



## PRESS RELEASE

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# FEDIAF defines focus areas for 2019

**As the voice of the European pet food industry, FEDIAF is busy working with authorities, regulators and academics on a regular basis to support industry's efforts to provide safe and nutritious pet foods to the 80 million European pet owning households. FEDIAF President Mechthild Exner-Herforth defines sustainability, self-regulation, free trade and education as key focus areas for the association.**

**Brussels, May 2019** - FEDIAF is the voice of the European pet food industry, representing 15 pet food associations across 18 European countries. Current President, Mechthild Exner-Herforth, Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Mars Petcare Europe, defines four key focus areas for FEDIAF to focus its energies in 2019:

### **Sustainability becomes key success issue for pet food industries**

“Environmental considerations are very important to FEDIAF and its members”, Exner-Herforth says. “We fully recognise that pet owners want to feed their pets in a way that respects the environment. Sustainable raw materials, an environmentally friendly production as well as recyclable packaging materials play a major role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the pet food industry.”

She explains that environmental challenges are expected to increase further: “The New Plastics Economy, the demand for additional protein sources, water scarcity as well as environmental labelling just to name a few. We, as representatives of the pet food industry, need to take a stand on these issues and develop solutions together. To sharpen our agenda and to agree common goals we are launching a FEDIAF Sustainability Task Force in 2019.”

Taking its members on this journey, FEDIAF is hosting a series of webinars for members on the Product Environmental Footprint and how pet food companies can measure their environmental footprint and how this information can be communicated to pet owners. “Making sure FEDIAF members are ready for any environmental policy changes is important but so too is helping consumers make an informed choice about the products they buy taking into account environmental considerations”, Exner-Herforth says.

### **Harmonising self-regulation in Europe as a key strategy**

One of the key strategies of FEDIAF is to ensure that the legislation is appropriately considered for the industry, not simply copied and pasted from the wider animal feed sector. To support the

existing legislation, Codes of Practice have been developed to promote best practice and create a level playing field across Europe.

“An exciting offer to our members later in 2019 will be a series of e-Learning tools on the Good Practice Guide for the Manufacture of Safe Pet Food and the Code on Good Labelling Practice”, Exner-Herforth says. “These Codes help members meet the legislative requirements and produce pet food that fully meets the needs of the pets and their parents in terms of health, safety and enjoyment.”

### **Free trade is essential for European industries**

For over half a century, free trade under agreed rules has been a critical keystone for global prosperity. It has helped lift millions out of poverty, creating new opportunities for manufacturers, workers, farmers, and consumers. Increased trade has meant more jobs and greater consumer choice at home and abroad. It has led to the development of sustainable cross-border supply chains that tie companies and countries together in shared success, thereby helping to reduce conflict and encourage cooperative relationships among nations.

“It is difficult to predict how Brexit will influence the market, as it is not yet clear under which conditions the UK and Europe will continue to cooperate, but FEDIAF is calling for the free movement of pet food products between the UK and Europe, regardless of the outcome of the Brexit negotiations”, Exner-Herforth says.

“Additionally, we are working on the removal of existing trade barriers for pet food by cooperating with the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) in their standard setting for safe products which may be freely traded internationally. At the same time international trade on internet platforms has increased and continues to do so. The challenge we are facing is protecting the consumer from inferior products of lower quality. There is an urgent need for some mechanism of control, particularly for products coming from abroad that often do not comply with European rules and standards.”

### **Education of the public about pet food generates transparency and trust**

“Staying on top of what people are saying about the pet food industry, how we are perceived and building consumer trust requires consequent reputation management within the pet food industry, the external organisations we work with as well as the public domain”, Exner-Herforth explains.

FEDIAF’s aim is to positively stimulate what people are saying or feeling about it and the broader pet food industry. Exner-Herforth says: “We need to be active to ensure that the public opinion is in line with our goals.” Those goals are:

- Building and maintaining trust in manufactured pet food
- Creating a positive image of the industry grounded in facts, science and expertise
- Being ambassador for responsible pet ownership but also broader animal welfare

“Good communication is vital for any organisation”, Exner-Herforth says. “It is key for building relationships, key for spreading knowledge and information, and regular communication both internally and externally generates transparency and helps build trust. As the trade body representing the European pet food sector, it is our role to raise our profile and reputation as the trusted voice of the European Petfood Industry. “



Mechthild Exner-Herforth is currently FEDIAF President and Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Mars Petcare Europe.

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*FEDIAF represents the European pet food industry with around 200 production sites. Serving as an umbrella organization of national pet food industry associations, FEDIAF's mission is to be the credible and responsible voice of the European pet food industry collaborating with authorities, regulators and academics for achieving favourable conditions for the supply of safe, nutritious and palatable products to pets and their owners. Based in Brussels, FEDIAF is fully committed to promoting responsible pet ownership, to the wellbeing of pet animals, to their important social role and to the respect of sustainable development. [www.fediaf.org](http://www.fediaf.org)*

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