



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

A great time had by all

As I write this, we are all reflecting on a fun and busy weekend at the Natural & Organic Products Europe expo at ExCeL, in Docklands. I always love to see our industry coming together to display their wares at what continues to be a thoroughly professional event. And for me, it sums up what I have always felt about this great industry being full of wonderful, caring people that have one collective aim – to help consumers to have healthier lives.

So, if I need inspiration to continue the daily fight to protect, promote and defend this great industry, I only need to stand at the centre of the show and do a 360 degree turn. Why does an industry full of such caring and well-meaning people have to spend so much of its time and limited resources constantly having to defend what it is doing? And yet that remains the case.

Further inspiration comes when I meet some of the great young people that are unquestionably representing the future of our industry. I was delighted to once again be invited to be a judge in this year's 'thirty under 30' awards, which recognises these super individuals, many of whom I caught in this photo at the reception in their honour, hosted by Dominic and Rosie, of Diversified. They are both to be commended for inaugurating this great new

initiative at the show a couple of years ago.

It was great to see a strong presence of HFMA member companies at this year's show, I estimated around 30 in total. What becomes evident as each year progresses is the quality and ingenuity of the stands of many of the exhibiting companies. I think this has been an aspect of the show that I've particularly noticed improving over the years, along with an increased professionalism of the people working on those stands. Sure, I always expect to see the Viridian stand buzzing with activity, and Cheryl doing what she does best at the centre of it, but many others have noticeably upped their game at this show. The BetterYou stand this year deserves a special mention, it was remarkably good – smart, streamlined and professional – so well done to them.

Having been a stalwart of countless shows over the years, both participating and attending, it takes something to make me stop and take a photo. But that was the case when I saw this great Weleda exhibit, the 'Nice Cream Van'. Simple, clever and very effective.

And I must also give a shout



out to the quality of some of the talks and presentations given during the show. Marilyn Glenville never fails to impress me with her calm authority, and I particularly enjoyed the extremely knowledgeable presentation by Jacek Kramarz, of HemPoland. But the pick for me was the absorbing and fascinating presentation by two great old friends, the brothers, Greg and Craig Sams, who spoke with great warmth and feeling about their role in helping to give birth to some of the founding principles of our industry.

Some of us have played a role in the story, but these two guys really were there at the start back in the '60s, and with instinct, flair and genuine innovation, they created some of the iconic names that are now part of the fabric, such as Harmony Foods, Whole Earth,

Green & Blacks and, of course, the VegeBurger. Fifty years of history and heritage wrapped up in a 45-minute presentation – I could not have enjoyed it more.

In my own small way, I was able to become part of the story as my company acquired the VegeBurger company from Greg Sams, and I got to know him well as the weighty responsibility for the marketing, and subsequent extending, of this great brand fell on my shoulders.

It begs the question – who in 30 years' time might be the iconic characters from today that the industry will be recognising? Well, I like to think that I met some of them at the 'thirty under 30' reception on Monday morning this week. If any of them can make the mark that these guys did, then it will be thoroughly deserved! **hfb**



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.

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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