

JOURNAL

Autumn 2023 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



A look ahead to
AIC's Dinner and
Conference 2023

Sustainability Training
and Self-Assessment
Framework launched

Concerns over
updated Explosives
Precursors regulation

aic 20
YEAR
ANNIVERSARY

An update from Robert Sheasby

2023 marks the 20th anniversary of AIC's formation, with our AGM in October set to be a celebration of its accomplishments over the past decades.

AIC continues to build on its considerable years of experience, tackling fresh challenges, such as seed treatments and EU Exit-related trade issues, whilst remaining focused on what matters most to our Members.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Feed Adviser Register (FAR) - a beacon for industry best practice which gives livestock producers confidence around the professional advice they receive.

Over the next year, there will likely be a General Election so AIC is canvassing your views on what a future government's priorities must be to support the agri-supply chain.

I am delighted to introduce Vicky Robinson, AIC's Head of Sustainability. Her work will include updating our Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain, as well as supporting the recently launched Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework, and helping your business with the net zero transition.

Lastly, I look forward to seeing many of you at [AIC's Dinner and Conference](#) this November, with an agenda and line up of speakers to help you prepare for the future.



Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC

Report on UK food production and security

AIC welcomes a report by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee highlighting fertiliser's critical importance to food security.

In November 2022, AIC gave evidence to the Committee on a range of issues related to UK food production which is referenced throughout the report.

The report said that "given the importance of nitrogen fertiliser to UK food production and food security... the Government should take steps to support the increased production of nitrogen fertiliser in the UK, and examine the incentives offered by our competitors."

Other recommendations include the Prime Minister chairing an annual food security summit and the Government developing a suite of food security indicators covering inputs and outputs with targets set, which aims to influence policy.

Elsewhere, Head of Policy and External Affairs Ed Barker took part in a discussion at 10 Downing Street in June on the private sector's role in financing nature recovery on farms.

Government recognition of the agri-supply chain's role in these policy issues underlines AIC's work over the past year as a credible voice representing the industry.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

Understand your business's sustainability credentials with AICs Self-Assessment Framework

AIC has launched its Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework which is designed to help Member and Participant businesses better understand the sustainability credentials of their operations.

The Framework complements the commitments made in [AIC's Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain](#) and has been developed by AIC through contacts, experiences, and involvement in a diverse range of stakeholder forums.

A webinar introducing the Framework and associated training course was hosted by AIC on 10 July 2023.

The Introduction to Sustainability for the Agri-Supply Industry training must be undertaken by anyone completing the Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework. It provides a basic understanding of sustainability influences, policies, and ambitions which will help those completing the self-assessment framework for their company.

Go to the [Sustainability pages of AIC's website](#) to find out more and watch the webinar recording.



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager



Head of Sustainability joins the team

AIC has appointed Vicky Robinson as Head of Sustainability to lead and develop its work in this core area.

A 2019 Nuffield Scholar, Vicky was previously Technical Director at Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), which followed 22 years working for Natural England and its predecessors on agri-environment delivery, policy development, and implementation.

Digital Grain Passport webinar keeps Members informed

In July, AIC hosted a webinar to update Members and scheme Participants on the Digital Grain Passport project.

Following the developments through 2023, the webinar shared the work to date ahead of the Business Case being presented in early autumn. Chaired by AIC's Chief Executive Robert Sheasby, there were detailed presentations from the Chairs of the Development and Data Groups plus a question-and-answer session.

The Digital Grain Passport project aims to achieve greater efficiency, accuracy, and traceability of data throughout the entire supply chain, while seeking to ensure that confidence in the safety of food and feed is maintained.

Members can visit the [Digital Grain Passport hub webpages](#) to watch the webinar on-demand, get the latest on the project, and submit their views and questions to AIC via a dedicated feed-in form. This Member-only section of the website is regularly updated with current information.

With a Business Case for the Digital Grain Passport expected in the autumn of 2023, AIC will keep Members up to date with developments.



Tackling treated seed issues

AIC is working with stakeholders to find a solution to a December deadline for the import and distribution of Korit, Redigo M and Force-treated maize seed. AIC has written to the minister to stress the importance of continued maize seed supply.

Meanwhile, an on-label authorisation has been granted for UK use of Tachigaren on fodder beet.

Members identified gaps for disease control in fodder beet due to the end of the transitional rules for treated seed on 31 December. This would have meant Tachigaren treated fodder beet seed could no longer be imported, sold, or used in the UK.

After AIC and other industry stakeholders approached the approval holder Mitsui Chemicals Crop & Life Solutions, Inc to ask if it would consider applying for an on-label approval for Tachigaren 70 WP on fodder beet, the company worked with CRD to deliver an authorisation.



Breeders get earlier royalty submissions after AIC feedback

Following feedback from AIC, the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB) agreed to amend its royalty submission dates.

Proposed date amendments mean breeders need to submit their royalties by 24 August 2023 for autumn crops (royalty for autumn 2024 sales) and 15 December 2023 for spring crops (royalty for spring 2025 sales).



Rose Riby,
Head of Arable Marketing and Seed

AIC working to find weed control solution in winter oats

Following a CRD review of the database of Extensions of Authorisation for Minor Uses (EAMUs), the withdrawals of EAMUs on major crops has left a gap for weed control in winter oats.

This is due to the withdrawal of the EAMU for diflufenican and flufenacet mixes on winter oats on 30 April 2023.

AIC is working with stakeholders and liaising with CRD to find a solution in the future, however it will not be legal to use diflufenican and flufenacet mixes on winter oats in autumn 2023.



Hazel Doonan,
Head of Crop Protection
& Agronomy

Prepare for explosive precursors law change

From 1 October 2023, businesses supplying regulated explosive precursors to professional users must take additional steps to verify the legitimacy of users or businesses.

Updated legislation encompasses some plant protection products, biocides, and products used in horticulture. Members should check government guidance to understand if chemicals and the concentration thresholds they supply are affected.



Update on sustainable soya work

AIC and AIC Services are actively engaged in the development of a UK national transition plan, which aims to achieve 100% verified deforestation and conversion-free (vDCF) soya by the end of 2025.

AIC is working with Member companies shipping and importing soya to deliver quarterly soya import data reports, benchmarking the proportion of vDCF soya coming into the UK. AIC is also working to create a vDCF soya standard as part of the national transition plan.

100%
DEFORESTATION
CONVERSION-FREE
2025

Video series promoting the benefits of distributor agronomy



AIC has worked with Members to produce a video resource to enhance the understanding of the distributor's vital role in crop production.

The "[Adding Value with Distributor Agronomy](#)" video series hosted on AIC's website offers stakeholders, government officials, and the public bite-size clips exploring key topics such as IPM, trials and research, and valuable advice given to farmers and growers. This resource will be added to in future.

Cobalt feed additives get GB emergency authorisation

Urgent authorisation of key cobalt salts to be used in livestock feed in England, Scotland, and Wales has been granted following pressure from AIC.

Working with The British Association of Feed Supplement and Additive Manufacturers (BAFSAM), AIC wrote to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), submitting evidence and data on the animal welfare and economic implications of losing the cobalt feed additives. AIC responded to an FSA/FSS consultation and wrote to Farming Minister Mark Spencer MP, drawing his attention to the issue.

Legislation in all three nations came into force on 15 July, ensuring uninterrupted market supply of cobalt feed additives.



James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed

Concerns over updated Explosives Precursors regulation

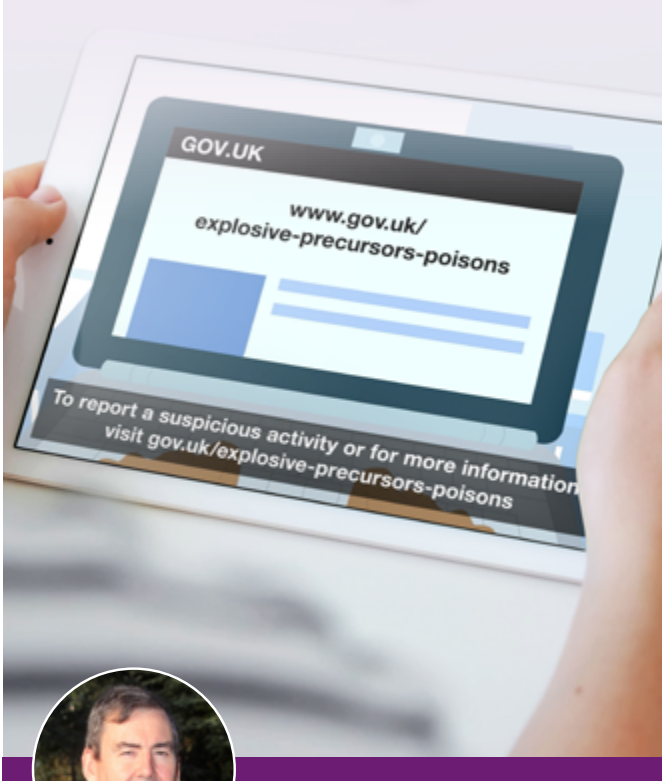
AIC has raised concerns with the Government that farming customers will need to submit photo ID to their supplier before ordering AN fertiliser as of 1 October 2023.

The Control of Poisons and Explosives Precursors Regulations 2023 has been amended to include AN with a nitrogen content of 16% or more as a regulated explosives precursor. This applies to compounds, including CAN, where any AN is used as an ingredient.

It means suppliers to professional users and other businesses will need to take additional steps to verify the legitimacy of the individual or business.

While the Home Office acknowledged that there had been no incidents of misappropriation of ammonium nitrate fertiliser since 2006 when FIAS was introduced, and accepted that FIAS acting with other assurance schemes provided the necessary levels of protection, it refused to grant any dispensations.

AIC continues to make the case for "Earned Recognition" directly to the Police service; who are responsible for enforcing the regulation, and together with farming stakeholders is contacting MPs for support in lobbying the Home Office.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser



From Left: Ian Muirhead, AIC Scotland Chair Sarah Bell, Deputy First Minister Shona Robison MSP, Robert Sheasby

Deputy First Minister attends AIC Scotland's Royal Highland Show reception

AIC Scotland's engagements at the Royal Highland Show included a range of meetings with ministers and parliamentarians including the Under Secretary of State for Scotland John Lamont MP, Food Standards Scotland, and representatives from across the political spectrum.

AIC Scotland held a 20th Anniversary reception at the show for Members, stakeholders, and politicians to highlight the economic importance of the industry. Deputy First Minister of Scotland Shona Robison MSP gave an address to guests.

Response to Climate Change Committee recommendation on livestock

AIC Scotland is working with key stakeholders including Quality Meat Scotland, NFU Scotland, and others to defend the Scottish livestock industry following recent recommendations from the UK Climate Change Committee for drastic cuts to livestock numbers and dietary changes.

Stakeholders have issued a joint letter calling on the ministers at both Holyrood and Westminster to challenge these recommendations in a range of areas including the need to use accurate rather than global emissions figures in relation to UK livestock production.



Ian Muirhead,
AIC Scotland Policy Manager



From Left: Robert Sheasby, Lesley Griffiths MS, Michael Muncey

Celebrating AIC Cymru's first anniversary

A reception was hosted at the Welsh Royal Show on 24 July to mark 20 years of AIC and one year of AIC Cymru.

Members and stakeholders attended, along with representatives of the Welsh Government. The Rural Affairs Minister Lesley Griffiths MS gave a speech affirming the work of AIC Cymru over the past year and working together in the future.

Latest on Welsh Agriculture Bill

The Agricultural Bill for Wales has now progressed through all stages of the Senedd and has gained Royal Assent to become law.

In July, the Welsh Government published its findings, comments, and direction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme framework consultation that was launched last year.

This will lead to a final round of consultation and co-design in 2024. AIC Cymru will continue to feed into the consultation process and will keep Members up to date on progress.

No financial details on payments particularly for "universal actions" are expected until sometime in 2024. The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) is due to start in 2025.

It is clear that this will be a phased approach with first payments for Universal Actions, Optional Actions, and Collaborative Action payments and process will be rolled out thereafter.



Michael Muncey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager

aic 20th YEAR ANNIVERSARY

2023 DINNER & CONFERENCE

Book early bird tickets for AIC's Dinner and Conference

This year's annual AIC Dinner & Conference theme is "Working with Natural Capital within the agri-supply industry" and has attracted some high calibre speakers from the Government, industry, and academia.

The use of natural capital – such as land, water, air, and soil - impacts all parts of the agri-supply industry and without effective management will result in supply challenges further up the supply chain.

The Rt Hon George Eustice MP will be the after-dinner speaker at AIC's Dinner and will reflect on UK agriculture and food policy and the challenges that lie ahead. Key speakers include Mark Spencer MP – Minister for Agriculture, Professor Sir Charles Godfray of the University of Oxford, and NFU president Minette Batters. Find full details at www.aicconference.org.uk.

Be sure to guarantee your place at this year's event by booking online to take advantage of the early bird discounted ticket rate.



John Kelley,
Chief Operating Officer, AIC
Managing Director, AIC Services

Potential Renewable Energy Directive recognition by EU

In June, the European Commission informed AIC Services that from 31 December 2023 it will no longer recognise voluntary assurance schemes, for the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

AIC is working with similarly impacted schemes, Red Tractor Assurance and Scottish Quality Crops, to maintain access to the EU market as a valuable outlet for biofuels under RED II.

In early August, AIC chaired a meeting with the Department for Transport, bringing the industry together to work on a solution.

Members and Participants will be kept up to date with developments. Visit [AIC's website](#) for more information.



Consultations on UFAS, FEMAS and TASCC Standards launched

Members, Participants, and industry stakeholders are encouraged to engage with consultations on proposed 2024 Standards for UFAS, FEMAS and TASCC. The Standards have been reviewed and clauses aligned to develop a common set of requirements and wording.

The deadline for responses is 2 October at 17:00. Find full details of each consultation and how to respond on [AIC's website](#).



Gill Barrow,
Technical Manager



Simon Williams,
Technical Manager

FIAS Standard goes digital

The latest FIAS Standard document is now available in an online version with enhanced searchability and links to supporting information for ease of use.

The appearance of the 2021 document may be different, but the content is identical. Visit [AIC's website](#) to view and see how it works.



Member survey reminder

AIC is currently surveying its Members by email to help it prepare for the next General Election, anticipated in 2024.

Since April, the primary contacts held for each Member business have been emailed and reminded to complete the important five-minute survey.

Please look out for email reminders from aicinformation@agindustries.org.uk and respond as soon as possible.

Dates for the diary

AIC AGM & 20th anniversary reception – 11 October

Fertiliser Industry Dinner – 2 November

AIC PreConference Dinner – 14 November

AIC Conference 2023 – 15 November

AIC Scotland Dinner – 23 November

AIC Seed Trade Dinner – 30 November



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