

THE NEW Scientist is just one outlet reporting that 2021 will see the world's focus shift back to saving the planet after covid-19 knocked efforts off-course. The conversation globally has been focused on Build Back Better and already there are reasons to be hopeful.

President Biden's plans to tackle climate change have been described as ambitious and he has vowed to make the issue a top priority. Back home, Glasgow will be hosting COP26 – the annual UN Climate Change Conference – in November. Leaders will come together with the aim of getting on top of climate change. The official event was postponed in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, which the younger generations felt was a cop out (pardon the pun). Instead, they initiated MOCK26 to address issues they believed should be given urgent attention.

The pet food industry is very mindful of the role it plays in the responsible use of resources, including minimising wherever possible the environmental impact of pet food production. Pets are part of the family and bring numerous benefits to society. Pets instil responsibility, encourage social awareness, and contribute to wellbeing. As an industry, we have a responsibility to balance the needs of the population (pets and people) with protecting the environment for future generations.

PFMA established its Sustainability Committee in March 2020. While Sustainability is by no means new to PFMA this dedicated committee reflected the urgency of the topic and our keenness to have more focus in this area. As it is such a huge topic our first exercise was to identify where PFMA should focus and, following consultation with the membership, we agreed on four priority areas: sustainability of ingredients, recyclability of packaging, animal welfare and the environmental impacts of pet food production.

SUSTAINABILITY OF INGREDIENTS

An important aspect of our sector is the fact that the pet food industry upcycles surplus products from the human food chain. The animal-based ingredients used in pet food are not used by the human food industry for a variety of reasons such as popularity, culture or appearance. However, these valuable ingredients are safe and nutritious. Additionally, using by-products in pet food contributes to the circular economy by reducing food waste as they might otherwise be disposed of by the human food industry.

In a recent article Petfoodindustry.com highlighted that while many pet food ingredients naturally classify as sustainable, the industry historically has not done a good job of explaining this to pet owners or retailers. Animal by-products have been demonised and misconceptions need to be overcome. There is a clear role for PFMA to share this sustainability success story.

Nicole Paley, deputy chief executive of the Pet Food Manufacturers' Association, offers an insight into industry moves on sustainability and tackling the environmental impact of pet food production



The pet food industry: playing a part in sustainability and reducing carbon emissions



RECYCLABILITY OF PACKAGING

While PFMA members are very active on sustainability goals and commitments, the strength of PFMA is that industry unites to collaborate. Collaboration and partnerships are key to success.

One of the first relationships we developed was with WRAP UK and becoming a Supporter of the UK Plastic Pact. The Pact is a pioneering initiative that has brought together government, business and citizens in a collective ambition to transform the plastic system and keep plastic in the economy and out of the environment. The birth of The UK Plastics Pact was also recognition that the scale and pace of change is too big for one single body, business, or organisation. It requires committed and collaborative action from us all – governments, business and individually as citizens.

The Pact has set four ambitious, world-leading targets to be achieved by 2025:

1. 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable
2. 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted
3. Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging items through re-design, innovation or alternative (re-use) delivery methods
4. 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging

PFMA supports the UK Plastic Pact, raising awareness of the targets among our membership, disseminating information and taking part in relevant working groups.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal welfare is a long-standing area of focus. PFMA recognises that safeguarding the high standards of health and welfare for animals is a key sustainability objective. Animal welfare is not an independent topic and it interconnects with our society and the planet we live in. There are links between improved animal welfare and improved conservation, improved food safety and food security and improved well-being.

The welfare of both farm animal and companion

animals is fundamental to us and we again recognise that success in these areas will come through collaboration. As a result, PFMA is a proud co-sponsor of the All-Party Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW) where we join other influential voices in the welfare sector to ensure animal welfare is a key consideration.

PFMA works hard to encourage responsible pet ownership. We work in partnership with organisations including the Canine Feline Sector Group and National Pet Month to provide education on healthy lifestyles for companion animals (beyond food and feeding).

We also encourage our members to have in place a publicly available policy on animal welfare and adopt the PFMA Animal Welfare Framework as a template.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PET FOOD MANUFACTURING

Measuring the carbon footprint of pet food is important and PFMA has been working with partners to develop a system to do just that.

PFMA, is a member of FEDIAF, the European Pet Food Federation, which is part of the European Commission's initiative 'Building the Single Market for Green Products'. The initiative aims to develop a harmonised method to monitor and report the environmental performance of products (PEF).

In 2018, as pioneers of this approach in Europe, FEDIAF developed the Product Environmental Footprint

Category Rules (PEFCR) for pet food, which was endorsed by the European Commission. This officially adopted methodology gives clear guidelines for calculating the environmental footprint of prepared pet food for cats and dogs, from 'cradle to grave'. Through FEDIAF, PFMA will continue

collaborating with the EU institutions and Member States to determine how this methodology should be used under future policy framework.

While this is just an introduction to PFMA's activities, you will soon be able to read member case studies at www.pfma.org.uk ■

