

HFMA UPDATE

Martin Last, Director General



AGM and collaboration

It was a pleasure to see so many HFMA members attending our AGM in London recently. Held at the Wellcome Collection in Euston Road, it provided an opportunity to share with membership the many faces of the HFMA, with insights from our Chair, Nick Bennett, Tom Moses as Treasurer, and me on the status of the HFMA.

Looking back at 2025

Operationally, the HFMA has now achieved full staffing levels, which enables consistency in the services we provide and helped establish our Account Development Team with an assigned member of operational staff to each member company so that all matters can be managed without fuss and improve our service levels.

We saw our CLEAR CHECK team encourage planned development on large projects to help manage NPd and addition of a wider scope of services to include cosmetics, pet supplements and feed products in addition to that of foods and food supplements.

Of course, 2025 experienced one of the most challenging trading conditions for decades due to economic uncertainty, unprecedented global events, cost of living pressures, and tariffs. As a result, the HFMA improved comms to members and non-members in print and social media, including webinars, Tech Talks, Coffee Mornings, plus regular bulletins and interactive working groups. Our political advisors continue to help reach our political audiences in a language understood by government and focussing messaging on growth and prevention. I indicated the



success of our recent meeting at the House of Commons, which has generated an active response from an MP, and the participants of the AGM were able to add their signatures to a joint letter, thus demonstrating our voice in Parliament.

I indicated that we regularly review our CAP Code, endorsed by our Primary Authority, Bucks and Surrey Trading Standards and that this has been extended into Wales with Glamorgan Council thereby providing greater protection for members.

Apart from being our 60th year, last year was also the 50th anniversary of our European partner, EHPM, and Penny Viner and I attended a high-profile event in the Brussels Parliament in celebration and reflected that we both continue to influence and support the EU agenda with greater collaboration with EHPM and a single voice throughout Europe.

I stressed that we continue to keep our members informed, educated, protected and engaged, but that it is not a time for us to stand still. We see the world changing at an ever-increasing rate and it is not a time for complacency but to look

forward into 2026 to explore ways to encourage growth.

Looking forward into 2026

As the economic effects bring UK challenges, HFMA is looking at how best to support members grow into export markets with a collaboration with Santander Bank to provide practical support to achieve this. We have already surveyed our members on key markets, and this year will look at events with Santander to help further this.

We are also looking at collaboration with key UK companies, making available greater technical services for our members at preferential rates and providing grant opportunities in matters such as novel foods. Similar collaboration is being sought with Kew after our successful event last year and we are discussing how we can help with the updating of botanical species and names which will help with better botanical regulatory compliance.

At the Making Nutraceuticals Exhibition in Coventry in April, our Chair hosted a panel discussion on sustainability and as a result, we are now exploring

means of collaboration with various organisations to help tackle the tight deadlines that the PPWR is about to deliver.

The show demonstrated that the HFMA lead and have considerable influence on many matters addressing our industry and that collaboration driven by HFMA will be a crucial part of our activity behind the scenes for 2026.

Our comms during 2026 will support all the initiatives being proposed and highlight that the solution to negative press stories is not to increase the regulatory burden on responsible manufacturers but that the target should be on rogue traders who either push the boundaries of what is legal or ignore the law altogether.

The HFMA will be pushing for our authorities to promote that FBOs operating in the complex world of food supplements should be members of responsible trade associations. This will help create a level playing field for all, promote good manufacturing practice and regulatory compliance. The HFMA is looking at development of a toolkit to help industry to identify these rogue traders.

Our AGM provides a great opportunity to demonstrate to members the tremendous efforts the HFMA conduct and I thank all those who contribute to that success. I am proud to be able to lead the HFMA forward and intend to conduct this with openness, transparency, and sound governance.

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