

# AIC JOURNAL

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WORKING IN SUPPORT OF MODERN, SUSTAINABLE, COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

## RATS!

There is a feeling of déjà vu as once again EU bureaucracy threatens to take vital tools away from the industry; and with every sector of AIC membership threatened.

Having battled through the challenges of pesticide regulation, the revision of the Biocides Directive has the potential to remove 95% of rodenticides (the anticoagulants) used in the UK because a clause in the draft legislation excludes them and other pest control product types from a derogation.

The derogation would permit their use if it could be shown that not using them would be a greater risk to human health and the environment. This clause also applies to products used to control birds, fish, snails, feed and food area disinfectants, repellents and attractants.

As all these biocides have no common chemistry, the clause does appear to be discriminatory.

### Every grain store and feed mill is threatened

The withdrawal of effective rodent control is more than just a threat to those who supply rodenticides. Every grain store and feed mill is threatened by rats and mice as well as every farm.

It's not the quantity of grain that rodents eat that's the problem, it's their potential to contaminate grain and feeding stuffs. A study showed that whilst rodents ate 4.4% of a bulk grain sample they contaminated 70% with urine and faeces.

### Impossible challenge without effective control

Given that animal feed manufacturers are required to produce safe, wholesome produce and that rodents are responsible for transmitting Leptospirosis (Weils Disease) and Toxoplasmosis, both of which impact on reproduction in pigs and cattle as well as Salmonella, it seems an impossible challenge without effective rodent control.

And the challenges go beyond the agricultural industry. Homes, offices and



even supermarket retailers depend on, and in some cases are required to take effective pest control measures. That is why AIC is campaigning against the latest threat to our industry emerging from Brussels.

We are ensuring we brief all relevant MEPs ahead of the vote in June to highlight the vital role that rodenticides play in keeping the whole foodchain free of contamination, loss, and the threat of disease. We are also engaging with like-minded trade bodies across the food and feed supply chain to ensure their voices join with ours to highlight the threat.

Various media headlines over the years have said no-one in the UK is more than a few yards away from a rat. Would you like to imagine how much more numerous and closer they would be without effective control measures?

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# AIC policy document welcomed by industry stakeholders



**Jim Paice, the new Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, and AIC Policy Manager Charlie Battle.**

AIC's new policy document which aims to ensure that the voice of the agricultural supply industry is heard loud and clear by Government has received a positive response.

Prepared ahead of the General

Election, the four-page document entitled 'Policy – an AIC view on priorities for food and agriculture' sets out the main concerns AIC believes the Government should address to ensure the entire UK food

supply chain remains competitive.

It covers four areas that AIC see as key to the industry's future, including productive sustainable agriculture, leading the European agenda, enhancing supply chain dynamics, and leading the food science vision.

The document was issued to all of the key political parties and stakeholders well in advance of the election being called shortly after Easter. It has already yielded valuable dialogue with officials and MEPs from other European Member States.

Charlie Battle, AIC's Policy Manager, said: "We have used this document to proactively engage with all the relevant UK ministers and their shadow opponents in the main political parties during the pre-election campaign, and will continue to share it with those stakeholders with whom we work to ensure a holistic approach emerges from the food chain."

## AIC Scotland strengthens links with NFUS

A meeting between AIC Scotland, NFUS Scotland (NFUS), Scottish Government & QMS proved to be hugely worthwhile with symmetry identified between AIC and NFUS in a number of significant areas, including CAP Reform, Climate Change, zero tolerance of GM feed and research and development.

It was agreed that the two organisations would continue to work closely to promote specific policies in the future and further meetings were scheduled in 2010.

Meanwhile, the 2010 Feed Compounders Dinner was held at the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld on 16 March and yet again boasted a strong attendance. The event saw the incoming AIC Scotland Feed Sector Chairman, Ian Oliver, formally address the feed industry for the first time. AIC

Policy Manager, Charlie Battle, then gave an address on behalf of AIC Scotland on the key high level policy issues affecting the industry.

The 2010 AIC Scotland Annual Meeting was held in Perth on the 13th April and attendance was typically healthy for the packed cross sector programme and three sector-specific meetings. Ralph MacLeod, of Galloway & MacLeod, was re-elected to serve as chairman of AIC Scotland for a further term. Mr MacLeod originally took up the post in 2007.

Ian Oliver, of Carrs Billington, succeeds Ian Henderson as chairman of the feed sector while Joe Harper, from Dods of Haddington, and Ian Keith, of Frontier, were both re-elected to chair the seed and arable sectors respectively.

Mr MacLeod said: "Scotland's



**Ralph MacLeod has been elected to serve as chairman of AIC Scotland for a further term**

agricultural industry faces a number of challenges and AIC Scotland is determined to play its part in helping to achieve a profitable and sustainable industry. I must pay tribute to the work of Ian Henderson for the feed sector and welcome Ian Oliver as his replacement".

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## Agreement close on the storage of AN on tarmac



After a decade of debate, agreement on storing ammonium nitrate (AN) on tarmac has nearly been achieved, writes Eileen Pullinger:

AIC is delighted to have reached agreement with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on an action plan to minimise the safety risks of storing AN fertilisers on asphalt – more commonly known as tarmac.

To reach this agreement AIC successfully demonstrated that AN stored on tarmac, which contains bitumen, a flammable substance, presents no additional risk in terms of increased intensity and propagation of fire, toxic fume emissions, deflagration to detonation, shock initiation and explosion, compared with AN stored on concrete.

An AIC Asphalt Working Group has worked tirelessly on this issue and has conducted literature reviews, small and medium-scale thermal stability tests, mathematical modelling and prepared a quantified risk assessment.

Large-scale testing was also carried out at the Health and Safety Laboratory at Buxton. All this work, together with consultation and meetings with UNIFA, the French Fertiliser Trade Association, which conducted its own tests, convinced the working group that there was no substantive evidence to suggest that

tarmac floors were unsuitable for storing fertilisers.

Despite all this work, HSE remained concerned, particularly for flooring with high levels of bitumen.

### AIC action plan

As a precautionary measure, AIC agreed to formulate an action plan to address bitumen content within tarmac inside covered storage areas where AN above 28% N is stored.

AIC has now asked companies storing straight AN to provide documentary evidence by the end September 2010 of bitumen levels inside their AN stores. Companies without the necessary documentary evidence have been asked to undertake sampling, and guidance on this is available on the AIC website.

Companies with bitumen levels higher than 12% have to resurface the flooring by 2015 while those whose stores have bitumen levels of between 9% and 12% have a longer timescale, yet to be decided, for replacing flooring.

The process has taken longer than expected but all the time and effort has nearly paid off with costly and onerous legislation potentially avoided. However, across the Channel the news is not so good as new legislative restrictions on asphalt flooring will apply in France from 2011.

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As the wheels of Westminster Government get into gear, I recall with relief how much common ground the Conservatives and Liberal

Democrats had on rural policy in their individual manifestos.

The coming weeks will see us establishing new contacts with those in power in the relevant departments. I intend to ensure that our issues, as the agricultural supply industry, are clearly heard as ministers get to grips with their portfolios. Of course, the task is easier because we have actively engaged with all the major parties over recent years – both those in Government and in opposition.

Whilst I am sure we will be heard, it is clear that the strategic focus of the new coalition Government is on economic policy. Neither Defra, nor DECC will be immune from cuts when the "emergency budget" is unveiled.

Therefore, I do not hold out a lot of hope for any significant investment in agriculture.

Against this rather gloomy backdrop what we will actively lobby for is freedom to act. Through innovation, economic activity and knowledge transfer the agricultural supply industry has already demonstrated that it is able to play a valuable role in building a sustainable countryside. However, we cannot continue to do this if we are fettered by the chains of bureaucracy and unwieldy regulation.

And, perhaps with our growing experience of coalition in tackling climate change and the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, we may even have a few lessons for Messrs Cameron and Clegg?

David Caffall

Chief Executive, AIC

# 112,000 sample soil analysis to prove valuable for industry



Hard facts on soil nutrient status are now available thanks to the recently established Professional Agricultural Analysis Group

(PAAG), writes Jane Salter:

The group, chaired by AIC on behalf of the industry's nutrient management partnership, has published its first collation of soil analysis data from laboratories around the UK and can be found at: [www.nutrientmanagement.org](http://www.nutrientmanagement.org). The information will be invaluable to FACTS Qualified Advisers, helping them to demonstrate the value of soil analysis and provide farmer customers with trends in soil analysis data.

The first report is based on over 112,000 samples taken in 2008-09. Key messages include:

- Only 29% of samples were at target indices of 2 for phosphate (P); -2 for potassium (K)
- 27% of samples were below the target index for P
- 38% of samples were below the target index for K
- 29% of samples were below the target of pH6-7

All members are encouraged to use the data in their own technical literature and promotions.

Meeting target indices is important. Inadequate supply of any crop nutrient



may limit yield. In terms of Nitrogen Utilisation Efficiency (NUE) optimising production will reduce the potential for losses of nutrients to water or as ammonia or GHGs to the atmosphere.

More soils are above target indices than below even though the levels are gradually declining. Overall, 44% of sampled soils were over the target index for P, although additional evidence shows that the percentage at the highest levels is falling. In addition 33% of soils are above the K target index. The proportion of soils above target P indices was especially high in Northern Ireland, Scotland and north west

England – areas where manures are regularly applied.

The report suggests further potential for spatial redistribution of manures. Applying manures where fields are below target indices and allowing indices that are above target to run down will lead to overall improvements in nutrient management planning and accuracy of application in field.

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## Lobbying continues for early resolution on GM imports

In the formative days of the new European Commission there was a strong indication that it was only a matter of time before a technical solution to the low level presence of non-EU authorised GM events in imported feed materials would be proposed.

However, this optimism has quickly evaporated and it is understood that

cabinet officials at the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) have indicated discussions on the proposal have been postponed until the end of the year.

DG SANCO will not move forward until assured of a qualified majority vote and has not decided if this would require leaving food out of the



proposal. AIC is continuing to lobby for an early resolution and will keep members apprised of any developments.

# Trust – a vital element in addressing climate change

Acceptance of an industry-led approach to addressing climate change, rather than heavy-handed regulation, has been widely welcomed.

AIC Chief Executive David Caffall was among the speakers representing the industry at the launch of Defra's Climate Change Plan, hosted by then secretary of state Hilary Benn. The event focused on how agriculture working in collaboration can look to address the complex challenges of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and land management.

"I believe what we are launching is a robust plan for action that addresses the complex and multiple challenges of the real world in which we have to live," said Mr Caffall.

"On the one hand, we need to address mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, while on the other hand, our industry remains tasked with achieving sustainable production. In plain man's language that means: 'growing ever more food and fuel while protecting and enhancing the environment and countryside in which we operate.'"

## Realistic goals

The action plan produced collaboratively by AIC, CLA, NFU and others does just that. It is a plan based on evolution, not revolution, of farming systems with realistic goals for greenhouse gas mitigation.

However, launch attendees were also left in no doubt that publication of the action plan was just the start of the process. And while welcoming government acceptance of a voluntary way forward, Mr Caffall spelled out the need for significant government support during implementation.

"First, Government funding is needed to help fill any gaps in delivering new techniques and advice to farms. The supply industry recognises that we have a unique role in not only delivering goods and services to farm businesses, but also the guidance that will enable



implementation of this action plan.

However, we cannot fund it all.

"Another challenge for Government is to provide us with expertise in data analysis that will allow us to measure progress against the goals that have been set.

"A third challenge is one that faces us all. The whole industry has to commit to operate in a well coordinated partnership. The industry has worked on the plan together; I trust we can work as closely on implementation with Government support."

AIC is fully committed to this action plan and looks forward to the partnership between members, academia, levy bodies and others to realise the efficiencies on-farm which will contribute to the 3 million carbon savings that the whole industry must achieve.

There is no room for a 'leave it to others' attitude. Government has placed trust in an industry-led initiative. However, should the industry fail to deliver then the spectre of heavy regulation still looms to ensure the targets of Climate Change legislation are met.

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## How agriculture plans to contribute 3 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e savings by 2020:

- Independently, without measures such as taxes, legislation, cap and trade
- Jointly, with all key bodies and companies of agriculture working in partnership in the same direction and in support of a consensus plan
- With Government funding to fill gaps in advice and overcome barriers and also for additional data analysis work
- Through continuous and accelerated improvement in farm efficiencies – reducing emissions per kg of production (grain, milk, meat etc) by refining the management of soils, fertilisers, feeds and perhaps most importantly manures – savings through on-farm AD are included in the 3 million tonnes
- We are not assuming new technologies – crop varieties, ability to develop ruminant diets or breeds - will be available before 2020
- We will collate and report the good effect of all existing industry campaigns and initiatives to reducing GHGs
- State the limitations of managing natural processes in the soil and of livestock and the uncertainties and difficulties in their management and measurement
- Revise actions in the light of new evidence
- Decide what parameters we need to measure or estimate to show relative improvement
- Set-up a clear process for AIC members and others to get their good work acknowledged in the delivery
- Secure support for members and others to access available funds against a new business case for contributing to fill the gaps in advice/ good farming practice



## AIC proposal to address traceability of PPPs along the supply chain



AIC has put forward a simple proposal to address traceability of professional plant protection products (PPPs) along the supply chain, writes Hazel Doonan.

The proposal is also designed to answer Government concern on the use of professional PPPs by untrained users.

This is in response to the Defra consultation on the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive, which looks to address the use of PPPs by untrained or amateur users.

Within the consultation The Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) proposed that sales of professional PPPs should be restricted to persons trained in their use and this could be achieved by purchasers providing evidence of a user certificate number to distributors.

On the face of it this may seem a tidy solution, however it does not consider the complexity of the PPP supply chain or the fact that there are 13 different certificates of competence that users may hold depending on the application equipment used.

More importantly it does not provide the solution to the issue it aims to address. Linking the sale of professional PPPs to their use ignores the fact that it is the purchaser who decides who applies the product.

In the case of a protracted supply chain, as is common in the amenity sector, the local authority purchasing the product for application by a contractor will not necessarily know, when the product is purchased. Neither will they know which contracting business will be hired let alone which individual within that business will actually apply the product on the day.

### **Costs could be significant**

The consultation also assumed that the cost to distributors of implementing a system to record a certificate number would be zero. Individual AIC members have quoted figures in the tens of thousands of pounds, depending on the size of their businesses, to purchase or amend software, train staff, acquire the information from every purchaser of PPPs and keep this database up to date.

AIC members have indicated their willingness to implement a vigorous

communication campaign to highlight to users the changing certification requirements as well as assisting with user training. AIC feels that this, together with increased training and a tougher stance on certification and audits in the amenity sector, will go much further to address the issue than the consultation proposals.

Legislation currently requires that all users of professional PPPs should hold the appropriate certificate of competence or have undertaken training under Grandfather rights or be supervised. This is checked under cross compliance and farm assurance audits in the agricultural sector.

AIC proposes that Government increase compliance checks. In particular, focussing on high risk sectors and those falling outside of audits. The current legislation must also be enforced to prevent professional PPP use by untrained individuals, rather than introduce additional costly and ineffective legislation.

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# Police warning to hauliers about deliberately induced road collisions



The TASCsure insurance provider, Bluefin, has been informed by the Metropolitan Police that there are a number of UK regions experiencing a high

level of deliberately induced road collisions, writes Garry Rudd.

Organised criminal groups are targeting companies which operate vehicle fleets, by deliberately causing collisions in order to defraud their insurers. Operation Catcher is a Metropolitan Police initiative, intended to identify when such an offence happens, prosecute the offenders and, as a result, reduce the incidence of this type of crime.

If the driver genuinely believes they have been the victim of an induced collision then they should take the following action:

1. Immediately call the Police on the non-emergency number 0300 123 1212 and say that you believe you have been involved in a deliberately induced collision - give the index number of the other vehicle.
2. You MUST tell the operator that you need an OPERATION CATCHER response.
3. Make a mental note of who was driving; it is very important you can identify this person to the police.



4. Take details of ALL occupants - you can say that this is company policy because of recent experience of personal injury claims.

5. Make a note of the car that drove off and make a note of where you first saw it - this will help the police trace it later.

A police officer will contact the driver and/or the company over the following days to pursue the investigation.

For more information on this initiative contact the Road Crime Intelligence Unit on 0207 161 1011 Monday to Friday.

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## TASCC seminars a success



More than 200 delegates attended the ever-popular TASCC seminars during February and March in Bristol, Peterborough, Wetherby, Perth and Belfast.

On the agenda were such topics as the new Salmonella code of practice, changes to the TASCC codes for 2010/2011 and HACCP. The seminars run every other year.

## TASCC Codes update

The TASCC codes are currently being reviewed and finalised in time for the 2010/11 scheme year.

Changes include: extending the scheme review period to every other year; although an annual audit will still be required; the addition of Naturally Occurring Prohibited Substances (NOPS) to the sensitive list; simple processing of combinable crops; the new Salmonella code; and changes to haulage sub contractor rules.

The new codes will be issued in late-June.



# Agribusiness 2011 will look at 'The Big Picture'



Agribusiness 2011 will take place in Peterborough on Wednesday, November 10th and look at how agribusiness can

meet the needs of the food and agriculture supply chain, writes John Kelley.

This year's conference will focus on some of the specific campaigns that AIC is managing on behalf of its members and the impact that these have on businesses.

Confirmed speakers include Allan Wilkinson, head of agriculture at HSBC, and Julian Little, Chairman of the Agriculture and Biotechnology Council.

AIC sector heads will explore the effects of the Campaign for the Farmed Environment, the Water Framework Directive and GM authorisations, while leading speakers from the political, economic and scientific fields will be present to discuss some of the key issues on biofuels, climate change and succession planning that affects members.

John Kelley, AIC's Chief Operating Officer, said: "This conference aims to deliver the 'big picture' for the agricultural supply chain. It will be invaluable for those involved in managing



AIC member companies both at board level and those developing their management career. In addition, it provides an opportunity for those involved in governments and regulatory

bodies to hear first hand, issues from the supply industry's perspective."

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## Know your FQAs

The FACTS Qualified Adviser network has never been more important. First introduced to farmers in the 1990s, then part of farm assurance and now in 2010, central to all of industry's activities: CFE, CSF and Tried & Tested are at the heart of every company or individual offering advice on crop nutrient management.

A new brochure has been published to explain all that industry has achieved in developing FACTS. AIC members, farmer customers and stakeholders are invited to use this new brochure, complete with case studies written by FQAs themselves,

to demonstrate to policy makers, regulators and others that industry advice is up-to-the mark and constantly evolving to meet tomorrow's needs.

For pdf copies see the fertiliser sector pages of [www.agindustries.org.uk](http://www.agindustries.org.uk). Limited stock of brochures will be held at AIC and industry partners: CLA, FWAG, LEAF and NFU and Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers.

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