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Ministry Objects to Claims Made by Vodka Brand

By The Moscow Times

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Another vodka brand claiming to be "certified natural" may be investigated for misleading advertising.

Ryabchik vodka, which means "Hazel Grouse" in English, comes with a bottle embossed with the gold-lettered claim that the "naturalness" of the product is guaranteed by a certificate issued by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, according to a photo e-mailed by the ministry.

But the ministry said it "has no authority to issue such certificates of legal guarantees under Russian law", and has asked the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service to investigate the drink's makers — a company called PK Rodina.

The bottle also comes with a certificate signed by Fyodor Metlitsky, president of an organization called the International Environmental Fund, that claims the ministry

guarantees "the impeccable taste and purity" of the product, the ministry said.

Calls to a phone number on the web site for Metlitsky's environmental certification scheme went unanswered Tuesday.

Repeated Google and Yandex searches failed to produce a web site or contact details for PK Rodina by Tuesday evening.

Last month, the Federal Anti-Monopoly Service said it was investigating complaints about premium brand Beluga vodka's claim that it draws its water from a source "300 kilometers from any industrial enterprise."

The Russian Consumers Union, which lodged the complaint, said it had evidence that the water was drawn from a region polluted by industrial waste and fallout from Cold War nuclear weapons tests.

No results of the investigation have been announced so far.

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