

HFMA UPDATE

Martin Last, Director General



A celebration of 60 years

At the beginning of this year, we were looking forward to a remarkably busy first half with plenty of activity to focus on. As we reach the mid-point of the year, it is the perfect opportunity to review what has been and what is upcoming.

The AGM in April was well attended and we welcomed Nick Bennett as our new Chair as Steve Mann finished his tenure. I would like to once again thank Steve for all his work and dedication over the past few years and wish him well for the future. I look forward to working as closely with Nick.

Due to the event in June celebrating our 60th anniversary, the structure of the AGM was changed slightly and to replace the seminar programme, we held a panel discussing many of the wider issues that have an impact on business in this arena. Members had the opportunity to hear the thoughts of the panel on topics such as import and export issues, sustainability and tariffs. We also considered how industry might adapt to future changes, such as the increased use of weight loss jabs and what opportunities might arise as these become more widely available, including potential poor nutritional levels and natural alternatives.

We are all now aware that this year's NOPEX was the last in its current format and it will be interesting to see how the industry adapts to these changes. For the HFMA, it presented one of the first outings for our 60th anniversary celebrations with the stand featuring a timeline showing key events and key people from 1965 to the present day.

It was fascinating to hear the memories and comments of others as they were reminded of events such as the Food Supplements Directive and the B6 campaign, major milestones in our industry's history.

In June, the HFMA celebrated our 60th anniversary at the perfect location, Kew Gardens in London. We were delighted to welcome many members and other industry guests to join us for a day at Kew with a reception in the Nash Gallery, followed by dinner in the Orangery. Even the weather was perfect!

A static exhibition showing the history of the HFMA sparked many a conversation, especially around some of the older photos with memories of industry personalities such as Maurice Hanssen and Dame Barbara Cartland. We were also delighted to welcome special guest speakers: Bob Alkin, the Programme Manager at Kew, gave us fascinating insights into the history of the gardens and a taste of the vast array of scientific work that goes on at the gardens; Dr Zubir Ahmed, the MP for Glasgow South West, demonstrated his great passion for good health and encouraging the nation to stay healthy rather than wait until illness arrives to make positive health changes; and our after-dinner speaker was TV gardener, author and Chartered Horticulturist, David Domoney, for an amusing and fact-filled speech highlighting just how connected we are to the natural world and how plants and nature can have a positive impact on us not just in the garden, but also via houseplants. I believe everyone



left feeling they had learnt something new and would look at humble houseplants in a new light.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the speakers for their input and insights, a varied mix of topics all relevant to the natural products world. I would also like to thank our sponsors for their support in helping to make the event happen and to our guests for making the trip to join us.

So, we now look forward to the next 60 years and more importantly to the next few months. The day-to-day work of meetings, committees and regulatory updates all continue regardless, and part of our remit is ensuring that members are kept informed and up to date. With a short break over the summer, we will soon be back to regular events including Coffee Morning zooms on topical subjects and Tech Talks with CLEAR CHECK on regulatory matters and educational webinars. We also have regular Technical and Working Group meetings and plenty of training opportunities for your staff with CLEAR CHECK, including increasingly popular sessions on pet supplement labels.

After looking back over the

past 60 years, it has been a good reminder that the HFMA has a long history of being the authoritative and accurate voice of the industry, not only supporting members but reaching beyond to the rest of the industry, opinion formers and policy makers. Our industry landscape and regulatory requirements are changing perhaps faster than it has over the past six decades and the need for unity and a cohesive voice is more important than ever.

With that thought in mind, I would like to remind our members that if there are topics they would like a webinar or information on, please get in touch. By the same token, I would like to extend the offer to any company who would like to find out more about what we do at the HFMA and how membership could be of use to your company – I am more than happy to have a call or a zoom.

Recently, the Government announced a move to work more on prevention of illness and ongoing good health, and our industry is perfectly placed to support that policy and continue to support the health of the nation for a long time into the future.