

HFMA UPDATE

Martin Last, Director General



Working for our industry

As the year gathers momentum again after the new year break, the regulatory environment continues to develop with the SPS negotiations in full swing and Europe stepping up a possible model for the setting of maximum levels in vitamin and mineral supplements. The outcomes of which are likely to have considerable impacts for our industry this year.

The HFMA remains the voice of the natural health trade, giving informed support and advice to members to help manage complex regulatory, scientific and political issues and guidance to manage these changing times. The HFMA is working hard to maintain meaningful communications to members through regular bi-weekly bulletins, quarterly working groups, and has upgraded its regular updates to help reach more individuals directly within member organisations.

Our *Fortnightly Bulletin* is now renamed *News and Insight*, covering HFMA news, technical, regulatory and legislative updates, event announcements, and latest industry matters. It is designed to appeal to directors, CEOs, business leadership roles, business owners, technical and regulatory departments, department managers, plus those in supply chain and logistics roles.

Our *Media Insider* is now *Natural Health Media Watch*, providing a twice weekly round-up of health and nutritional news in mainstream and consumer press. Ideal for directors, CEOs, marketing and PR teams, sales managers, department managers, and those in comms and PR roles.



Research Insider becomes *Nutrition and Botanicals Research Update*, giving a monthly round-up of nutritional and botanical research. Positioned to appeal to directors, CEOs, R&D, regulatory, and marketing departments, nutritional teams, and those in science and regulation roles.

And to complete the list, *Westminster Insider* now is named *Political News* for directors, CEOs, regulatory teams, marketing departments, managers, business leadership roles, policy and Government affairs roles with a fortnightly review of political news impacting the industry.

We continue to be active on LinkedIn, encouraging followers and continue to explore how social media can assist communication of industry matters. Webinars, coffee mornings, and Tech Talks we introduced last year have grown in popularity and provide opportunity for members to engage over a coffee and for 30-45 minutes to grapple with key matters of the moment.

The HFMA attends weekly and bi-weekly Government update meetings on topics from border controls, botanicals, CPD, SPS agreements, business readiness forums, food supply issues, and safety forums, plus

regular meetings with the Government enforcement and regulatory bodies and direct engagement with MPs and Lords, plus their counterparts in Brussels. But this work is not just conducted at meetings as there is much preparatory work, membership contact, strategic meetings, liaison with other bodies, all required to ensure the HFMA has a workable industry perspective and supports the interests of members. This extends to regular meetings with trade associations and where possible, we try and present a common voice on key matters where there is convergence.

Our CLEAR CHECK service provides advice on regulatory compliance issues, which helps with ensuring compliant labels, but also with a wide range of services to help as an extension to marketing departments with marketing materials, releases, and strategic development for products presented as foods, food supplements, functional foods, cosmetics and pet supplements.

We have a special relationship with Bucks and Surrey Primary Authority (PA) in the UK and with Glamorgan County Council in Wales, where our primary authority status ensures assured advice on topical trading standard issues, which in effect

automatically provides our members with a countrywide common position that our PA supports. This two-way relationship keeps us and them updated and is key to maintain a level playing field.

Links with Europe are important to maintain and HFMA has an integral role in the European Federation of Food Supplement Associations (EHPM), where, as a member of the Board, I continue as Vice President and Chair of the Quality & Regulatory Groups, as well as being involved in taskforces on issues such as novel foods, probiotics, influencer marketing, botanicals, etc.

As for the UK, the EU link is not just with the EHPM; it also provides us with access to Food Drink Europe, Food Supplements Europe, and internally through International Alliance of Dietary Associations and Codex Alimentarius.

Through all these activities, the HFMA provides meaningful and helpful information, advice, and guidance, on industry issues to members and represent these interests at all levels. It looks like this year will continue to generate its own challenges and the HFMA remains in a strong position to address these on your behalf.

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.