

## **KBI Verified Program to Launch at Kombucha Kon 2016 in February; New AOAC Standards Working Group for Testing Ethanol in Kombucha Completes Phase One**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Los Angeles, CA - December 30, 2015: Kombucha Brewers International, the non-profit trade association for the Kombucha bottling industry worldwide, is pleased to announce the launch the KBI Verification Program at KombuchaKon 2016, Feb 5-6 at the Long Beach Convention Center. The program, including alcohol testing and extensive labeling requirements, demonstrates the industry's willingness to self-regulate and will be based on the modern, kombucha-specific testing methods currently in development by the AOAC – Association of Official Analytical Chemists – a non-profit organization recognized worldwide for establishing scientific testing methods utilized by governments, industries and labs including the Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Although the very low levels of alcohol in kombucha normally remain under .5% for most producers, and though no public health issue has ever been identified in relation to the low levels present, KBI and the industry in general are committed to accuracy in labeling and compliance with all beverage laws. This self-administered program will build on KBI's Best Practices (<http://kombuchabrewers.org/resources/best-practices/>), published in 2015, and will be the most extensive kombucha labeling program available. The ultimate result will be to assure retailers, distributors, and consumers that the contents of the beverage match up with what is printed on the bottle label, including alcohol content, sugar content, and other claims. Just as important, those same retailers, distributors and consumers, as well as the Kombucha Bottlers, will have peace of mind that the most up to date and accurate testing methods will be employed by the KBI Program, based in-part on the testing standard being established with the AOAC.

Many currently employed methods for testing levels of ethanol use techniques not developed for low-alcohol beverages, and these tests have been found to skew readings 2-4 times higher versus more precise techniques, necessitating the creation of kombucha specific standards. The TTB, the agency responsible for testing and taxing alcoholic beverages in the US, has been an active participant in the AOAC Working Group, which utilizes voluntary consensus among all participants to achieve ethical and accurate standards. The Working Group has successfully completed the SMPR – Standard Method Performance Requirements, which defines the scope and criteria for the scientific testing method needed. Remaining phases could be completed as soon as September 2016.

Members of KBI will be eligible to join the KBI Verified Pilot Program beginning at the KombuchaKon conference this February, and regular testing will be required for certification. Those who maintain compliance will have access to the KBI Verified Seal for their labels. "We feel it is crucial to educate our members before rolling out the program so they are clear as the expectations and how to meet the criteria," explained Special Projects Team leader Susan Fink of Karma Kombucha (IL). The conference will feature education on the Verification Program including training on how to comply with all requirements, controlling ethanol in kombucha, HAACP Plan development, registering with the TTB if desiring to make an over-21 beverage, and many other opportunities for new or established kombucha breweries to improve their knowledge of regulatory and marketing challenges of the industry, as well as grassroots marketing and kombucha market overview by Bobbi Leahy of SPINS. PRESS PASSES AVAILABLE.

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Kombucha Brewers International (KBI) is a non-profit trade association that represents the Kombucha Tea bottled beverage category globally. To learn more about the Kombucha industry, please contact KBI President Hannah Crum at [info@kombuchabrewers.org](mailto:info@kombuchabrewers.org)  
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