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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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3-A Symbol Infringement List Grows

McLEAN, VA – 3-A Sanitary Standards, Inc. (3-A SSI) has updated the online list of companies that currently display the trademarked 3-A Symbol without authorization or make unsupported equivalent claims of 3-A SSI approval. The 3-A Symbol is now being displayed by a number of Chinese companies without the authorization of 3-A SSI or the companies are making unsubstantiated claims such as ‘3A Certified’.

A list of documented infringers was posted in June on the 3-A SSI web site under the special announcement, ‘Buyer Beware: False or Misleading Claims’ at http://www.3-a.org/3-A-Symbol/Buyer-Beware-False-or-Misleading-Claim. The list has more than doubled in size from seven in June to 15 companies today.

In light of the number of infringers and the type of misleading claims found in marketing literature, 3-A SSI strongly urges all interested parties to monitor the ‘Buyer Beware’ list on a periodic basis. Literally hundreds of marketers promote food processing equipment on-line or through B2B web sites free of the independent verification of any product claims. Many of these state claims such as ‘meets 3A’, ‘conforms to 3A standards’, or the equipment may even include ‘3A’ in a model name or designation. Such references suggest the equipment meets the criteria for 3-A Symbol authorization. Unless the supplier is an authorized 3-A Symbol licensee, the buyer is solely responsible for verifying whether the equipment meets the desired (and expected) sanitary design and fabrication criteria.

The 3-A Symbol, shown on this masthead, is properly registered as the legal property of 3-A SSI by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. 3-A SSI licenses use of the 3-A Symbol to fabricators around the world to identify equipment that meets 3-A Sanitary Standards for design and fabrication. Voluntary use of the 3-A Symbol by dairy and food equipment fabricators helps assure processors that equipment meets sanitary standards, provides accepted criteria to equipment manufacturers for sanitary design, and establishes guidelines for uniform evaluation
and compliance by sanitarians in the U.S.  3-A SSI currently licenses use of the 3-A Symbol to fabricators in the U.S. and 29 other countries, including many fabricators based in China.

The unauthorized use and display of the 3-A Symbol is misleading and potentially damaging to customers who select such products with the understanding the equipment has been verified to meet the criteria of a 3-A Sanitary Standard. A public list of all 3-A Symbol licensees is available on the 3-A SSI web site at http://www.3-a.org/3-A-Symbol/Search-Database-of-Current-Certificates to help fabricators, processors, and regulatory sanitarians verify a current authorization. Information on 3-A Symbol licensees is important public information because it shows all equipment that has been found by an independent Third Party Verification inspection to conform to 3-A Sanitary Standards for dairy and food processing equipment and meet provisions of the 3-A Symbol program.

According to 3-A SSI Executive Director Tim Rugh, “3-A SSI often finds through web searches many unsupported statements of conformance to 3-A Sanitary Standards, 3-A Certification, or authorization to use the 3-A Symbol, including some products such as ‘sanitary butterfly valves’, for which no 3-A Sanitary Standard exists. Unfortunately, the number of suspect or misleading claims appear to be on the rise, but the leadership of 3-A SSI is examining strategies to help stem this issue,” Rugh said.

3-A SSI encourages those searching for food processing equipment that meets stringent criteria for sanitary design and fabrication to verify the equipment maintains authorization to display the 3-A Symbol. To find equipment built to 3-A Sanitary Standards, details on 3-A Sanitary Standards, and the 3-A Symbol, visit www.3-a.org.

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3-A Sanitary Standards, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to enhance product safety for consumers of food, beverages, and pharmaceutical products through the development and use of 3-A Sanitary Standards and 3-A Accepted Practices. For more information, visit www.3-a.org.