



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

The definition of fast-moving

"Move fast and break things. Unless you are breaking stuff, you are not moving fast enough." – Mark Zuckerberg

There is a real danger in trying to be 'current' when writing an article like this, when the environment surrounding us is so fast-moving. So my apologies if things have moved on since I wrote this, but by the time I write next month's article, this will have been my only opportunity to speak of the fast approaching national election.

If we thought we were living in an unprecedented Brexit world and that was change enough, a new curve ball was thrown into the game with the General Election announcement, as we saw that Theresa May found the case for a snap General Election just too hard to ignore.

Prior to her announcement on April 18, there had been 36 polls collated by Britain Elects in 2017, with an average Conservative lead in these polls of 14.5 per cent. A snap poll carried out by ICM on the day of her announcement found a 21 per cent lead. The same poll also found strong support for the election itself; 55 per cent supported May's decision to go to the country early, as opposed to just 15 per cent against.

This morning, three weeks on from the Prime Minister's announcement, I received the latest polling data that has the Conservative lead ranging from 15 per cent to 24 per cent, with an average lead being 18.4 per cent. So, if anything, the polls are widening, not closing. However, with over a month to go, there is still time for anything to happen, and we all know just how unreliable polls can be! But these polls,



combined with the results from last week's Mayoral and local elections, definitely offer a very strong indicator of how things might go, and that realistically the only real question is how much larger the Conservative majority will end up being compared to now. Along with the polling data, I also received the following latest seat projections, which, on the face of it, will be very worrying for all of the opposition parties.

So, why now? What was this decision of the PM really all about?

Well, when it comes to Brexit, for the PM, timing is everything. Going to the polls now means that another election will not be due until 2022. This will give three full years between the point of departure from the EU in 2019 – giving significantly more breathing space after Brexit than a 2020 election would have done. This allows time for any immediate economic shocks to have subsided and would also give the Government

time to iron out any wrinkles arising in the immediate aftermath of departure, without an imminent General Election looming. This is no real secret and it has been reported that senior Ministers have been briefing that this timing issue was a major factor in the PM's thinking.

Our excellent Parliamentary advisers, Cicero Group, have been keeping us briefed throughout the Brexit and election process, and I thought the take on this provided by our main contact there, Simon Fitzpatrick, was extremely perceptive: *"Theresa May has taken a bold move which many believed would not be in her nature. While she will be wary of resurgent Lib Dems in some of their former strongholds, the Tory lead over Labour will leave her confident of securing an enhanced majority, delivering a mandate both for her personally and her Brexit plan. All of this will strengthen her hand, but with the two year Brexit process having only just kicked off, the ongoing situation in Northern Ireland and Nicola Sturgeon relentlessly pursuing a second Scottish referendum, not to mention that a damaging defeat for Labour is likely to see Jeremy Corbyn replaced, perhaps with a leader who may succeed in landing more regular blows on the Government. It would be a mistake for May to think an election alone will make her life easier."*

As you can imagine, we at the HFMA are watching things closely and as soon as possible after the election outcome is known, we will be monitoring the composition of the new

Government, and the Ministerial appointments within the Department of Health. We will then be contacting those individuals to make them aware of the vital and very positive role that our sector plays in helping the nation to be healthier, and also the issues and concerns of the HFMA and this industry. A more enlightened approach to the role of supplementation would be a good start.

You are probably aware that the HFMA provides the secretariat for the Micronutrients and Health All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in Westminster, and we will be re-doubling our efforts to have this be a key mechanism for this industry's voice to be heard. The first four meetings of the APPG have been extremely productive and we will be holding the next meeting on June 27. Continuing with the general theme of the previous meetings that discussed nutrition and life stages, the subject matter for the next meeting will focus on nutritional issues in older people.

At the HFMA's annual members' meeting at Church House, Westminster, on Monday, June 12, following which we have organised a Brexit-related seminar, attendees will receive a 'hot off the press' comprehensive expert analysis of the election outcome and its implications going forward. Needless to say, we will be positioning ourselves, whatever the outcome, to be able to best influence the prospects for all of our member companies, and the wider industry generally.

For further details please contact philippa@hfma.co.uk.

Party	2015 Votes	2015 Seats	Pred Votes	Pred Seats
CON	37.8%	331	47.4%	404
LAB	31.2%	232	26.9%	171
LIB	8.1%	8	10.2%	8
UKIP	12.9%	1	7.3%	0
Green	3.8%	1	2.4%	0
SNP	4.9%	56	4.1%	45
PlaidC	0.6%	3	0.6%	4
Minor	0.8%	0	1.0%	0
N.Ire		18		18

HFMA membership is vital to ensure that your company keeps abreast of the fast-changing regulatory environment. The HFMA is the UK's best source of information and most effective defender of our industry's interests. To help the HFMA defend your business at this most critical time contact hfma@hfma.co.uk or call 020 8481 7100.

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THE VOICE OF THE NATURAL HEALTH INDUSTRY

To help us in our efforts to protect this industry and benefit from the gold-standard advice we provide, join the HFMA at the earliest opportunity. To learn more about our activities, please contact graham@hfma.co.uk.