

State agencies crack down on 1,300 false food, drug product ads

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»The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Broadcasting Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) have taken action against more than 1,300 false advertisements this year.

Paisarn Dunkum, FDA secretary-general, said the two groups had collaborated and taken action against 1,388 advertisements for food, drugs and food supplements on social media and in the e-market which overstated the products' effects.

Authorities have already withdrawn food registration permits from 23 of them, said Dr Paisarn.

Peerapong Manakit, a commissioner at the NBTC, said hyped-up advertising was on the rise.

However, cooperation between the authorities started in 2018 and had resulted in heavier punishments — now up to a 100,000-baht fine and withdrawal of offenders' business' licences.

As of Nov 15, 18 TV operators and 674 radio broadcast operators had

been prosecuted for running this type of advertising, Mr Peerapong said.

"Most 'hype' advertisements boast of the products' efficacy and instant results in boosting health and curing diseases like eye problems, rheumatoid arthritis, herbs or curing sexual impotency," he said. "The number of these ads has been on the rise, especially for products on health and wellness. Many consumers have been affected and some have even died from taking these products."

As an example, a food supplement called Dtox Kelly boasted it could cure constipation and colon cancer but the FDA found the product had not received an FDA permit.

The FDA also found many wellness and health supplements used banned adjectives by describing their products such as miracle cures or offering "sacred" properties.

He said the FDA would next year create an advocacy network to deal with online advertisements and provide the "right" information to consumers.