



HFMA UPDATE

by Martin Last,
Director General

A time to reflect

As we enter a new year and reach the year end of 2023, it is a good time for me to look back on the last six months in my role as Director General of the HFMA. A role that I started fully last July, and one that I am thoroughly enjoying, despite the various challenges it raises.

Clearly, the HFMA is an influential and authoritative association that is the voice of our industry and that of our membership. I can see that the work that the HFMA team apply to making things happen is inspiring. There is activity on so many levels that helps our interaction with the authorities, Government, other trade associations, membership, and the wider industry, and these pay off in dividends to the effective and efficient operation of the HFMA.

I have repeatedly expressed in many ways my desire for the HFMA to look forward. I inherited a sound, robust organisation, but I have also had the opportunity to implement a new rolling five-year plan that will not only help modernise, refresh, and prepare the HFMA for today's challenges but to also build the foundation to help it grow and extend its influence in the future. Much of this year has enabled me to review, and where required, rethink how we can do things, how we can be more effective, and at the same time explore what is ahead of us.

Some of these changes so far have been internal and may not seem apparent to our members but they will result in us having more chances to interact with members and to have more regular contact and feedback in the future. We are also in the process of reviewing some important HFMA tools and procedures to make it easier and better in managing members day to day issues.

In our re-structuring, we now have a full CLEAR CHECK team, final recruitment of a new Technical Manager, and are in the final stages

of selecting new Political Advisors, as well as all our existing support. All these things will mean we can start 2024 with new vision and a strong platform to support the activity that will be required. We anticipate that 2024 will be a UK election year, either in May or September, and it is also to be an election year in the EU in June.

I regularly attend and am involved with many of the UK Government bodies, including regular liaison with MHRA, ASA, FSA, and other UK industry bodies, which gives the HFMA continual insight and ability to influence the agenda. In addition to my Director General role for HFMA, I continue to represent the HFMA as Vice President of our sister European organisation, the EHPM. This influence then extends into the EU, and I also chair some important groups in Brussels on regulatory, quality, and technical matters, on vigilance, on probiotics, on Novel

Foods and play an active role on the EHPM Board. Beyond this, the EHPM have links to Food Drink Europe and internationally with IADSA, the International Alliance of Dietary Supplement Associations, which not only provides valuable international perspectives but also interacts with CODEX and brings us full circle to the UK's position in the global market. Interaction with all these wider groups enables us to affect and keep ahead of the numerous industry issues that affect us all, not just here in the UK, but also with a wider perspective.

The HFMA is always proactive in such issues that affect our industry, from application of the new Windsor Framework, through to health claims, CBD, collagen interests, regulatory labelling updates, maximum levels, sustainability, and more. Some of these issues regularly undergo

changes and others have longer term impact. Whatever they are, we always listen to our members so that issues are addressed and managed.

In looking forward, I will keep our view on the horizons, not to look backwards but embrace the new opportunities that are in front of us. I appreciate that I have been given the opportunity to make my own mark on this role and that maybe this is a new and different style of management to that before. I have total commitment and belief to delivering an organisation that is fit for purpose, not only for today's issues but also for tomorrow's challenges.

So, I hope you all had a happy holiday and that 2024 is a fruitful, and successful year. I am looking forward to keeping you updated on all developments and thank you for your ongoing support of the HFMA. I sincerely thank all the staff and associates to the HFMA for their hard work, and positive efforts.



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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