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SCOTLAND

agricultural  
industries  
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scotland

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# AIC Scotland Manifesto

WORKING IN SUPPORT OF MODERN, SUSTAINABLE,  
COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

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## Building the Green Recovery 2021

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This manifesto sets out the key priorities of the Agri-supply industry here in Scotland, and how we can play a crucial role in building our green recovery.

The agricultural industry faces a period of significant change, and we believe that a strong partnership between government and industry will provide the considered support required to help the sector thrive and successfully navigate this period.

Increasingly agriculture and the wider Agri-supply industry can be seen as providing society with a wide range of solutions to the challenges we face in reducing GHG emissions and providing clean air, healthy soils, bio-diversity and food security.



## Creating a Framework for Success

**AIC Scotland believe there are a range of positive policy interventions which need to be made to ensure we create the conditions for a productive and environmentally sustainable agricultural industry here in Scotland.**

Through our network of professionally qualified advisers we will enable change on Scotland's farms – positive change which helps reduce emissions whilst retaining productive agricultural businesses.

### Productivity

- **Industry led advice is recognised and supported** – aim to ensure that industry best practice becomes industry standard practice – maximising environmental gains.
- **Supporting innovation in Scottish agriculture** – in a range of areas including precision plant breeding techniques.

### Sustainability

- **Economic and environmental sustainability are inextricably linked** – support for active and productive farmers to enable their contribution to sustainability outcomes. We support protecting existing funding levels for agriculture.

### Environment

- **A level playing field** - The need to recognise the challenge of meeting net zero by 2045 – acknowledging the risk of exporting production and emissions. We support protecting Scottish agriculture from carbon intensive imports.

- **Positive Environmental Outcomes** – Which don't create negative economic consequences – e.g. integrating forestry and productive agriculture and/or further implementing integrated pest management.

### Competitiveness

- **Education & Knowledge Transfer** – Key to positive progress – recognising the key role AIC Members will play in delivering knowledge transfer and supporting that role.
- **A regulatory framework which works for UK agriculture** – We support the development of common frameworks which ensure regulatory alignment and equivalence.



# AIC Scotland – Strength in Numbers

– Representing the Agri-supply chain in Scotland



**AIC SCOTLAND** represents over 90% of companies involved in the Agri-supply industry here in Scotland, with over 30 companies headquartered in Scotland.



**UK WIDE** we have a membership of 210 companies representing a farmgate value of £9 billion and employing over 43,000 people directly and indirectly.



**ADVISORS** on professional register who engage day-in, day-out with UK farmers



Through our roles in the provision of advice, inputs and assurance we play a critical role within the Scottish agri-food supply chain.



**OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE** is the role which AIC services play in providing assurance schemes including for livestock feed and for combinable crops, these ensure food and feed safety and help underpin the added value brands of Scotch whisky and red meat products such as beef and lamb.

## ASSURANCE SCHEMES



## Positive Partnership for Progress

**AIC have a positive record of progress in improving sustainability both at an individual company level and at farm level through provision of advice services and inputs.**

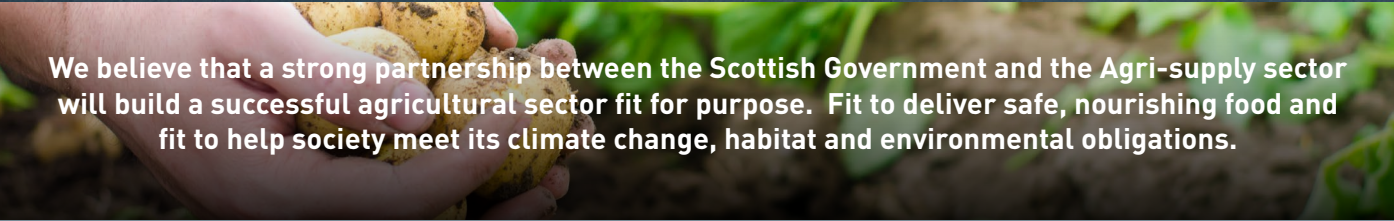
Our Sustainability Roadmap initiative charts the positive progress that has been made to date in reducing emissions from the production of inputs such as livestock feed and fertilisers, it also highlights the progress made in improving input efficiencies at farm level (30% improvement in 30 years), achieved through a combination of advice, new products and precision technologies. The roadmap also sets out how our sector will progress further in reducing emissions. Crucially it also highlights areas where there are barriers to change, which can be addressed by government and industry working in partnership to achieve positive change.



# Options for Progress

We have developed a range of policy options which could be deployed to build the green recovery and improve the financial and environmental sustainability of Scottish Agriculture.

- 1 Government support for industry led advice services** which AIC Members provide. These services can complement those already provided by the Farm Advisory Service and ensure all farm businesses have access to a range of advice options. Advice is key to enabling change and achieving environmental outcomes. Our Feed Adviser Register is a clear example of an industry led initiative helping to deliver government policy alongside crop nutritional advice from FACTS qualified advisers and BASIS agronomists providing the latest crop solutions.
- 2 Access to green technologies.** Support for precision breeding techniques which can develop new crop varieties with better disease resistance, higher input efficiency and healthier consumer food products whilst reducing use of crop protection products.
- 3 Support for sustainability measures.** There are a range of options which could be incentivised to drive change including support for maintaining and improving soil health, investment in precision Agri-tech, incentivising productivity improvements in livestock and crop production systems.
- 4 Support for Research & Development.** Government should consider new ways of funding R&D, making it more accessible to SMEs to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into practical on-farm solutions – creating solutions to the many challenges we face. A collaborative approach is needed between research institutions and commercial operators. R&D is crucial in ensuring we drive innovation within the industry and make the productivity and environmental gains which are necessary.
- 5 Access to, and responsible use of, crop protection products** - this will be crucial to ensure we have all the tools in the tool box to ensure we can continue to produce crops sustainably and effectively deal with the effects of climate change. This, however, must also be coupled with research to ensure access to new biopesticides and bio stimulants as well as non - chemical alternatives, giving a range of options for sustainable control of weeds, pests and diseases. By ensuring the widest range of control methods, including new plant breeding techniques, we can effectively minimise resistance issues. We support the proposed GB approach to active substance approvals and the UK wide approach to plant protection product authorisations with provisions to receive advice from devolved authorities.
- 6 Support for Productivity** – Government and industry need to work together to drive on farm performance and ensure that industry best practice becomes industry standard practice. A framework which supports the development of new products and technologies, such as feed additives and improved livestock genetics to reduce methane emissions, could create big environmental gains. It is also important that support is focussed in this way to improve productivity which in turn will help ensure we maintain critical mass throughout the supply chain.
- 7 Knowledge Transfer** – Government must support clear pathways for knowledge transfer and development of best practice at farm level, AIC Members can drive this through our network of professionally qualified advisers.
- 8 Common Frameworks** – We support the process of creating workable frameworks which ensure regulatory alignment between different parts of the UK.
- 9 Livestock Production** – A climate change policy which recognises the positive benefits of livestock production – for food production, landscape management and carbon sequestration.
- 10 Sustainable Protein** – We support the development of home - grown protein sources and research into novel protein sources for animal feeds, whilst maintaining access to a wide range of protein sources for livestock.
- 11 Future support policy** – Support should be directed to active and productive farmers with mechanisms put in place to encourage new entrants to the industry. Trialling and testing of new approaches to agricultural support which can deliver a multiplicity of societal benefits should begin as soon as possible.
- 12 Green Energy** – Continued support will be needed to drive adoption of renewable technologies. Careful consideration needs to be given to the unintended consequences of some forms of green energy support. For example the use of distillery by-products in AD plants has led to reductions in the availability of high-quality sustainable protein sources for Scottish livestock.
- 13 Business support** – We welcome measures which ensure Scotland is a business-friendly environment in areas such as business rates, environmental regulation and encouraging business to invest for the future.



We believe that a strong partnership between the Scottish Government and the Agri-supply sector will build a successful agricultural sector fit for purpose. Fit to deliver safe, nourishing food and fit to help society meet its climate change, habitat and environmental obligations.