal tasks like conflict checks, document management, and marketing.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Litigation and bankruptcy checks for companies and debtors.

E-DISCOVERY AND LEGAL VENDORS

Sync your system to PACER to automate legal marketing.