

JOURNAL

Spring 2025 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



AIC welcomes Land Use Framework consultation

Progress on Digital Passport for Combinable Crops

AIC launches new Trade Assurance Checker App



An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

The ramifications of the Budget last October are still being absorbed. The headline changes to Agricultural and Business Property Relief (APR/BPR) remain an industry-wide focus with unknown consequences. The impact of increased employer National Insurance Contributions are yet to be felt, along with other changes. It is hard to see the Government's "Budget for Growth" as such.

In the meantime, progress on our asks of Government has been made – namely the appointment of a Minister for Food Security, and a commitment to negotiating a Sanitary and Phytosanitary agreement with the EU to ease trading relations.

In a further cause for celebration, AIC is a double finalist in the 2025 Trade Association Forum awards – for our 20th anniversary Marketing Campaign and Trade Association of the Year. To be shortlisted twice in these prestigious awards – benchmarked against other leading trade bodies which represent a diverse range of industries – is a proud moment and recognises the efforts of AIC's team working on your behalf, aided by Members' enduring support.

Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC



Uniting to raise Budget concerns with Government



AIC has joined a coalition of business groups that will work together to collect Member feedback and lobby the Government on Business Property Relief (BPR) and Agricultural Property Relief (APR).

This work is led by Family Business UK, coalition bodies include the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Confederation of British Industry (CBI), National Farmers Union (NFU), Country Land and Businesses Association (CLA) and others.

Uniting with other lobby groups which represent the wider economy makes a compelling case to HM Treasury, MPs and Peers. AIC Members were encouraged to complete a survey assessing the impact of recent changes to Inheritance Tax.

These insights will aid lobbying work on Members' behalf and help build a strong case for the Government to reconsider the changes.

Latest on oilseeds advocacy work

AIC is leading a group of trade bodies to reverse a decline in the UK oilseeds area and give growers greater confidence. By sharing oilseeds sector facts and advocating ways to address barriers to their uptake, the UK Oilseeds Group (UKOG) is lobbying MPs, government officials, and sharing with wider stakeholders.

Issues include the difficulty of importing oilseed seeds from the EU, wider crop protection regime for oilseeds, and interactions with the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and Future Farming Programme.

Defra Minister Daniel Zeichner MP has responded positively to the UKOG's request for an "Oilseeds Summit" to discuss these barriers, and the solutions.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

AIC welcomes Land Use Framework consultation

In January the Government launched a consultation on proposals for its long-awaited Land Use Framework - something AIC has continually called for, and one of its core asks of the new Government.

The Framework aims to clarify the Government's vision for how land will be used for food production and other priorities such as energy, housing, and environmental improvement. The draft

Framework appears to fall short in addressing how England maintains agricultural land and improves productivity. AIC will work with Members to feed into the consultation.



Introduction to Sustainability Action Plan webinar

AIC has hosted a webinar introducing its recently launched Sustainability Action Plan, with strong attendance from Members and stakeholders.

The webinar shared how the Action Plan can support agri-supply businesses to achieve their sustainability goals and answered questions from attendees.

Scan the QR code to find out more and watch on-demand.



Vicky Robinson,
Head of Sustainability



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager

AIC Stakeholder

Each Journal edition we look at how AIC works with a valued industry stakeholder in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture. This time we share how AIC collaborates with the Agri-supply Coalition.

Since 2016, AIC has worked with like-minded organisations in the wider agri-supply industry to form a strategic coalition contributing to the direction of UK farming, food, energy, and environmental policies.

Chaired by AIC, the Agri-supply Coalition comprises the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA), the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB), the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV), CropLife UK, the Grain and Feed Trade Association (GAFTA), the International Meat Trade Association (IMTA), the National Association of Agricultural Contractors (NAAC), and the National Office for Animal Health (NOAH).

This strategic group provides agri-supply businesses with a united representation with government aligned with the wider farming and food and drink industries, worth over £100 billion to the UK economy.

FOCUS





Progress on Digital Passport for Combinable Crops

Following an industry-wide consultation on the business case for a Digital Passport (Combinable Crops), the AHDB-led Leadership Group has made a series of revisions to proposals.

Digital Passport adoption is contingent on securing grant funding for its development, rollout, and initial operation. A final review and due diligence on budget and delivery options are in progress, focussing on necessary support for a smooth transition to a digital system.

The Digital Passport Development Group was reconvened in January to define roles and responsibilities of organisations and businesses, including communications, training, onboarding, rollout, and support.

Members can find the latest information on AIC's Digital Passport Hub.



Compromise reached on AHDB levy rebate rate

Following protracted negotiations with AIC reinforced by evidence from Member businesses, AHDB has agreed to revise the rate it will pay to levy-collecting businesses to the 3.28% in year one - up from the 0.44% originally proposed by its Cereals & Oilseeds Sector Council.

The new rate will be implemented on 1 April 2025, and AIC will maintain its work with the AHDB to set an appropriate rate for future years.



Rose Riby,
Head of Combinable Crops and Seed

Responding to Plant Health Fees and Precision Breeding consultations

AIC is responding to two Government consultations of significant interest to Seed Members.

Proposed changes to plant health fees for England and Wales are set to take effect in autumn 2025. A review of fees for plant health services delivered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has not been conducted for five years, with planned increases in part owing to inflation.

Defra is also consulting on the proposed Plant Varieties and Seeds framework for precision bred plant varieties in England, including the proposed Precision Bred Plant Variety List for England, and the provision of information on precision bred seed and other plant reproductive material.

Shaping future Plant Varieties and Seeds Strategy

In February AIC joined a government workshop to represent Member interests and help shape the first UK Plant Varieties and Seeds (PVS) Strategy covering the next five years.

The Strategy will cover breeders' intellectual property rights, variety registration, standards for seed marketing, and certification.





Webinars aid understanding of Members' role in sustainable crop production

Government officials and industry stakeholders have benefitted from a series of webinars hosted by AIC.

The aim of the webinars is to improve understanding of how Crop Protection and Agronomy businesses support the agriculture, horticulture, and amenity sectors to be sustainable and produce healthy crops.

The eight-webinar series concluded on 10 March with attendance of over 60 for many of them. Attendees commented on how interesting and helpful the webinars have been.

Voluntary Initiative appoints new Chair

The Voluntary Initiative (VI) has appointed East Fife mixed farmer David Bell as its new Chair.

David brings extensive experience to the role as both a farmer and an industry advocate, as well as a deep understanding of innovative and practical farming. His leadership in the broader rural sector makes him ideally suited for VI Chair.



Hazel Doonan,
Head of Crop Protection and Agronomy

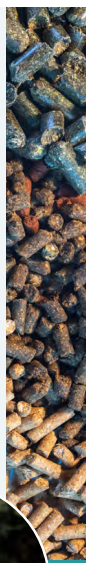
Engagement with the FSA

Recently AIC's Head of Animal Feed James McCulloch presented to the Food Standards Agency Board and Senior Executive Team on how feed can contribute to sustainable livestock production.

AIC invited FSA officials to consider amended or new regulation and legislation needed to help encourage feed sector innovation in this area. This includes responsible sourcing and the potential role for precision breeding, access to co-products from biogas competition, the proposed Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) amendments to broaden the scope of proteins feed manufacturers can access, as well as former food products.

Feed additives were also covered, in particular the strategic reliance on Chinese supplies for some groups of vitamins and amino acids and the need for a regulatory environment that enables new additives to come to the market in a more expedient manner – especially those that have a favourable effect on the environment.

In December and January, the FSA launched consultations on regulated products and other amendments to legislation designed to enable quicker approvals for regulated products. AIC will work with Members to submit responses to these consultations.



James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed

AIC to join Government Expert Group on UK-CBAM

AIC has been invited as the representative body for the fertiliser industry to participate with other such affected industry representatives in the Joint Industry Working Group on the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

This small working group brings together industry leaders and the Government and is tasked with collaborating on the development and implementation of UK-CBAM.

AIC to host AIC Members comms group on UK-CBAM

With a UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) set to be implemented in 2027, Member companies are invited to join an informal AIC working group to meet periodically to be kept up to date as technical aspects of the policy develop.

Members wishing to participate in the Working Group should contact AIC Head of Fertiliser Jo Gilbertson.

AIC is directly engaged with government officials leading on the introduction of this policy and is also liaising with the economist teams in the farm unions and the AHDB to model and understand the possible impacts of the policy on Members' customer bases and UK crop production.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser



AIC Scotland elects Graeme Logan as new Chair

Graeme Logan of Glasson Fertilisers is the new AIC Scotland Chair. Mr Logan was elected by Members at the Annual General Meeting held late last year and will serve through to 2026.

He is the Commercial Manager for Scotland at Glasson Fertilisers and brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. He is also a Director of the Scottish Corn Trade Association.

Mr Logan said: "I'm honoured to be elected as Chair of AIC Scotland and look forward to working with our Members to continue advancing our industry as a fundamental part of the agriculture, food and drink industry which is so vital to the Scottish economy.

"I would like to extend my thanks to Sarah Bell for her exceptional leadership and dedication over the past two years as Chair.

"I'm keen to build on the excellent work of AIC Scotland in recent years, including on shaping the future of support for Scottish agriculture."



Alister Davies elected as new Chair of AIC Cymru

AIC Cymru has elected Alister Davies as its new Chair. He was voted in by Members at the AIC Cymru Annual General Meeting on 30 January 2025 and will serve a two-year term.

Mr Davies is Beef and Sheep Commercial Manager at ForFarmers and succeeds Gareth Davies, the former Chief Executive of Wynnstay Group, who recently completed his tenure as Chair.

Mr Davies' leadership is set to further strengthen AIC Cymru's mission to work in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture and represent businesses in the Welsh agricultural supply industry.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Davies said: "I am honoured to take on the role of Chair at AIC Cymru and look forward to continuing our vital work on behalf of the Welsh agri-supply industry.

"I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Gareth Davies for his leadership and dedication. His instrumental role in establishing AIC Cymru has ensured Welsh agri-supply businesses have a stronger, united voice in an ever-evolving agricultural landscape."



Michael Muncey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager



Report highlights how FEMAS, TASC, and UFAS underpin UK feed and food safety

A special report demonstrating how the Feed Materials Assurance Scheme (FEMAS), the Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops (TASC), and the Universal Feed Assurance Scheme (UFAS) underpin UK feed and food safety has been published by AIC Services.

The interactive report offers a comprehensive look at the rigour and confidence brought to UK animal feed and food supply chains by the three pioneering Trade Assurance Schemes since they were originally launched in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Each scheme was developed in response to a succession of feed and food safety incidents which put the health and safety of humans and animals at risk, including Salmonella in eggs, Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), and Foot and Mouth disease.

The report includes a foreword by Food Standards Agency (FSA) Chair Professor Susan Jebb OBE, along with testimonials from Red Tractor Chief Executive Jim Moseley and others.



**READ
THE FULL
REPORT**



Gill Barrow,
Technical Manager



**DOWNLOAD
SUMMARY
BROCHURE**



Sarah-Jane Godfrey,
Technical Manager



Simon Williams,
Technical Manager



About AIC Services leaflet

A new leaflet explaining how AIC Services' range of Trade Assurance Schemes and professional services bring confidence to UK food and feed supply chains has been published.

AIC Services manages a range of services, including Trade Assurance Schemes and professional registers recognised by the UK Government as essential means to underpin feed and food safety alongside fertiliser security.

The leaflet includes a diagram of the UK food supply chain highlighting the stages assured by the various schemes, such as animal feed manufacturers, treated seed suppliers, and crop traders.



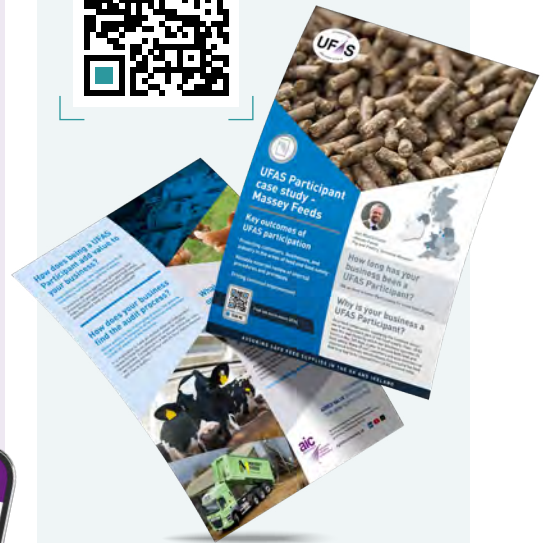
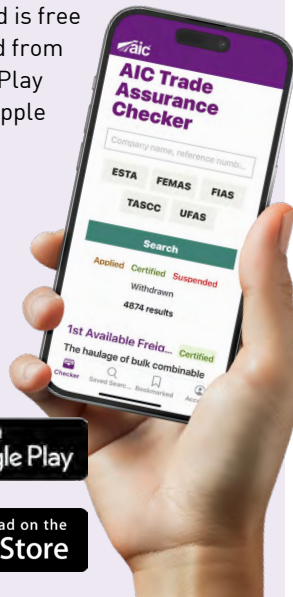
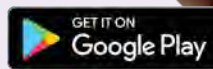
John Kelley,
Chief Operating Officer, AIC
Managing Director, AIC Services

AIC launches new Trade Assurance Checker App

A new AIC Trade Assurance Checker app is now available for download on iOS and Android devices.

Designed to complement the existing Trade Assurance Checker on AIC's website, the app brings greater accessibility and convenience to users and is free to download from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

AIC TRADE ASSURANCE CHECKER FREE TO DOWNLOAD



UFAS case study published

Read the latest Trade Assurance Scheme case study with UFAS Participant Massey Feeds sharing the value the scheme brings to its business.

To express an interest in featuring your business as a case study for FEMAS, FIAS, TASCC, or UFAS, email enquiries@agindustries.org.uk.

AIC website – set up personal preferences on login

Did you know that you can update your personal preferences and opt-in options via your profile on AIC's website? When logging in by clicking the icon in the top right corner, click on 'Edit profile' and 'Contact Preferences' to select the topics which are of interest to you. You can also choose how you wish to be contacted and tailor your opt-in preferences for Member briefings. Go to www.agindustries.org.uk/log-in



Tracy Smith,
Membership Manager

KEY DATES

AIC Scotland Spring Meetings Perth - 30 April

AIC AGM 8 October

AIC Services AGM 15 October

AIC Fertiliser Dinner York - 6 November

AIC Dinner & Conference 2025 Peterborough - 11-12 November

AIC Scotland Meetings & Dinner Glasgow - 27 November

AIC Seed Trade Dinner York - 4 December

2025



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