



SEA Report for BATF AGM 2021

Highlights since the last AGM

The 2 key issues that caused the sector the most concern during the past 12 months were the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the end of the transition period in BREXIT.

1 – SEA during Covid-19

The SEA team has worked from home during the Covid-19 pandemic and have managed to work very effectively thanks to the assistance of Paul Quirk sorting out any IT and remote access issues. SEA Members have been kept up to date with regular Covid-19 briefings and we've received some very positive feedback from our members. The majority of SEA members continued to work during the pandemic to help UK manufacturing meet increasing demands.

SEA National Committee meetings have taken place remotely using Teams and we have continued to hold online meetings with the European Chemicals Agency, European Commission, BEIS, DEFRA, HSE and the Environment Agency as well as working closely with key players in our sector, such as Airbus, Rolls Royce, Jaguar LandRover etc to try and ensure that there are no disruptions to supply chains during the Covid-19 crisis and following the end of the Transition Period.

2 – SEA Members during Covid-19

SEA members were surveyed to see what impact the pandemic had had on their businesses. Virtually all members had continued to operate during the crisis but the level of operation varied widely depending upon the main sector of operation. All members had made use of the furlough scheme with some seeing 90% of the workforce furloughed (automotive sector). Some redundancies are inevitable in our sector and it would appear to be around 5% to 10% in total from the feedback received so far. However, most members were positive about the future but were concerned that business could be further reduced if a deal with the EU could not be reached.

3 – Webinars

In order to maintain regular contact with members and to try and help them improve their performance, we have been hosting regular webinars. The topics covered so far include:

- a) How to manage energy costs
- b) UK REACH and what you need to do (series of 4 webinars)
- c) XRF and Plating Shops
- d) How to minimise wastewater
- e) Roadmap out of lockdown
- f) Waste reduction opportunities and strategies

- g) How to improve sales through website and social media engagement
- h) Sustainability

4 – REACH Regulations

Regular online meetings have been held with BEIS, DEFRA and HSE to try and avoid any supply chain issues following the end of the transition period. This is particularly relevant to the REACH Regulation and the introduction of UK REACH. The UK Government has listened to our concerns and has extended the periods in which companies have to supply information for compliance with UK REACH. An amendment to the UK REACH Statutory Instrument was recently published detailing the extended time periods.

We are working very closely with both HSE & DEFRA to ensure that chromium trioxide can continue to be used safely in the UK. We have been asked by the HSE to develop best practice guidance documents that can be used to demonstrate that any exposures are in line with the ALARP (as low as reasonably practicable) principles. We are also investigating the requirements for re-authorisation under UK REACH and have over 60 companies that have expressed an interest in working with us on this matter.

5 – Climate Change Agreements

The climate change agreements have been extended through until the end of March 2025 and we are in discussions with the UK Government regarding a follow-on scheme. We were able to recruit another 10 sites into our agreement when new applications were allowed towards the end of 2020. The scheme is currently closed to new applicants, but members of the scheme continue to benefit by paying a reduced rate of climate change levy on their energy bills in return for improving their energy efficiency.

6 – SEA Awards Evening

The SEA Awards Evening has been postponed twice now but is now scheduled for Friday 8th October at the Park Regis Hotel, Birmingham

7 – Advanced Engineering Show

The 2020 show was eventually cancelled and has been rescheduled for 3rd & 4th November 2021 at the NEC. The SEA will once again have a pavilion stand and will be offering space to its members.