

JOURNAL

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

A look ahead to AIC's Dinner
and Conference 2023

Precision breeding gets green
light in England

Feed innovation and
opportunities promoted

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An update from Robert Sheasby

This quarter has seen AIC represent your voice across the UK. From the spring AIC Scotland Member meeting in Perth, to a BCFTA lunch in the south-west, and attending the Farm to Fork Summit in London, there have been extensive opportunities for Member concerns to be heard and discussed.

The Farm to Fork Summit hosted by the Prime Minister in 10 Downing Street enabled AIC to raise “pre-farmgate” issues, including the importance of having a Land Use Strategy to provide confidence for businesses across the agri-supply industry to invest in the UK.

We highlighted the productivity gains that can be made from knowledge uptake of best practice and opportunities for the Government to support businesses by issuing phytosanitary certificates promptly, implementing an efficient approval process for seed treatments, and the approval of GM authorisations - it is frustrating this happens more efficiently in the EU.

Regarding the Digital Grain Passport, we continue to engage with the industry leadership group, working on a Business Case which AIC hopes will be published soon. To aid this, AIC is developing a set of principles to help it scrutinise the Business Case. Visit www.agindustries.org.uk/digital-grain-passport for the latest.

Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC

Domestic crop production boost as precision breeding technology becomes law

With the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act passing into law in late March, regulatory divergence within the UK remains a challenge as this legislation applies to England only - Scottish and Welsh devolved governments do not currently support it.

AIC is working with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and others on the practical implementation of the legislation and is focused on how it is promoted globally. The European Union is currently debating its own legislation on precision breeding, making the UK a world-leader in legislating for this technology's use.

AIC Members were invited to join an exclusive webinar in late April examining precision breeding techniques and the gene editing legislation passed in the UK and USA. The webinar on new genomic techniques, which was jointly hosted by AIC, COCERAL, and FEAC, featured policy and food safety teams from the UK Government who shared information on the new UK law.

Representatives from Washington DC and Brussels reflected on trade and key topics arising from the EU's current policy efforts on genome editing. As well as chairing the webinar, AIC offered a view from the supply chain. Members can watch the webinar on demand on AIC's website - visit <https://www.agindustries.org.uk/precision-breeding-webinar>.

In early May AIC's Head of Policy, Ed Barker, chaired a panel event on behalf of the UK Mission to the European Union in Brussels outlining the Act. The event saw Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and FSA officials discuss the policy and regulatory aspects of the new legislation.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

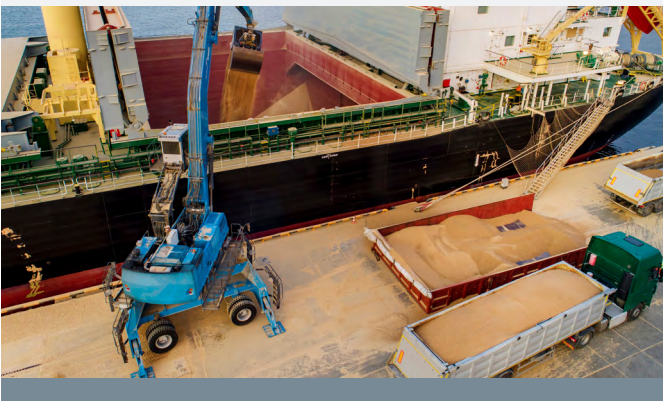
Unrealistic retained EU law review plans dropped

AIC supports government's decision to abandon plans to review all EU-derived legislation by the end of 2023. AIC had called for the approach to reviewing all EU legislation by the end of the year to be reconsidered.

AIC will continue to work with the Government as it seeks to review all retained EU laws over a more realistic timescale.

Target Operating Model proposals for EU imports published

Following a call for feedback, AIC has responded to a consultation on behalf of Members which import such products from the EU to GB. The Government has published a draft border "Target Operating Model" (TOM), setting out its plan to introduce import controls on animals, animal products, plants, and plant products entering Great Britain from the EU and EFTA.



Support payments webinar connects Members with Defra

Members joined a free webinar on agricultural support payments in England, including the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship components of the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme on 31 March.

The webinar was jointly hosted by AIC and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to give an overview of recent announcements about the schemes, including a speaker from the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway.

Members also had the opportunity to get their questions answered by Defra officials. Members can watch the webinar on demand - go to www.agindustries.org.uk/support-payments-webinar.



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager

A look ahead to AIC's Dinner and Conference 2023

AIC's Dinner and Conference 2023 is set to feature a range of thought leaders from politics, business, academia, and trade to explore this year's theme of "Working with Natural Capital in the Agri-Food Supply Chain".

The Conference will again be held at the Holiday Inn West, Peterborough on 15 November, and will be complemented by a formal dinner - AIC's Conference Dinner - the night before (14 November) which will be hosted at the same venue.

While marking the formal opening of AIC's Conference, the dinner will also celebrate AIC's 20th Anniversary.

Both the Dinner and Conference are open to Members, industry stakeholders, and the trade. Further information will be made available on AIC's website in the coming weeks.

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2023 DINNER &
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John Kelley,
Chief Operating Officer, AIC & Managing Director, AIC Services

AHDB acts on AIC feedback

AHDB has confirmed that it will not mandate levy-collecting businesses to share farming customer data, following AIC's opposition to the proposal.

Planned reforms to the [AHDB Order](#), which were consulted on by the UK and devolved Governments earlier this year, included an obligation for businesses which collect the levy to share details of farming customers with AHDB.

[AIC challenged the proposal](#), relaying the significant concerns of Members that this would be unworkable as it breached General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Reservations about the likely cost and burden placed on Member businesses were also highlighted.

AIC will continue to work with AHDB as it considers how a suitable rate deduction for businesses collecting the levy can be set and reviewed in future.



New animation explains Arable marketing sector

AIC has produced an [animated video](#) to help explain how arable marketing works within the [Grain & Oilseed sector](#) of the UK agri-supply industry.

It is the latest in a [series of animations](#) designed to increase the understanding of policymakers, agricultural, stakeholders, and the public on the role and significance of the agri-supply industry.

The short video outlines the important work of [Grain & Oilseed](#) sector Members. Visit www.agindustries.org.uk/grain-oilseed-animation to watch the video.



Rose Riby,
Head of Arable Marketing and Seed

Royalty rates pressure

Working on behalf of Members, AIC has written to British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB) to propose that the publication of the royalty rates is brought forward.

Significant increases in rates over the past two years means royalty rates are now becoming a key part of Members' purchasing decisions.

With decisions currently being made on next year's cropping, seed merchant businesses risk a situation in which they are unable to commit to variety selections.

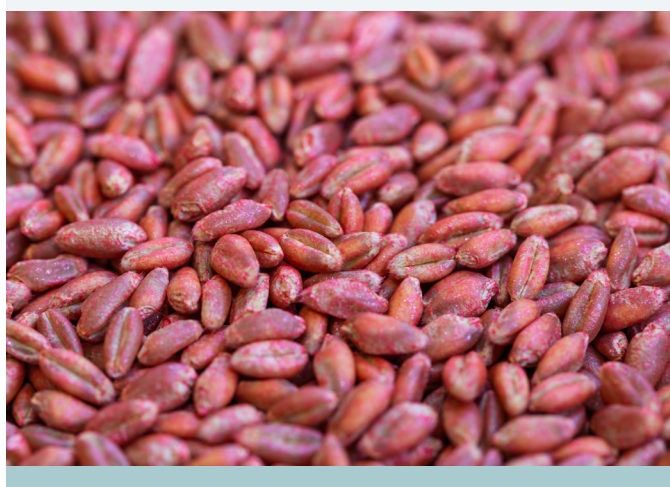
AIC has stressed that this would be an undesirable implication for growers, merchants, and breeders, and the uncertainty is a cause for concern amongst Members.



Challenging treated seed deadline

Up to 31 December 2023, seed treated with a PPP authorised for that use in EU countries may continue to be imported into GB, marketed, and used. From 1 January 2024, only seed treated with a PPP authorised for that purpose in GB may be imported, marketed, and used in GB.

AIC is working with other industry stakeholders to challenge the Government on this deadline, seeking an extension to allow more time for alternative chemical solutions to be registered.



AIC holds field visit for pesticide officials

In April, AIC organised the latest in a series of field visits for Chemicals Regulation Division and Defra pesticide hub officials.

The visit, which was held at a Member's trial site in Northamptonshire, demonstrated to government officials the ongoing commitment of AIC Members to research and knowledge exchange in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) measures.

Our thanks to Agrovista for kindly hosting the day at its Lamport AgX site.



Extended approval expiry dates for GB pesticide active substances

On 12 April, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) announced an extension to expiry dates of the approvals of pesticide active substances that have been supported for renewal in Great Britain, and for which the approvals are due to expire before April 2025.

Following EU Exit, active substances due to expire within three years of the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) were granted a further three-year extension under the GB plant protection product (PPP) regulations, to allow for a GB active substance renewal programme to be developed.

HSE has consulted AIC and other stakeholders on the development of the Great Britain Active Substance Renewal Programme (ASRP), however the details are yet to be finalised.

HSE has considered and made a decision on each affected active substance individually. Where it has decided that it is suitable to extend the approval period, this will be extended by up to five years. The GB Pesticides Approvals Register has been updated with the new expiry dates.



Hazel Doonan,
Head of Crop Protection & Agronomy



From left: Jo Gatcliffe (AIC Feed Chair), Kieran Whitaker (Entocycle), Nick Major (ForFarmers), James McCulloch (AIC's Head of Feed), John Knight (SugaRich).

Feed innovation and opportunities promoted

Members of Parliament and Peers from across the political spectrum heard about a range of innovations and opportunities in the UK's agri-supply industry at a Westminster meeting in March.

AIC was at Portcullis House in London to share the feed sector's latest developments on sustainability and net zero with the All-Parliamentary Party Group for Science and Technology in Agriculture.

The Group heard from AIC's Head of Policy and External Affairs Ed Barker and Head of Feed James McCulloch about how the sector is contributing to net zero targets.

Promising innovations shared included developing technologies for insect bioconversion and the use of former foodstuffs in livestock feed. Also discussed was the focus on standard metrics to assess sustainability progress in the industry.



Summary of feed sector carbon budget measures

The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan has been published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The plan sets out a package of Government proposals and policies to meet carbon budgets under the Climate Change Act 2008 and has some specific proposals on livestock feeds.

AIC will continue to engage with relevant Government departments on these proposals and provide more details to Members when they become available.

Go to www.agindustries.org.uk/carbon-budget-feed-sector for AIC's summary of key points for feed sector Members.



James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed

Clarity on inhibited urea welcomed

New rules on the use of inhibited urea fertilisers, known as "Option 4", will be implemented this year, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed on 22 March.

The long-anticipated decision on the use of inhibitors in urea fertiliser comes after AIC wrote to the Secretary of State Thérèse Coffey MP last month requesting an urgent clarification ahead of the new season.

In a letter to AIC and other industry stakeholders, Farming Minister Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP said that the proposed industry scheme should be incorporated into the Red

Tractor farm assurance scheme meaning most farm applications to crops after 1 April 2024 needed to be inhibited if containing more than 1% urea.

The Minister reiterated that this was essential to ensure that emissions of ammonia are reduced as part of the UK meeting legally-bound targets. AIC supports the implementation of "Option 4" and welcomes the much-needed clarity.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser



From Left: Edward Mountain MSP, Alex Telfer NSA, Finlay Carson MSP, Rachael Hamilton MSP, Martin Kennedy NFUS President, Ian Muirhead AIC Scotland.

Future agricultural policy progress

Engagement with MSPs from across the Scottish political spectrum continues, with Policy Manager Ian Muirhead recently attending the Scottish Conservative Party Spring Conference in Glasgow. In late April, Ian was on a panel alongside key industry figures including NFUS president Martin Kennedy to discuss future agricultural policy.

This provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the key concerns of Members including the need to ensure equivalent legislation is laid before Holyrood so Scottish businesses have access to gene editing plant breeding technologies.

Following pressure from AIC Scotland and others, the Scottish Government has now published a route map and further detail on the proposed future agricultural support system. This included the publishing of a detailed list of draft support measures.

AIC Scotland has provided a detailed response, highlighting the key issues which the Government must consider as policy details are finalised to ensure it is workable and does not create unintended consequences for the wider agri-supply industry.



Ian Muirhead,
AIC Scotland Policy Manager

Concerns over Welsh Government's SFS approach

In May AIC Cymru joined the Environment and Rural Affairs Monitoring and Modelling Programme (ERAMMP) launch and stakeholder meeting with Welsh Government in Cardiff. The Programme aims to provide evidence and monitor outcomes of policy as Sustainable Land Management and Sustainable Farming Schemes (SFS) are rolled out.

The Welsh Government has committed £12 million over the coming decade in two-yearly cycles, dependent on key deliverables and milestones. ERAMMP is project managed by the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology with 16 other largely environmental stakeholders, including Welsh universities.

While the long-term approach is commendable, there is a concern that the measured indicators are overtly environmentally-focused. SFS is a whole land management change approach which must also consider economic and social aspects. The Agriculture (Wales) Bill and SFS is much more than a BPS replacement and extension of the Glastir approach. As such, AIC Cymru and farming unions are aligned in their concerns.

AIC Cymru has also stressed to the Welsh Government that there is a willingness and clear offer from the agri-supply industry to be instrumental in providing advice, innovation, expertise, and verification of outcomes of SFS.



Michael Munciey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager

Joint Scheme Development

Work on the Joint Scheme Development project, which aims to align the requirements and wording of UFAS, FEMAS, and TASC more closely, is progressing well.

The implementation date for the next version of the schemes will be in the first half of 2024, with the next step in the project being a full public consultation during summer 2023. This will allow sufficient time for the comments from the consultation process to be considered prior to the finalised schemes being submitted for approval by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

AIC Services will keep Members, Participants and stakeholders updated and will ensure that they are aware when the consultation process launches.



Gill Barrow,
Technical Manager



Simon Williams,
Technical Manager

Managing the Safe Receipt of Animal Feed 2023

Updated guidance to help farm staff and delivery drivers stay safe during feed deliveries has been published by AIC in collaboration with other industry stakeholders.

The guidance – “Managing the Safe Receipt of Animal Feed 2023” – has been revised and published by the Farm Safety Partnership, which includes AIC, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), National Farmers Union (NFU), NFU Mutual, Country Land and Business Association (CLA), and Tenant Farmers Association (TFA).

This new publication provides livestock producers with valuable, practical guidance and a useful checklist to help them comply with [AIC’s Code of Practice for Making Safe Deliveries of Animal Feed to Farms](#).

The Code, which was published in January 2023, offers detailed information on meeting the requirements for safely accepting delivery of animal feeds.

Go to www.agindustries.org.uk/safe-receipt-animal-feed-guide to download the guidance.



David Moss,
Technical Manager

AIC surveys Full Members in preparation for General Election

With a General Election expected next year, AIC is asking its Full Members to complete a short, confidential survey to help it build a more detailed picture of the businesses it represents.

The information that Members share with AIC will support its lobbying activity with political parties in the run up to the election.

The quick online survey was emailed to senior leaders within each Member business on 20 April. It should take no more than five minutes to complete and asks for key figures on business turnover and employee numbers, as well as any export activity.

This will provide baseline data on the size and value of the agri-supply industry to the UK economy and ensures that AIC understands Members’ policy priorities.

For help and queries, please email enquiries@agindustries.org.uk or call 01733 385230.



Tracy Smith,
Membership Manager

Dates for the diary

- Annual General Meeting - 11 October
- Fertiliser Industry Dinner – 2 November
- AIC’s Dinner and Conference 2023 – 14 & 15 November
- AIC Scotland Meetings and Dinner - 23 November
- AIC Seed Trade Dinner – 30 November

Coming soon – Introductory Sustainability Training and Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework

Building on AIC’s Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain, these offerings to Members will assist them in assessing their company sustainability credentials and tracking continuous development in sustainability performance. More details will be shared shortly.



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