



# Bulletin Board

News, information and comment

The voice of  
the natural health  
industry



## Health on the high street will always be 'open all hours'

Fans of good comedy like me will be pleased to hear that a new season of the classic BBC series *Open All Hours* is coming back this Christmas.

And while Holland & Barrett has grown to more than 1,000 stores globally, we still think of ourselves, like David Jason's character Granville, as individual local shopkeepers.

This is true from our CEO right down to our newest recruit, because the high street, with all of its challenges and opportunities, is where we began and is an important part of this brand's future.

I was therefore surprised to read earlier this month that one of the UK's biggest property owners, Aviva Investors, has predicted the 'death of the high street' due to everyone buying online instead.

The report said that in order to survive, shops will have to offer a personalized 'high engagement' experience that 'merged the online world with physical retail'.

Now, I am no technological expert – I leave that to our digital team – but I do enjoy shopping,



**Lisa Garley Evans**  
is an HFMA council member and group legal director, Holland & Barrett International

and the one thing our industry has that sets us apart from other sectors is that health will always be a personalized 'high engagement' experience.

While you can research online, nothing beats the direct face-to-face interaction with someone who really knows their stuff and can explain how products work and the choices available.

Trying to Google your own health advice is dangerous, particularly in this era of fake news, but people trust experts with whom they can have a real conversation, especially when they can interrogate the answers and explore alternatives.

A lot has been written in this magazine about Amazon's purchase of Whole Foods. There is talk, too, of Planet Organic being purchased by an as yet unknown

bigger fish, keen to exploit the 'wellbeing trend' online.

But the online world, while more than capable of boosting retail opportunities in our sector, can never totally replace physical stores and the much-needed access people want and can have with staff that are experts in their fields.

That's why my team has been investing in our high street stores across the UK, with nearly two-thirds of the Holland & Barrett estate having enjoyed a full make-over in recent years.

Our own staff training and support of the Health Food Institute remains a huge priority for us. And we aren't going to stop.

Last month I met with landlords from across the UK who agreed that the health food sector was on the up, driven by a new generation of interested, curious and health-conscious customers all keen to talk to like-minded people.

We have exciting plans to open more bigger and better stores in 2018 to keep health 'open all hours' on the high street – for all of us. I look forward to seeing you there.

## Getting the best from the HFMA

### Good Manufacturing Practice

With an ever-increasing focus in the national media on safety and efficacy standards in nutritional products, it has never been more important to ensure exemplary practice and responsibility in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). To protect the reputation of members and our industry as a whole, HFMA policy requires all members to ensure their products are manufactured in accordance with GMP.

All companies within HFMA membership sign a declaration of adherence to the principles of the GMP at various stages during their manufacturing and distribution process. To provide further assistance, our Primary Authority-accredited CLEAR CHECK compliance service is available to both member and non-member companies for advice on all labelling, publicity, advertising and promotion of natural health products.

## NEWS ... LEFT IN THE SHADOWS

As the darker nights set in, consumer media attention turns to vitamin D as the go-to health tip for the winter months. In the last month alone, vitamin D has been reported as beneficial for the following issues: heart disease, diabetes in children, flu, asthma, multiple sclerosis and carpal tunnel syndrome.

While it is comforting to see the mainstream media taking notice of the power of micronutrients as part of a healthy life, there are many other vitamins and minerals

with huge bodies of research behind them that seem to fall under the radar when it comes to media recommendations.

In contrast, a recent review in *The Lancet* of the importance of iodine – against the backdrop of a reduction in milk consumption – was covered minimally by the national press, despite the researchers advising "Iodine deficiency in pregnant women in the UK should be treated as an important public health issue that needs attention."

Recent studies also showed the vitamin E present in maize could be controlled to create a nutritionally strong food across the developing world – another story receiving little attention outside of medical journals.

While it is fantastic to see the huge impact of ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing vitamin D deficiency across the UK, it remains the responsibility of this industry to continue to promote the evidence-based benefits of micronutrient supplementation to the mainstream media.

## News ...

### It's hip to be vegan

With more consumers than ever before becoming vegan, media conversation has shifted from sustainable and tasty vegan options, which the industry provides in abundance, to the vital role of micronutrient supplementation to support a vegan diet.

The advice, helped by backing from celebrity fans including Natalie Portman and Jared Leto, has been warning consumers going vegan of the dangers of missing out on essential B12 and iron.

Whether it be via celebrity messenger, social influencers or stakeholders, it is encouraging to see the media display a greater understanding of the essential micronutrients our modern diets may be lacking, and taking steps to educate consumers.