

JOURNAL

Spring 2024 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



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General Election
Manifesto 2024

What food
supply chain
businesses need
from the next
UK Government

Productivity | Sustainability | Competitiveness

**AIC launches General
Election 2024 priorities**

**Precision breeding
progress in Scotland**

**Digital Passport for
Combinable Crops latest**

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An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

A General Election will almost certainly happen this year – the only question is when exactly. In readiness, AIC has developed the following manifesto priorities: Ensuring a standardisation of sustainability metrics, delivering on the “Powering Productivity for Sustainable UK Food Security” report recommendation of an independent UK Food Security Committee, and addressing policy divergence between the UK and EU, as well as within the UK home nations.

I encourage all Members to meet with prospective MPs as their decisions will impact your business in the future. This is your chance to use AIC’s manifesto to explain the value of the agri-supply industry to UK agriculture and to get across the asks of a future Government.

AIC work on the Digital Passport for Combinable Crops continues, with the consultation on the business case bringing forward a wide range of views and comments, as well as questions on the accuracy of some figures. These will be considered carefully by the Development and Data groups in the coming weeks.

As you’ll see throughout the pages of this Journal, AIC continues to ensure your voice is heard on these and many other important issues.

Robert Sheasby, Chief Executive, AIC

AIC launches General Election 2024 priorities

Following consultation with AIC Committees and a survey of Members, AIC has prepared its Manifesto and priorities for a General Election this year. These are:

- 1 A considered Government approach to UK food security and land use (using the AIC-commissioned “Powering Productivity for Sustainable Food Security” report); seeking to implement an independent, statutory UK Food Security Committee.
- 2 Addressing divergence in policy and technical standards between GB and the EU/NI and urging Government to seek an SPS/ veterinary agreement with the EU.
- 3 A consistent approach to sustainability reporting in the food supply chain

AIC has prepared the election document, which will be sent to all prospective parliamentary candidates and stakeholders and also made available to Members.



Scan the QR code to view the full Election 2024 manifesto >>

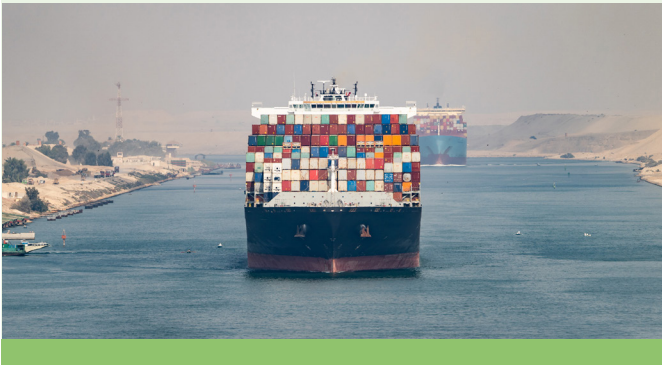


Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

Government briefed on Red Sea trade disruption

AIC has briefed the Government and shadow ministers on impacts of trade disruption in the Red Sea caused by attacks on vessels. AIC has been in discussion with its Members regarding this issue since early December 2023 and continues to monitor the situation closely.

So far, the supply chain has effectively mitigated the challenges to supply of goods and shipping. Most of the short-term disruption has impacted the supply of specific animal feed materials such as organic soya from China which is shipped via the Suez Canal.



UK extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine to 2029

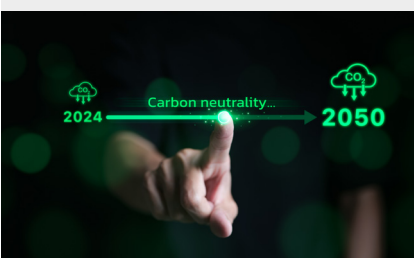
The tariff-free trade of most goods - including grain - between the UK and Ukraine has been extended to 2029.

The original trade agreement signed between the two countries in May 2022 was due to expire on 31 March 2024, but has now been extended by five years for almost all goods. Similarly, the EU is considering a 12-month extension of its own.

AIC responds to consultation on the future Climate Change Agreement scheme

AIC has worked closely with members of the Feed Manufacturing Committee and sustainability consultants SLR to respond to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero's consultation on a new six-year Climate Change Agreement scheme.

A range of points and alternative proposals were raised in relation to questions on new entrants, multiple facilities in one business, how data will be gathered, and the baseline year. A government response is expected to be published in spring 2024.



Vicky Robinson, Head of Sustainability



Andrew Pearson, Policy Manager

WRAP updates Scope 3 GHG Protocols

The [Waste & Resources Action Programme \(WRAP\)](#) is updating its guidance on Scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Measurement and Reporting Protocols for Food and Drink, originally published in 2022.

AIC is broadly supportive of the proposed updated Protocol and has responded to the [consultation](#) to seek clarity on some of the changes after seeking Member views.

Whilst the scope of the Protocols is not directly intended for use by primary producers, the principles for accounting and setting targets for emissions through the agri-supply chain are often intertwined. Members may be working within these Protocols with customers, retailers, and processors.

Members feedback on business case for Digital Passport (Combinable Crops)

Following the closure of the industry-wide consultation on the business case for a Digital Passport (Combinable Crops), AIC has collated and conveyed the range of feedback received from Members to the Leadership Group for consideration.

Making appropriate changes to the business case considering the feedback will be an important next step. A revised business case will then be examined by the cross-industry data and development groups to ensure that proposed amendments are pragmatic, feasible, and robust. AIC Members and scheme Participants will be kept up to date with developments.



Helping farmers and stakeholders understand imported crop standards

AIC has produced a guidance page on its website explaining how crops are traded globally, why crops are imported, and how crops from overseas are verified as meeting the same legal food and feed safety standards as UK-grown crops through equivalent assurance schemes, contracts, and rigorous testing.

The article is written primarily with farmers and farming stakeholders in mind to help clarify misunderstandings and dispel misinformation on this topic, and can be shared by Members. An [animated video](#) has also been created to further aid understanding.



Reassuring the industry on spring seed supply

In January, AIC met with the British Society of Plant Breeders (BSPB) and the National Farmers Union (NFU) to discuss an alleged lack of spring seed availability.

Poor weather caused a surge in demand for spring seed as farmers seek to replant areas of damaged winter-planted crops. Demand pressures had been compounded by erratic ordering trends.

AIC worked with Members to establish the facts and monitor processing progress, reassuring farming stakeholders, government, and the press that the certified seed sector was able to meet the high demand in time for spring drilling.



Rose Riby,
Head of Arable Marketing and Seed

National Action Plan and the GB PPP regime

The National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides (NAP) is to be published “in due course” according to Farming Minister Mark Spencer MP.

Publication of the NAP has long been anticipated, and AIC and industry are keen to see what measures the Government proposes to deliver its aims. AIC understands that the development of the GB plant protection product (PPP) regime will go hand in hand with the NAP.



Hazel Doonan,
Head of Crop Protection & Agronomy



Renewal of approval of glyphosate in EU

The renewal of approval of glyphosate in EU in December 2023 has potential implications for product authorisations in Northern Ireland.

EU member states now have autonomy to introduce mitigation measures on the use of glyphosate products as they consider necessary based on risk assessments. In addition, pre-harvest uses as a harvest aid are not permitted.

The Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) has advised AIC that there are no immediate plans to amend glyphosate labels destined for the Northern Ireland market to reflect these changes. However, as the EU and GB PPP regimes continue to diverge, we can expect these differences to continue.

AIC is lobbying across all sectors to highlight to the Government the impacts of divergence on AIC Members’ businesses and the sector more widely.

Derogation for feed mills impacted by organic soya expeller shortage

Following AIC’s lobbying work with organic certification bodies, the Government granted derogations on a mill-by-mill basis to feed businesses affected by a short-term lack of availability of organically certified soya expeller caused by Red Sea disruption.

With ships passing through the Suez Canal at a heightened risk of attack from Houthi rebels in Yemen, international shipping lines re-routed vessels, impacting delivery times.

Feed companies are required to supply, via their certification bodies, detailed information to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to secure derogations to temporarily use non-GM soyabean meal in their feeds.



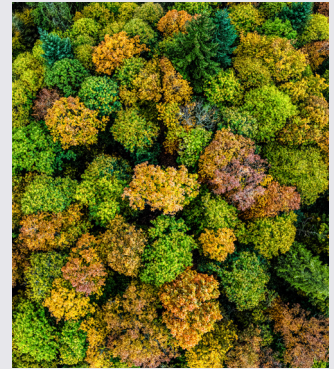
James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed

AIC hosts webinar on UK Forest Risk Commodities Regulation and EU Deforestation Regulation

In February, AIC Members joined a webinar on forthcoming legislation covering the UK Forest Risk Commodities Regulation (FRC) and the EU Deforestation Regulation.

Defra provided an overview of the Regulation and provided some details on what to expect from the secondary legislation. AIC gave attendees a summary of how the legislation might affect Members and outlined proposals for a soya and palm standard designed to help Members demonstrate compliance with the legislation.

European trade associations COCERAL and FEFAC presented an overview of the EU Deforestation Regulation, highlighting the obligations for operators and traders under this Regulation, as well as the outstanding compliance, implementation, and logistical challenges that need addressing.



UK follows Europe on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism introduction

The UK Government intends to introduce a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism in 2027 to reduce the risk of “carbon leakage”, following a year behind the EU timetable. It is likely that if this includes fertiliser, it will closely follow the EU scheme for reasons of alignment with Emissions Trading Schemes and current benchmarking.

CBAM charges would have a tapered introduction payable at a rate of one-tenth of the eventual full tariff increasing each year between 2027 and 2036, when the full charge would take effect.

There are significant risks that World Trade Organisation rules may be breached, and that costs of imported fertiliser materials could be inflated by up to £100/tonne in 2036 (based on today’s carbon price).

Questions arise as to the exact details of the scheme which are to be consulted upon in 2024, and the impact on the profitability and competitiveness of UK farming as a result of the imposition of this additional cost on a critical input material.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser

Welcome step forward on precision breeding in Scotland

In a welcome step forward, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is assessing the impacts of gene editing policy developments in England and the EU, with a view to developing advice and future policy options for consideration by the FSS Board this summer.

In Scotland, gene editing is currently regulated under GMO regulations. The FSS recognises that the current regulatory regime has not kept pace with scientific developments, and it is now exploring the key issues around precision breeding alongside Scottish Government officials.

Part of this work will include engaging with AIC Scotland and other stakeholders. The FSS, along with the FSA, have also carried out consumer research to better understand awareness and attitudes regarding precision breeding. The research has shown a marked increase in support for precision-bred products which can have a range of consumer benefits.

In March, AIC Scotland is meeting with FSS officials to discuss their work in this area.



Ian Muirhead,
AIC Scotland Policy Manager

SFS talks with Welsh Conservatives leader at Carmarthen feed mill

The [Welsh Conservative Party](#) leader [Andrew RT Davies MS](#) visited an AIC Member feed mill on 15 February to discuss priorities for UK agri-supply businesses and wider agriculture in Wales.

Co-ordinated by AIC Cymru, the visit was kindly hosted by Member business ForFarmers at its animal feed manufacturing site in Carmarthen. During the visit, Mr Davies acknowledged and supported the industry's concerns over the Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) policy.

The Welsh Government's consultation on the plans closed on 7 March. Responding on behalf of its Members, AIC Cymru is clear that it cannot support the proposals in their current form as the economic impact on Welsh agriculture is unacceptable.



Andrew RT Davies MS centre, Michael Muncey right



 SCAN ME

Scan the QR code to watch the visit

Constructive talks were had with the Leader of the Opposition in Wales on the need for an in-depth economic impact assessment of the SFS. The new Welsh farm payment scheme is set to be introduced in 2025.



Michael Muncey, AIC Cymru Policy Manager

Seminars on updated FEMAS, TASC, and UFAS standards for scheme Participants

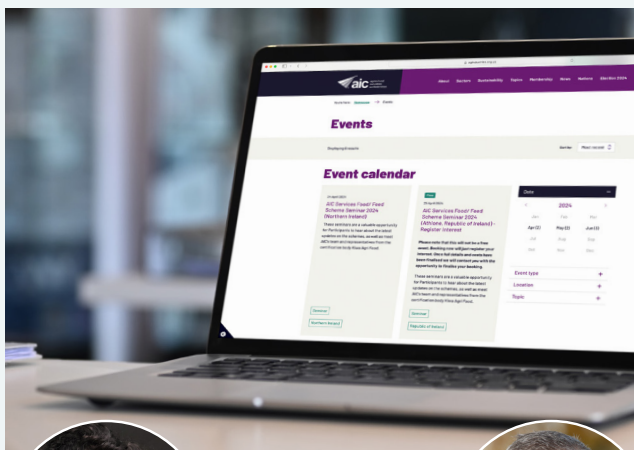
With the launch of the updated FEMAS, TASC, and UFAS standards on 1 June 2024, AIC Services is hosting a series of seminars across the UK and Ireland to inform scheme Participants of the changes, help them prepare, and answer their questions.

These seminars are a valuable opportunity for scheme Participants to hear about the latest updates on the schemes, as well as meet AIC's team and representatives from the certification body Kiwa Agri-Food.

Seminar tickets cost £60 + VAT. For full details and to book, go to www.agindustries.org.uk/events-calendar.html.

Last year, AIC Services held industry-wide consultations on updates to these trade assurance scheme Standards, with clauses aligned to develop a common set of requirements and wording, aiding greater understanding amongst Participants.

Following an extensive review process, the updated Standards for FEMAS, TASC, and UFAS have now been submitted to the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) for review.



Gill Barrow, Technical Manager



Simon Williams, Technical Manager

UKFFPA 10-year anniversary

The value the former foods bring to the animal feed sector has been highlighted in a special publication released to mark 10 years of the UK Former Foodstuffs Processors Association (UKFFPA).

The commemorative 10-year anniversary publication includes a look back at how and why the UKFFPA was formed, its vital role in helping feed livestock while minimising environmental impacts, and the industry support it has attracted since 2013.

An affiliate of AIC, the UKFFPA represents businesses in the former foodstuffs sector which add value to the food supply chain by converting former foods into animal feed, providing nutritious feed ingredients while reducing food waste and carbon emissions.



Scan the QR code to view and download the publication >>



David Moss,
Technical Manager



Promoting FAR and FAA at Dairy-Tech

In early February, AIC Services exhibited at the Dairy-Tech event. Technical Managers Sue and Roberta were on hand to speak with show attendees about the benefits of the Feed Adviser Register (FAR) and the value of the Forage Analysis Assurance (FAA) Group.



Sue Whittington,
Technical Manager



Roberta Reeve,
Technical Manager



AIC Services strengthens team with new Technical Manager

AIC Services is pleased to have recruited Sarah-Jane Godfrey as a new Technical Manager based at the Peterborough office.

Sarah-Jane joined the team in January and is responsible for the support of the assurance schemes, as well as the delivery of agri-supply technical projects. She brings a wealth of practical experience having held a range of technical, nutritionist, and commercial roles during her 25-year career in the animal feed and pet food industry.



John Kelley,
Chief Operating Officer

Dates for the diary

AIC Scotland Meeting
Perth – 24 April 2024

AIC Fertiliser Dinner
York – 7 November 2024

AIC Dinner & Conference
Peterborough – 12-13 November 2024



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