



HFMA UPDATE

by Graham Keen,
Executive Director

Award-winning HFMA

After what has been a momentous and extremely challenging last 18 months or so, we decided that we would put ourselves forward for a couple of the main categories in this year's Association Excellence Awards. This is not something we have ever done before, but then we have never previously had a year like the last one!

Well, I'm delighted to say that at last week's award event, the HFMA was delighted to receive the Silver Award in one of the two categories we were nominated for, Best Lobbying Campaign or Advancement of a Cause During COVID-19. That said, we were unsuccessful in the main award, although being included in the final shortlist of six for UK Trade Association of the Year was quite an achievement, and that particular award went to the National Association of Funeral Directors!

Everyone within the HFMA 'family' has worked tirelessly over the past 18 months. Together, we have supported our members, retailers and consumers during Covid-19, and the post-Brexit challenges, and it is wonderful that this has been formally recognised. We are very proud of all of the quick and decisive action taken over the last year or so and, amongst other things, this has resulted in the fastest growth in the HFMA's membership in our near 57-year history as we approach having 150 member companies for the first time.

The HFMA tries at all times to offer exemplary representation for its members, and nowhere was this more evident than through its response to the pandemic. The association understood that protecting the needs of the natural products industry meant protecting its members and their role in the supply chain, the high street's

ability to provide safe natural health products, and to protect consumers' access to those products and advice. As such, we successfully lobbied Downing Street to ensure that health food stores were classified as an essential service, enabling them to remain open. Furthermore, we successfully lobbied to secure 'key worker' status for all those working in the natural health industry, protecting both member companies' ability to operate and consumer access to essential products.

The lobbying campaign connected the HFMA directly with high-level Government ministers and MPs, including Jo Churchill MP, the then Public Health Minister, Paul Scully MP, Small Business, Consumers and Labour Minister, Marcus Jones MP, and David Davis MP. This acknowledgement from the Government is a clear demonstration of the HFMA's value to its members, not only for safeguarding and continually improving the industry's image but facilitating its ability to continue functioning under Covid restrictions.

And in amongst all of that we launched HealthyDoesIt, a first-of-its-kind consumer campaign. Created to be a positive and proactive platform, the HealthyDoesIt messaging has been sensitive to lockdown experiences and scientifically accurate, ensuring that consumer messaging is responsible and easy to understand. At its most recent meeting, the HFMA Council agreed that the association's significant financial commitment to the HealthyDoesIt campaign would

continue for another two years at least, with increased funding for each year. The HFMA has never previously provided such a level of funding for what is basically an industry-supportive, non-commercial and altruistic purpose.

I think the HFMA's key role throughout the last year or two can be summed up best of all in the results of our most recent member survey, and in particular in response to the key question; 'How likely are you to recommend HFMA membership to a non-member company?', which achieved a score of 9.1 out of 10!

I will leave the last word to our members, some of who were kind enough to say the following as part of our awards submission:

■ "No organisation did more than the HFMA to protect and champion the interests of the natural products industry in 2020. From Brexit, to COVID-19, to Vitamin D, I am confident that my organisation's requirements were effectively represented to policymakers, both in the UK and Europe." Vicky McIver, Managing Director, Power Health

■ "The support of the HFMA has been invaluable throughout the COVID pandemic. The association has consistently provided the latest data, policy updates, and guidance to members without which our industry strength and collective response would have likely been diluted." Jalal Janmohamed, Managing Director, Wrenlabs

■ "Bionutri Ltd has been a member of the HFMA since our business first

started trading in 2007, and HFMA has been part of the bedrock upon which our business sits since our beginning. Responsible businesses in most industries value the importance of the representation that their trade association can provide." Robert Joy, Managing Director, Bionutri

■ "We know that in this unprecedented year of uncertainty, misinformation and restrictions, working collectively as a sector has been essential for helping consumers maintain their health and wellbeing. The HFMA provides the fundamental platform that allows us to do so, and the 'HealthyDoesIt' campaign epitomises that movement." Amanda Williams, CEO, Cytoplan

■ "The HFMA's leadership is second-to-none. Every year, the strategic direction set by the association is innovative, focused on advancing and future-proofing our industry and never has this been more apparent than in 2020. Membership is a 'must' for my business, not an option." Cheryl Thallon, Managing Director, Viridian

This is a great example of the work that we undertake at the HFMA on behalf of 140-plus member companies. If your company is not in membership and you would like to help us in our efforts to protect this great industry and benefit from the gold-standard services we provide, you should 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.

