

HFMA - The Voice of the Natural Health Industry. For information on HFMA membership, or enquiries, call 0208 481 7100 or email office@hfma.co.uk



Bulletin Board

— News, information and comment



GETTING THE BEST FROM THE HFMA ...

Professional networking

The natural health industry, like many others, relies on a strong network of contacts and advisers to support and promote individual business interests. The HFMA provides its members with a busy calendar of industry and member events, giving them an opportunity to build valuable relationships with their counterparts from other member companies, and also key industry stakeholders.

HFMA members also benefit from its contact with key regulatory officials, government departments and agencies, and partnerships with other national, European and global industry associations.

Know and trust your supplier

New products are the lifeblood of our industry. However, the continuing stream of legislation from Brussels means it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the changes and be confident that a new product will not fall foul of the regulatory authorities.

The complexity of legislation, combined with scientific formulations, means it is essential to really understand the ingredients and the formulas that you use. If these are wrong, you may find yourself facing the expense of amending the packaging or even recalling the product.

So how can you be confident that the products you sell or manufacture are fully compliant with all the relevant legislation?



Janet Groves
is chairman of Lanes Health and an HFMA Council member

“Many herbs have more than one common name, so it is recommended to always work with the Latin name”

risks of contamination from substances such as heavy metals, pesticide residues and environmental contaminants. And it is also vital to be vigilant against using irradiated ingredients and ingredients from GMOs that are not authorized in Europe.

It is not just the active substances that may be affected; carrier materials and solvents may also be present in extracts. Again, it is important to cross check that these are approved

under European Food Law and always accurately declared on the packaging.

These are just a few of the questions that need to be asked. At Lanes Health we have developed a checklist that we can send to new raw material suppliers to confirm that ingredients meet both European legislation and also any additional requirements that we have.

Choose a good supplier

It can sound daunting, but you can avoid many of the pitfalls by choosing your supplier carefully. Look for suppliers who operate to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) standards, and if they are based outside the EU check that they understand the requirements of EU legislation. Where possible choose members of organizations such as the HFMA which will have access to all the changing requirements and whose members are required to operate to GMP standard.

Most importantly, whether you are a manufacturer or a retailer, ask questions and build a good relationship with your supplier so that they fully understand your requirements and you know and trust their abilities.

NEWS ...

New folic acid health claim

We are pleased to confirm that the submission for an Article 14(1)(a) disease risk reduction claim for folic acid and the reduced incidence of neural tube defects – authored by HFMA Scientific Adviser Dr Michele Sadler, working closely with other UK industry stakeholders and the spina bifida charity SHINE – has been formally approved by the European Commission. This is a major milestone and means that the folic acid claim will be available for commercial use throughout the EU before the end of 2014. However, companies should use the claim carefully and stick firmly to the conditions of use stipulated. As always, the HFMA is on hand to provide advice on appropriate use, so do get in contact for more information.

NEWS ... BONE HEALTH AMONG THE RISKS OF ALCOHOL

“Fresh calls for ‘calorie information’ on alcohol labels” dominated the national newspaper headlines recently. These articles stemmed from the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) which said that beer, wine and spirits are fuelling the obesity epidemic and should be labelled with the calories they contain.

The research highlighted facts about the calories in alcohol, including the fact that a large 175ml glass of 13% ABV (alcohol by volume) wine contains 160 calories, a bottle of alcopop contains 170 calories and a pint of 4% ABV beer contains 180.

In addition to this concern, there are many ‘hidden dangers’ and health risks from alcohol. One particular area which many are not aware of is bone health and osteoporosis. This is due to alcohol restricting the stomach’s ability to absorb calcium adequately – something that calcium supplement manufacturers’ will be aware of.

Heavy alcohol use, especially during adolescence, can dramatically affect bone health and increase the risk of osteoporosis later in life, research shows. Despite this, the HFMA’s Health of the Nation survey of 10,000 adults (conducted

earlier this year) found that 80% of the adult population had no idea that among other health risks, the consumption of alcohol can also affect the body’s ability to absorb calcium. In addition – and worryingly – only 57% recognized that calcium is important to help reduce the loss of bone later in life.

The HFMA survey also showed that while ‘calorie intake’ and ‘sugar intake’ were ranked as most important in terms of a ‘healthy diet’, 90% relegated ‘vitamin and mineral intake’ to the bottom of the importance list.

Alcohol Concern has stated that alcohol misuse currently costs the NHS an estimated £3.5 billion each year – and it should be noted that bone health could be another significant consideration of this problem.

