

# HFMA UPDATE

Martin Last, Director General



## Full steam ahead – issues and events steering us through the year.

**A**fter a very busy start to the year, there is little let up in activities and issues that need to be addressed by our industry, and we continue to focus on many aspects here at the HFMA. Some issues change by the day, and I can find myself with an email in the evening that totally alters factors that were discussed with a Government department that morning.

With this in mind, it is a good time to remind members to keep up to date with our bulletin subscriptions and for non-members to check our LinkedIn posts, where we regularly update activities and news that can have an impact on the industry.

Looking industry wide, the SPS Agreement the Government is currently discussing with the EU is likely to have a massive impact on our trade. On one hand, easier movement and certification of goods can be a positive move, but the demands it may place on our industry, including maximum levels and additives, could have a far-reaching influence. We are in regular contact with other trade bodies and Government departments to ensure our voice is heard. We recently held a well-attended online Coffee Morning discussing updates and potential impact of the SPS Agreement and due to the important nature of the topic, we opened the event to non-members. Similar events will be announced in our mailouts and via LinkedIn.

Working closely with Government departments and political lobbying is a key part of our activity and will continue throughout the coming year. It is vital that our industry has a voice



that is listened to by regulators and legislators. I regularly meet with MPs and other members of Parliament in order to keep up the profile of the industry and make our opinions heard. If you have never contacted your local MP or invited them to visit your business, I would urge you to do so. It can be a useful way of giving them an understanding of the issues we face within our sector and getting your questions asked in Parliament.

Looking forward to other activities, we have a full schedule for 2026. Our regular Webinars and Coffee Mornings continue to look at hot topics and current matters. Although these are usually member only, we will also hold non-member events on topics that can impact across the board. One such area I am particularly focussed on is that of rogue traders. We have seen plenty in the press about the food supplement arena not having enough regulations to stop products coming into the marketplace with non-permitted ingredients, false claims and dubious packaging. I would argue there is plenty of regulations

that the majority of companies adhere to and create safe and legal products. Perhaps the issue is not that we need more regulation but that there needs to be more done about the brands breaking the rules, as opposed to even more legislation for the ones who already abide. This theme will form the focus for a series of events throughout 2026 looking at regulatory issues, rogue trading and how the playing field can be levelled in favour of the brands who do it correctly.

We are also looking forward to our AGM in April, a chance to catch up with members and colleagues to not only address the formal matters of the AGM but to present our annual awards, plus introduce the new Roger Lane Award for Growth and Innovation, celebrating a person, product or campaign that demonstrates growth and innovation within the industry, embodying the ethos of Roger, who was so deeply passionate about this trade and the messages we convey.

This year, we will also introduce the HFMA Autumn Seminar and we hope this will become

an annual event open to members and non-members where we will discuss topics that are relevant to us all, as well as a chance to come together as an industry. We are finalising an exciting speaker line-up for a day of education, insight and networking. Please save the date, November 3, and keep an eye out for more details soon.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks both personally and on behalf of the HFMA to Dr Michele Sadler, HFMA Scientific Adviser. After over 22 years of dedicated service, Michele retires at the end of March. Her insight, knowledge and support has been invaluable in our dealings within the UK and Europe. She has been instrumental in many areas, including most recently her extensive work on maximum levels. Michele will be missed and we wish her all the best for a very happy retirement and again thank her for all her work and dedication during her time as Scientific Adviser.

As we head into the second quarter and if you are considering how UK and EU changes affect your business, do get in touch to discover how the HFMA can support your business. Services such as HFMA CLEAR CHECK are available to members and non-members and are only a phone call away for an exploratory chat.

If you would like to know more about the benefits of membership, visit [www.hfma.co.uk](http://www.hfma.co.uk) to learn more, or contact me on 020 8481 7100.