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## **Pet and garden product federation's director general makes rallying call to support UK manufacturers**

The director general of The Federation of Garden & Leisure Manufacturers Ltd has made a rallying call to the UK pet and garden product sectors to support its strong heritage of innovation, design and manufacturing. Ms Sizer Barrett's message to member companies in the federation's latest quarterly newsletter is headed 'Now is the time to fly the flag for Made in UK'.

*The full text of her message reads:*

"It's good to see that John Lewis is to promote British-made goods in its stores to support this country's manufacturing base. The department store will identify all domestically sourced products with a Union flagged 'Made in UK' label which will go on lines made by 130 British manufacturers. A company spokesman told the Sunday Telegraph: "The reason for doing this now is that there's a feeling that businesses should be doing more to support UK manufacturing".

Let's hope John Lewis manages to set a 'Buy British' bandwagon rolling, because the Government's aim of rebalancing the economy away from service provision and towards manufacturing and exports is totally sound and deserves all the support we can muster. With the United Kingdom coming under an international spotlight through next year's celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the hosting of the Olympic Games, I also think that it's a timely moment for a bit of flag waving in our export markets.

I'm not suggesting we indulge in a bout of British nationalism, far from it. But often we appear somewhat coy about displaying our national identity at overseas trade fairs, as if afraid of causing offence. That way of thinking needs to be put aside because the 'Made in UK' label is about to be bolstered by a magnificent advertisement of British skill and excellence.

The once in a lifetime conjunction of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and Olympic Games in 2012 is set to provide a feel-good factor for this country that the most highly resourced marketing teams could only realise in their wildest imaginings. Tradition, pageantry and organisational ability will combine to showcase the United Kingdom to the world with unforgettable images of royal events and sporting endeavour. The coming year therefore offers a matchless opportunity for our manufacturers to tap into the country's reputation for flawlessly staged great occasions to elevate the perception of British quality.

One or two of our members have already detected a pro-British sentiment among foreign buyers at trade fairs where we've had exhibitor groups this year, particularly in the wake of William and Kate's spectacular

wedding in April. We should capitalise on this response and make a point of emphasising Britain's heritage in the pet care, garden and leisure sectors to establish an untouchable competitive edge in our export markets".

Amanda Sizer Barrett has been director general of the federation, which includes PetQuip and Gardenex, since 1991 and was awarded the MBE for Services to Export in 2000.

PetQuip and Gardenex are divisions of The Federation of Garden and Leisure Manufacturers Ltd, the trade association that works on behalf of British companies to help its members increase sales worldwide.

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