

Facing the challenges ahead



One area that Ian Muirhead has been asked to enhance is our influence with Scottish Government and he has succeeded in getting alongside Head of Agricultural

Policy, Dr John Kerr, as well as securing a meeting with Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing. As a result, I believe we have real opportunities to influence future policy.

Nationally, AIC is actively encouraging Member company engagement with politicians locally. Here, in Scotland, where available Ian is keen to offer support.

Over the past 12 months with my commitment to the AIC Board and various other meetings, it is becoming clear that I cannot support Ian alone. He will be reaching out to sector chairs and AIC Scotland Members for support or advice prior to key meetings.

Whilst I see an encouragingly bright future for AIC, there are some very real challenges, not least Member engagement and support at sector committee meetings. I encourage everyone to think who else in their businesses could get involved, particularly younger colleagues. Without input from the industry our trade body cannot succeed.

Stephen Kenyon
Chairman, AIC Scotland

AIC Scotland on critical Government working group



Robert Sheasby, Ian Muirhead, Fergus Ewing and Stephen Kenyon

Ian Muirhead will represent AIC Scotland on the newly-convened Food and Farming Production Group. The first meeting of the Group was convened at the Royal Highland Show by Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing. He said: "People are the food and farming industry's greatest resource, so I am delighted that such an array of talented, experienced and knowledgeable people has agreed to join this group.

"It will provide its views and expertise to support Scottish Government officials in making recommendations on future farming and food production policy build around the six principles set out earlier this year to Parliament.

"Scotland's landscape and climate provide us with an unrivalled natural larder. We need to develop policies which support both to ensure that our status as a high-quality producer of food is maintained and grows.

"Crucially we need an integrated approach that will ensure that Scotland's land assets play their part in responding to and mitigating the global climate emergency."

Ian will sit on the Group alongside civil servants and representatives of a wide range of food and farming organisations including NFUS, Quality Meat Scotland, and Scotland Food and Drink.

New Vice-Chairman for AIC Scotland

Robin Barron of East of Scotland Farmers has been appointed as Vice-Chairman of AIC Scotland.

Robin says: "I first attended AIC meetings when I joined East of Scotland Farmers in 2004 and have valued our Membership of the organisation ever since. Life would be much harder without the regular email briefings, bi-annual Scottish meetings, access to expert sector specific staff and the existence of pragmatic assurance schemes and contracts, not to mention the benefits of AIC lobbying activity in all its guises.

"I was pleased to chair the Arable Committee from 2015 – 2017 and it is good

to see the numbers of people involved in this committee growing steadily. By taking on this role I hope to play a small part in the ongoing success of AIC.

"A cup of coffee and a warm welcome awaits any members who are passing through Coupar Angus and have time to stop and say hello."



Ian Muirhead congratulates Robin Barron on becoming Vice Chairman

Meeting with Mike Russell



Paul Rooke, AIC Policy Manager; Mike Russell; Stephen Kenyon; Ian Muirhead.

AIC Scotland hosted a meeting with Cabinet Secretary Mike Russell at Harbro to discuss Members' concerns on a range of issues including Brexit and the continuing uncertainty which it has created.

The visit was kindly hosted by AIC Scotland Chairman Stephen Kenyon. AIC Head of Policy Paul Rooke and AIC Scotland Policy Manager Ian Muirhead were also in attendance.

Mr Russell was given a presentation on AIC Scotland, who it represents and why the agri-supply industry matters so much to the

Scottish economy. Key points raised with Mr Russell included the important economic contribution AIC members make to the rural economy and the threat that a 'no-deal' Brexit could pose to Member companies.

Policy manager Ian Muirhead outlined some of the key positive industry-led initiatives which are run by AIC including the Feed Adviser Register (FAR) and the role this and other initiatives play in contributing to government climate change targets.

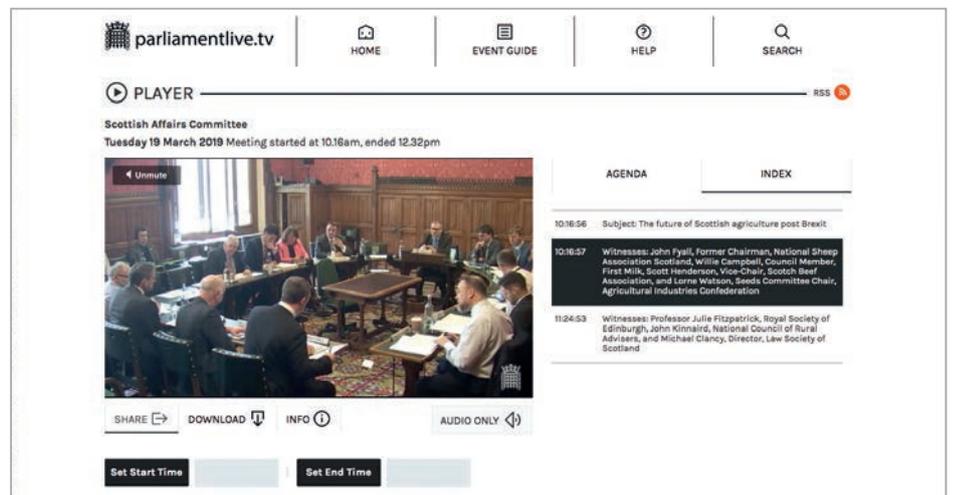
AIC Scotland makes a mark at Westminster

At the start of the year Ian Muirhead received an invitation to meet with officials from the Scotland Office based in Edinburgh, and this provided an opportunity to give them an overview of the agri-supply industry and AIC Scotland's key concerns in relation to Brexit.

One of the key issues raised was the proposed Immigration Bill and in particular the possible effects the wage thresholds may have on the availability of migrant labour, eg lorry drivers.

The meeting also led to AIC Scotland being asked to send a representative to the Westminster Scottish Affairs Committee to provide evidence on what shape future agricultural policy for Scotland should take.

Our seeds committee Chairman Lorne Watson kindly agreed to represent AIC on this occasion, which was much appreciated. A link to the evidence session can be found



here; <https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/e72f21df-957e-4644-b8fa-b053f0ce211a>
This was a great opportunity for AIC Scotland

to contribute to the debate and also to raise its profile amongst UK Parliamentarians.

Meeting with MSPs

Over the past six months Ian Muirhead has had meetings with MSPs who sit on the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy Committee. He has met with nearly all the parties' rural affairs spokespersons and the majority of members on the Rural Economy Committee.

Areas covered included a presentation on the work of AIC Scotland – what we do and why - Agrisupply matters, key policy asks and a discussion on the future direction of agricultural policy.

There is general consensus across the main political parties in Scotland that there is a continued need to support our agricultural industry, especially given the level of uncertainty surrounding the environment in which the industry may have to operate in post-Brexit.



Ian with Donald Cameron MSP, Scottish Conservative Shadow Rural Economy Secretary

AIC involved at Agriculture and Rural Development Stakeholder Meetings

The Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) stakeholder group has met twice in the past six months with key issues covered including Brexit updates and future agricultural policy. In the short-term the Government proposes to make small changes to the way in which support payments are administered with simplification of areas such as inspections, mapping and penalties.

It is proposed that a Scottish Agricultural Bill will be laid before the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2019. This legislation will not be subject to any further consultation and is designed to allow implementation of the stability and simplicity policy for delivery of farm payments until 2024, after which further primary legislation will be required for the new agricultural policy.

It is envisaged that post-2024 policy development will be informed by a new policy group made up of key stakeholders. There continues to be areas of disagreement between the administrations on certain aspects of the common frameworks proposals which need to be agreed by the end of the implementation period, ie 2020.



Funding uncertainty

There also continues to be funding uncertainty with no concrete guarantees post-2020. AIC Scotland's position is that it believes that having a multi-annual financial framework is essential. This is in line with NFUS and other stakeholder concerns.

At the most recent meeting, Scottish Government intimated that it had set up a website to provide vital information and a signposting service in the event of a no deal scenario. More info can be accessed at www.prepareforbrexit.scot.

The issue of how to deal with the effects of no-deal on the sheep sector was discussed, both NFUS and NSA are of the opinion that some form of deficiency payment may be required to underpin the market. This would require monies from Treasury.

UK Agriculture Bill

On the issue of the UK Agriculture Bill there is unlikely to be any significant movement on the Bill until the autumn or such times as a deal is agreed. It is likely that the Scottish Government will agree to UK-wide marketing standards as part of the Bill and that it is anticipated that the Scottish Parliament will give consent to approve the red meat repatriation levy which forms part of this bill.

Finally, the First Secretary at the Scottish Government EU office provided us with an update on the likely direction of the CAP, the next iteration of which runs from 2021 – 27. In the event of a deal being agreed the CAP will apply here during any transition/ implementation period.

Doddie Weir



At the AIC Scotland Dinner in Cumbernauld, Members took up a collection for the charity My Name's Doddie Foundation. At the Royal Highland a cheque for £2,170 was presented to Doddie himself. (Left to right): Robert Sheasby; Ian Muirhead; Doddie Weir; Gary Armstrong, Director of the charity; Stephen Kenyon.

Connecting with Scottish Government

Following a productive meeting with the retiring Head of Agricultural Policy at the Scottish Government, Iain Davidson, towards the back end of 2018, Iain Muirhead met with the new postholder, Dr John Kerr.

There was a wide-ranging discussion on issues raised by Scottish Committee chairs including chlorothalonil, maleic hydrazide, designated posts of entry, gene editing and food imports.

The future of agricultural policy in Scotland and the timetable for this took up a large part of the meeting. Stability and simplicity are the key policies from 2020 – 24, providing farmers with a degree of certainty, especially when faced with possibly very difficult trading

environment depending upon tariff regime, this however is caveated by the fact that only firm financial guarantees from UK Government until 2020.

Any transition period would take place in the years post-2024, and the length of this transition from the current to any future system would depend on the degree of change to support mechanisms. It is therefore envisaged that between now and 2024 new policy will be developed and piloted before being gradually implemented.

A new policy group will be set up by the Government to shape post-2024 agricultural policy.

Dates for your diary

17 October 2019

Feed Regional Meetings
Moredun Group, Penicuik

12 November 2019

Agribusiness 2020
Pre-conference supper
Peterborough

13 November 2019

Agribusiness 2020 conference
Peterborough

20 November 2019

Fertiliser Communications meeting
Edinburgh Zoo – 4.30pm

28 November 2019

AIC Scotland meeting
AIC Scotland Dinner
Cumbernauld

5 December 2019

AIC Seed Trade Dinner
Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh

Visiting Members pays dividends



(Left to right): Donald Harvey (Galloway & Macleod), Angela Crawley MP, Christina McKelvie MSP and Minister for Older People and Equalities, Iain Muirhead AIC Scotland Policy Manager.

One of the key focusses for Iain Muirhead over the past six months has been visiting Member companies and discussing any issues they may have, whilst also learning more about the industry and individual companies.

Invaluable meetings

Iain has already carried out a number of these and has plans for more, but if there are any companies which have not yet been visited, they can get in touch and arrange a visit.

Iain says: "I have found these visits to be an invaluable tool in getting to know Members and establish good working relationships. One of the key objectives which we have identified is the need to get policy makers out on site to Member businesses, and the first MP/MSP visit took place earlier this year. This was a great opportunity for the politicians to learn more

about the needs of business and to have a discussion about Brexit concerns and the role of AIC Scotland."

If you would like to invite Iain to visit you, so he can learn about your business and explain to you more about AIC and its work in Scotland, then get in touch. Iain welcomes all opportunities to meet Members.

GET IN TOUCH

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Call for mycotoxin results

For many years AIC has shared mycotoxin test results with nabim at harvest, to help determine the national mycotoxin risk level. Members are advised that the European Commission is discussing changing mycotoxin limits, so Members are strongly encouraged to enable their quality assurance teams to carry out testing, and to share results weekly throughout harvest with Arable Sector Manager Catherine Barrett at catherine.barrett@agindustries.org.uk

AIC uses the data provided to lobby for realistic mycotoxins limits, so all data submitted can directly impact legislation being formed.

All results will be welcome, and alongside DON and ZON we particularly ask for T2-HT2 results, and ergot alkaloid results when available.

Mycotoxins are expected to be discussed at Working Groups and the SCOPAFF in September, so the aim is to submit as much data from this harvest as possible.