



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

It's that time of year when you will be reviewing your activities for 2017 and planning for the New Year ahead. So I think it is a good time to give you a reminder that as you think about how to address the challenges ahead, one of your options is to give yourself access to the friendly, supportive and passionate people at your industry trade association.

If your company is not already a member of the HFMA, you should think seriously about joining. You would be a member of by far the most vocal and proactive trade association in the sector, and we have always gone to extraordinary lengths to try to protect our members' interests. In most situations, if we did not do this, nobody would, least of all an individual member company acting in isolation.

By joining the HFMA, you are supporting the one association that is dedicated to this great industry, and thinking all the time about the future health and wellbeing of everyone working within it. And we are now entering our 53rd year of being the voice of the industry! I therefore thought it might be helpful and informative to give you 10 really good reasons to join with the 120 or so companies that make up the HFMA's membership:

■ **1:** Your queries answered – HFMA Secretariat, CLEAR CHECK and advisers are at the end of a phone. You have unrestricted and free access to some of the best technical, scientific, regulatory and political advice that you could wish for, and through the HFMA you have access to our counterpart 'sister' trade associations in 13 other EU member states.

■ **2:** We are constantly fighting for the regulatory 'rights' for the existence of the specific ingredient forms, additives and delivery forms that our members use in their

Ten reasons to join the HFMA



THE VOICE OF THE NATURAL HEALTH INDUSTRY FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS

products. Our efforts in this area have been critical.

■ **3:** At a time when enforcement is stretched, we are keeping a level playing field, ensuring there is a way, through your trade association, to report misleading and unscrupulous competitors that could take sales/market share from you by using unfair or even illegal means. This is happening on a daily basis.

■ **4:** We are, on a daily basis, helping our members ensure that their products, adverts and packaging are, and remain, fully compliant with all UK and EU regulations and thereby don't fall foul of the authorities/TSOs etc. HFMA's Code of Advertising Practice sets out the regulatory framework for specialist health products and HFMA members are required to conform to its criteria. HFMA's Code of Advertising Practice Administrators and its (COPY • LABELLING • EDUCATION • ADVERTISING • REGULATION) (CLEAR CHECK), are there to assist you to present your products to their maximum advantage within the law. All applicants for HFMA membership which manufacture relevant products must also agree to comply with the requirements of its

Guidelines for Good Manufacturing Practice for Food Supplements.

■ **5:** If issues arise, you get an early warning and timely response if anything is raised by a regulator, or something is on the regulatory horizon. If the challenge comes to HFMA first, it can be potentially headed off before it even reaches the company (i.e. we act as a buffer to address the problem). In terms of other companies, we have an internal HFMA system (known as UCI – i.e. Unfair and Illegal Competition), whereby member companies are asked to bring concerns to us, and in strictest confidence, about other member companies, rather than approach the regulatory and enforcement authorities. We then try to resolve these issues internally. We could also be of help with issues such as ASA investigations and rulings.

■ **6:** We manage the secretariat for All-Party Parliamentary Group on Micronutrients and Health (see: www.micronutrientsappg.org) and this helps us to now be better able to influence events in Westminster.

■ **7:** As a member, you receive a constant stream of news updates, 'In the News' and 'Beyond the News' bulletins, CLEAR CHECK News and

other mailings, have access to an information-packed members-only section of our website, and the opportunity to attend our quarterly technical working groups meetings.

■ **8:** We have never been better connected to the regulatory and enforcement authorities on a national or local level. We are better connected now than ever before to the Department of Health, FSA, Regulatory Delivery, Defra, MHRA, Trading Standards Institute etc.

■ **9:** In July 2016, the HFMA entered into a new Primary Authority partnership with Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards with the aim of further solidifying its position as the go-to experts on regulation within the natural health industry. Through your membership of the HFMA, you can, at no additional cost, sign up to the Primary Authority scheme, and your being part of the PA Partnership provides you with a protective 'shield' that you otherwise might not have.

■ **10:** We spend a lot of time and effort in being on the lookout for, and handling, the media PR issues that always seem to be coming our way. There are countless times when we have been a voice of reason and balance in an otherwise damaging story in the national media. **hfb**

Our strength as an industry comes from speaking with one voice and presenting a united front. So, 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 me at graham@hfma.co.uk, or visit www.hfma.co.uk

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.

