

BUSINESS FILE

HFMA UPDATE

Martin Last, Director General



Sixty years

This year, we are celebrating our 60th anniversary and it reminds us of why there is a need for a strong and active trade association for our industry.

The HFMA was founded in 1965 to represent the interests of manufacturers of specialist health products in the UK. We are a not-for-profit organisation which, over the 60 years, has continually demonstrated that we are the authoritative and responsible voice for the UK natural products industry and its members play a crucial role in helping to improve public health.

We were instrumental in 'keeping the lights on' during the Covid lockdown by gaining key worker status to health stores and manufacturing in our industry. We have also been at the heart of campaigning for education for women on the use of folic acid during pregnancy, and the B6 campaign in the 1980s pioneered the need for food supplements and levels that are appropriate. Even now, we are central to the fight for the use of the term 'probiotics' and to gain proportionate use of novel foods legislation with ongoing lobbying of Parliament.

Over 75 per cent of our 120 members are SMEs and includes suppliers of specialist food supplements and health foods and now also includes pet supplements and beauty products. The HFMA works effectively to represent the interest of the industry at all levels of legislative, regulatory and Parliamentary process, and works proactively with other industry associations to achieve this aim. Membership of the HFMA is based on fair subscriptions determined by

turnover, and the organisation is fully democratic. Each member has one vote, regardless of size, and can stand for Council, which helps determine industry strategies.

The HFMA supplies sound information and advice to members, and promotes positive communications and public relations, training and education and the highest quality standards of products and services. Members receive frequent bulletins and updates for regulatory issues, political activity, media coverage and more. There are regular technical and regulatory working groups addressing issues and legislation sharing best practices and problem solving. We conduct regular webinars, seminars and other educational events.

Our CLEAR CHECK service is a full and professional checking service to ensure your labels and marketing materials are fully compliant with UK regulations. CLEAR CHECK is an acronym for Copy, Labelling, Education, Advertising, Regulation. The service is Primary Authority accredited and has an approved Code of Advertising (CAP) code, which means that we sit with the authorities to reinforce best standards. The service is available to non-members, although HFMA members receive preferential rates as a benefit of membership.

Other tangible benefits are access to our highly experienced technical and regulatory advisors where sometimes complex issues can be disseminated and solutions sought. Members have access to guidance notes and receive comprehensive training for member companies.



Plus, we provide networking opportunities in the UK and Europe.

Practically, the HFMA does not just help to safeguard standards but also assist member companies in their day-to-day challenges. This can be particularly positive for overall industry insights and when developing NPD programmes and new formulations from concept through to finished product. HFMA provides reassurance that not only are products compliant with regulatory authorities but that they also meet requirements of retailers and online operators to help with product listings. This linked to the HFMA's relationship with our primary authorities permit clarity to be sought and strong due diligence in bringing product to market.

Bringing products to the UK market involves complex and informed considerations and covers many areas, from additive usage and formulation requirements through to marketing and finished products and HFMA provides a one-stop shop for its members to enable these processes to be managed effectively. So, not only can you share in network opportunities but have a collective voice which is credible and recognised.

And whether companies are in a start-up situation or

well established, the HFMA provides a wealth of knowledge to help your organisation make informed choices. Joining the HFMA is simple, just visit our website, read about the benefits and complete an online application. This is reviewed and discussed by HFMA Council, which would then approve membership. From that time on, you immediately start to receive membership benefits and receive an introductory meeting to help you and your team make the most of the information available to member companies.

In our 60th year, we are delighted to celebrate the occasion with our members at a Heritage Garden Party at Kew Gardens on Wednesday, June 25. All member attendees will have access to the gardens all day, along with an evening drinks reception, including a speaker from Kew, followed by a superb dinner and after dinner speech by David Domoney, Chartered Horticulturalist and British Plant Profiler, best known for being a presenter on ITV's *Love your Garden*. We look forward to welcoming and celebrating with our members there.

If you would like to know more about the benefits of membership, visit www.hfma.co.uk to learn more, or contact me on 020 8481 7100.