

# BREXIT

**Michael Bellingham**, chief executive of the PFMA, shares his views on the post-Brexit pet food trade

**H**ere at the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association we are tackling the challenges of Brexit full on. Our executive committee is fully engaged in supporting our plans to ensure we get the best possible deal for the pet food sector. To start there are some immediate and clear risks which we need to manage; the most obvious of these is the potential to disrupt trade with our EU partners if we were to 'fall off the cliff edge' at the end of the two year Brexit negotiation to leave the EU. Tariffs are one thing, but what keeps me up at night is the thought that we would need, from one day to the next, to produce export health certificates, evidence to comply with rules of origin, veterinary inspection at port, to move our goods into the EU. All of this we do not need now as we are part of the single market, and we are lobbying both the UK government and the EU to ensure trade can continue as seamlessly as possible.

## CRITICAL ISSUES

We have fully engaged our members in this process by asking their opinion on what are the critical issues for them. These included domestic agriculture, animal welfare, product safety and facilitating international trade. Based on the results of the survey we are now working hard to ensure that EU legislation, particularly relating to farm animal welfare and feed safety, is transposed seamlessly into UK law. We pride ourselves on the high levels of animal welfare, raw material and finished product safety we have in the UK and we wish to maintain that. Maintaining these high levels will also ensure trade with Europe remains straightforward as we will not have different rules for use of raw materials and for manufacturing safe products.

Going forward, domestic agriculture supplies us with 80 percent of our raw materials (both animal by products and cereals). It is vital for our interests that this supply should continue and not be

undermined by imports of both raw materials and finished product produced using lower welfare and safety standards. By the same token, we also see great opportunities to export to the rest of the world our high quality products using the best raw materials with the highest welfare standards. For this we need the support of government, and we will be pushing hard for assistance in opening new markets for our members.

PFMA is now in full lobbying mode, talking to as many key stakeholders as possible. We take part in the Food & Drink Industry Round Table which involves a number of trade associations in the food and feed sector and meets regularly with key people in various government departments including; Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department for Exiting the EU (DEXU). We are also meeting government ministers and members of parliament. MPs will play a key role holding government to account in getting the best outcome for businesses. We are also visiting Brussels to meet key EU member state representatives and Commission officials to get their perspective as negotiations are about to start. Our European trade association, FEDIAF, also has a role to play in putting pressure on the EU side to make sure we can trade as seamlessly as possible after Brexit, which is just as important to our European colleagues.

Finally, we are focussing our Annual Convention on 30 March on this critical issue and have a number

of key individuals signed up to speak. We will be looking at how trade, animal welfare, product safety and domestic agriculture will be affected. We will also launch our own Brexit manifesto that day to make clear to key opinion formers the needs of our large and vibrant sector as we go forward into a brave new world. 🐾

For more information on the PFMA go to [www.pfma.org.uk](http://www.pfma.org.uk).

Do you have an opinion on the post-Brexit pet trade? Share your views with Pet Gazette. Email the editor at [sara@petgazette.biz](mailto:sara@petgazette.biz).

