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It has been an exceptionally dry and pleasant Scottish summer for most, with reports of excellent harvest conditions. AIC Scotland has been busy engaging with MSPs across the political spectrum following the devolved elections in May, and we continue to represent the issues that matter to you in Holyrood and beyond.



Ian Muirhead
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Tackling ongoing challenges

AIC Scotland is working with UK colleagues and officials on finding solutions to a range of challenges facing the agri-supply sector. Chief among those at the time of writing are the impacts of HGV driver shortages and fertiliser production issues, both domestically and throughout Europe. We are working with stakeholders and putting forward a range of solutions to help ease and rectify some of these negative impacts, including the creation of temporary visas for European drivers.

Covid-19 remains a concern. The Scottish Government has put a range of baseline measures in place to try and reduce the spike in infections. If successful, this will not only protect public health but avoid subsequent disruption to the NHS and businesses. We continue to work with officials to promote those preventative measures in the workplace, including the wearing of masks, providing support

for those required to self-isolate, and regular testing.

We remain ready to discuss any challenges your business may be facing and hear your suggestions.

We are keen to start meeting with Members face-to-face again; to arrange a visit from AIC Scotland, please contact ian.muirhead@agindustries.org.uk

Book your place at the AGM and lunch

AIC Scotland's meeting and AGM will take place at The Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld on 25th of November 2021 at 10am, followed by a sit-down lunch at 1pm.

Please book your place by emailing Julia.Corr@agindustries.org.uk and, if you have suggestions for new committee members and office bearers, please email ian.muirhead@agindustries.org.uk in advance. We hope to see you there.



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Scottish Legislative Programme 2021-22

Numerous proposals that are directly relevant to the agri-supply industry have been published for the next legislative agenda, including:

- Launch of Rural Entrepreneur Fund – grants for new business start-ups and relocation to rural areas
- Legislation to ban supply and manufacture of certain single use plastics
- Creation of a single marketing brand for Scottish produce – ‘Sustainably Scottish’, capitalising on sustainability credentials
- Five-year hydrogen action plan and industrial energy transformation fund
- Research commissioned on the role of carbon border adjustment mechanisms – prevention of offshoring emissions
- Phasing out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030
- Commitment to EU alignment for Agricultural Policy, including fertiliser and pesticides regulatory regimes
- Creation of a Scottish Veterinary Service to provide animal welfare and food safety functions
- Publication of a bio-energy action plan by 2023 – focusing on the role of livestock manures to fulfil bio-energy ambitions
- Target to double amount of land in organic production by 2026
- Introduction of low emissions zones in four Scottish cities by May 2022
- Commitment to freeze income tax rates and limit threshold increase to no more than inflation during the parliamentary term
- Road commitments to find long term solutions to A83, ongoing dualling of A9 and planned upgrades to A96
- Commitment to retain the Road Equivalent Tariff on ferry routes

For more details, read the publication on the Government’s website:
A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22

Ministerial reshuffle

Following Scottish Elections in May, Mairi Gougeon has replaced Fergus Ewing as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs & Islands, and Mairi McAllan MSP has been appointed as the Minister for Environment.

AIC Scotland held a successful introductory meeting with the new ministerial team, kindly hosted by East Coast Viners. We briefed the ministers on the role of AIC Scotland and the importance of the agri-supply industry within the rural economy, including the role that our sector can play in reducing emissions and producing new innovative products.



Mairi Gougeon
Cabinet Secretary for
Rural Affairs & Islands



Mairi McAllan MSP
Minister for
Environment



Seed labelling success



AIC Scotland has worked with SASA officials to ensure a more streamlined process for printing OECD labels following EU exit. We have been successful – the industry will be able to compete with operators in the rest of the UK whilst still complying with OECD seed scheme rules. Members will be able to print labels on their premises. SASA has written to seed operators notifying them of the changes.

Four-day working week

The Scottish Government plans to run a pilot scheme for a four-day working week, with a £10 million fund for participating companies.

AIC Scotland is working with a range of stakeholders from rural Scotland to highlight our collective concerns about these proposals, not least the fact that there is a general labour shortage being experienced across the economy. A letter setting out our concerns on the implications for the private sector will be sent shortly. We will be highlighting the practical implications for agriculture and small businesses.



Establishment of ARIOB

The Agriculture Reform Implementation Oversight Board (ARIOB) has been formed, jointly chaired by NFUS President Martin Kennedy and Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon.

The Board will develop a package of preliminary measures focusing on reducing emissions from livestock ahead of COP26. Once these measures are agreed, farmer recruitment will take place in the

autumn with a national pilot following in 2022. Proposals will consider existing reports from farmer-led groups and the updated climate change plans.

Under current proposals, Scottish Government plans to retain an element of direct support to agricultural businesses post 2024 in support of food production, with the remainder conditional upon meeting environmental targets and outcomes.

Pesticides Stakeholder Meeting



The Pesticides Stakeholder Group provides a useful forum to raise Member concerns with officials. The most recent meeting in August focused on the impacts caused by the loss of insecticides from the market.

Further analysis of the loss of active ingredients is needed, particularly regarding the disproportionate impact on higher value crops such as potatoes and soft fruits. The Scottish Plant Health Centre website is a useful resource on this matter, with several reports on the impacts and unintended consequences of pesticide withdrawals.

Scottish Government plans to do more analysis of plant protection product losses and undertake case studies to identify priority issues. AIC highlighted the need for increased notice and grace periods for product withdrawals and several supermarket representatives have also acknowledged the key role they play in terms of educating consumers.

Consultation – Make your voice heard



AIC Scotland will be responding to a new consultation from Scottish Government, on: 'Agricultural Transition in Scotland: first steps towards our national policy.' The consultation closes on 17th November 2021 and we encourage individual Member companies to feed in their thoughts.

Full details on this can be found on the Government webpage for 'Delivering a new future for rural Scotland'

Post-harvest challenges

AIC Scotland continues to meet with NFUS twice a month, as well as through our established pre- and post-harvest meetings.

Though the excellent harvest conditions have helped to reduce many of the logistical pressures which AIC Scotland Members had highlighted, NFUS has been encouraging its members to speak with their grain buyers to discuss requirements and ensure any logistical issues can be avoided, or solutions found, where on-farm storage is limited.



17th November 2021

agribusiness.org.uk

Join the UK's agri-supply industry for an online half-day conference around the theme of 'Managing the green recovery for the UK agri-food supply chain.'

TICKETS ON SALE NOW