

JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2026 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



UK-EU Summit delay
Harvest 2026: latest updates
Managing regulation change

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 **AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRIES
CONFEDERATION**



An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

2026 has presented significant challenges. The Iran conflict, the effects of which are likely to be felt into 2027, has added to uncertainty, while successive heatwaves, drought and the spread of bluetongue have affected farmers, growers and suppliers.

Politically, Westminster has a new Prime Minister, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has a new Secretary of State. Throughout the summer show season, we met with ministers from across the UK to highlight Members' priorities of supply chain resilience, inward investment and growth, EU reset, and sustainability.

The delayed UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement summit is now expected to take place in the autumn. While the detail is still awaited, AIC continues to emphasise the importance of transition periods for crop protection products and accelerated adoption processes for feed additives.

Alongside this, AIC continues to engage on the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), ensuring Members' practical interests are reflected in policy discussions.

Our focus remains on supporting growth and proportionate regulation, including through our work with the Farming and Food Partnership Board to help shape sector growth plans.

Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC

Policy and Parliamentary Engagement Update

Since spring 2026, talks between the UK and EU have moved into formal negotiations on the UK-EU reset and a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement. These negotiations were expected to conclude in late June, with details due to be announced at a joint UK-EU Summit on 22 July 2026. However, following the Prime Minister's resignation announcement, the European Commission postponed the summit. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) continues to engage with specific sectors represented by AIC, with detailed discussions ongoing. AIC Committees remain actively engaged throughout this process, and a dedicated UK-EU section of the AIC website provides relevant updates. AIC's European associations continue to be consulted on this work.

Also in June, the Government published its long-awaited 25-Year Farming Roadmap for England. This follows engagement with industry and stakeholders and draws on the Land Use Framework, Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP), Food Strategy and Carbon Budget. The Roadmap is not a detailed delivery plan with specific milestones or targets. Instead, it sets out a long-term vision for farming to 2050, alongside the actions needed to deliver it.

As part of its parliamentary engagement work, AIC hosted **Members of Parliament (MPs) on a visit to an arable farm** in June. This was part of the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Food and Farming Fellowship Programme which AIC partners with. Now in its second year, the programme enables newly elected MPs to visit different parts of the farming sector throughout the year. It also provides AIC with an opportunity to hold meaningful discussions about how the supply chain operates while building longer-term relationships. Following last year's successful event, this year's visit covered cropping decisions, storage and marketing, variety choice, market demands, and the role of advice in the use of fertiliser and crop protection inputs.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

Sustainability policy and supply chain engagement

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Window 1 opened in June for smaller farmers and those with existing Environmental Land Management (ELM) agreements. With over 75% of the budget committed by July, any remaining funding will roll into Window 2 in September, supported by an additional £50 million in drought assistance from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). AIC has continued to engage with Defra on SFI development and associated communications.

AIC's Sustainability Liaison Group (SLG) met with Defra's Agri-Net Zero team to discuss policy development and the role of mineral fertiliser and nutrient management. AIC's Sustainability Data and Reporting Working Group also met with Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to ensure the agri-supply sector's sustainability work is reflected in Defra-related projects.

At Groundswell, AIC hosted a panel featuring Bunge, the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), Nestlé and The Billington Group. This highlighted the importance of collaboration, robust data and evidence-based approaches in supporting sustainable farming and supply chains.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy
and External Affairs



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 European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC).

FEFAC represents the compound feed manufacturing industry across Europe and brings together national feed associations to promote safe, sustainable and competitive livestock feed production.

AIC works closely with FEFAC on a range of policy issues that affect UK feed businesses including trade, sustainability, animal nutrition, feed safety and regulatory developments. This collaboration helps ensure UK industry perspectives are considered in European discussions, while keeping AIC Members informed of emerging legislative and market developments.

As the UK and EU continue discussions on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement, maintaining strong links with European organisations remains important. Through its engagement with FEFAC, AIC can share practical industry expertise, exchange intelligence and contribute to discussions that support efficient trade and resilient feed supply chains. Working together helps ensure businesses across the agri-supply chain can respond to regulatory change while continuing to deliver safe, high-quality feed to livestock producers.

FOCUS



Fairness in the supply chain consultation

A review of fairness in the supply chain remained on hold following the redeployment of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) officials to other priority areas. As a result, no outcomes from the consultation have been published. AIC continues to engage and monitor developments closely, with greater clarity on next steps and potential outcomes hoped for Q4.



Scottish harvest data

Changes to the Scottish harvest sounding process in 2026 mean the Scottish Government will not publish its usual October first estimates for cereal and oilseed rape harvests. Instead, industry data will be collected directly by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) to support UK balance sheets, while final official harvest statistics remain due in December. AIC is discussing the implications and the need for a sustainable long-term solution.

DON and ZON harvest reporting

Harvest 2026 also saw Members contribute to the annual AIC deoxynivalenol (DON) and zearalenone (ZON) monitoring programme. Results indicated a generally low-risk year for mycotoxin contamination in UK wheat, while supporting industry-wide risk management and the tracking of seasonal trends.



Rose Riby,
Head of Combinable Crops and Seed

APHA plant health fee consultation

AIC worked closely with Members and industry stakeholders to respond to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) consultation on proposed plant health fee increases, highlighting the potential cost and administrative burden on businesses. Following this engagement, the seed sector welcomed the news that APHA would not proceed with the proposed increases. AIC continues to engage on future plant health policy and fee development.

Erucic acid

Following two consecutive years of strong oilseed rape yields and renewed grower interest in the crop, AIC issued guidance ahead of the 2026/27 campaign on best practice when using farm-saved seed. The guidance reinforced the importance of maintaining varietal purity, quality and traceability across the supply chain.

Plant health import checks and fees

AIC also coordinated Member feedback on proposed changes to plant health import checks and fees linked to the proposed UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement, ensuring practical industry concerns were represented in discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).



UK-EU Summit delay and glyphosate uncertainty in GB

In May, the Government **published guidance** to help businesses prepare for a potential Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement. Although not detailed, it aimed to raise awareness of likely changes across relevant sectors, including crop protection. AIC continues to engage with Government and industry stakeholders to support a practical SPS framework that provides regulatory certainty and protects supply chain competitiveness.

The UK-EU Summit, originally scheduled for 22 July [See Policy update p2] was expected to provide greater clarity on the SPS agreement and transitional arrangements for the sector. While the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) remains committed to implementation of the agreement by mid-2027, the postponement of the summit until the autumn makes this timeline increasingly challenging.



The Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) is yet to publish its consultation on the GB renewal of glyphosate. Uncertainty remains over the impact of the proposed SPS agreement and whether GB will align with the EU renewal decision. To support Members, AIC has published a glyphosate **FAQ**, while approval remains in place until 15 December 2026.

Ellie Vinnicombe,
Head of Crop Protection and Agronomy

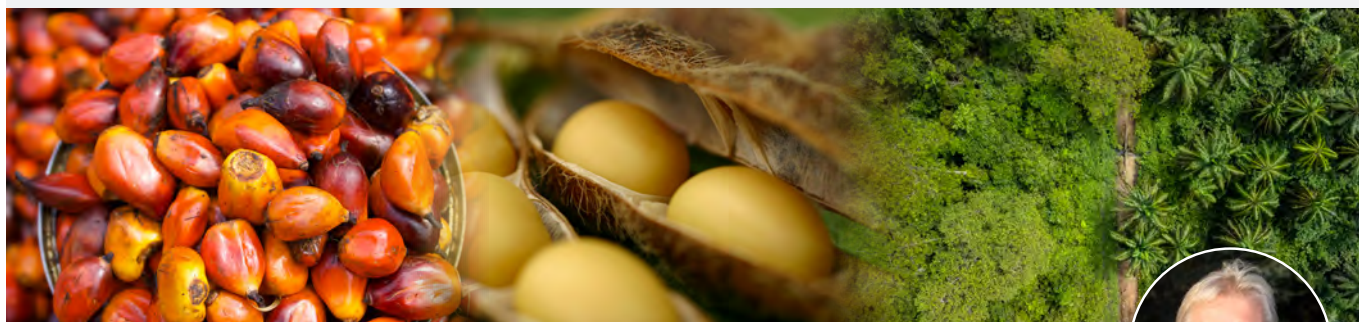


UK Government deforestation policy announcements

The UK Government has announced plans to introduce new rules in GB to tackle illegal deforestation in supply chains, with a consultation on the proposed policy expected later this year.

Businesses in scope (with a turnover of £1 million+ that use forest risk commodities) will be required to complete an annual due diligence report. This will include establishing systems, reporting on activities and collecting geolocation data. In terms of commodities covered, the regulation is expected to align more closely with the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), although it's not currently thought that forest risk commodities embedded in imported foods will fall within scope.

The Government has also confirmed that, in Northern Ireland, the EUDR will apply from 30 December 2026 and that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) will act as the competent authority for feed-related commodities, including soya and palm. AIC is anticipating meetings with the Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to better understand the detail and practical implications.



James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed



Policy and industry communications

AIC continues to engage closely with HM Treasury and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the implementation of the UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), pressing for clarity on key aspects of the scheme and engaging with the Government's CBAM Readiness Programme, including arranging discussions with the AIC Fertiliser Executive Committee.

Alongside this work, AIC has been supporting Members in raising awareness of the importance of timely fertiliser purchasing. Drawing on insights from Members and in collaboration with the farming fertiliser stakeholder group, a joint communication involving UK wide farming unions, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), Defra and other organisations has been released on **"Fertiliser Ordering: Why Timing Matters This Season"**. The message was shared with Members and the farming press, resulting in industry and national coverage.

AIC also wishes Jo Gilbertson a long and happy retirement, thanking him for his dedication and contribution to Members and the fertiliser sector and welcomes Harriet Trewin to the team.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser



Harriet Trewin,
Head of Fertiliser

AIC Scotland policy and stakeholder engagement

Under John Swinney, the Scottish National Party (SNP) secured a fifth consecutive victory in the 2026 Scottish election, although the party fell short of an outright majority. While no major changes to agricultural policy are expected, the SNP has reaffirmed its commitment to active farming, food production and the four-tier support framework. However, close attention will be paid by AIC Scotland to a policy to try and cap the price of certain foodstuffs.

AIC continue to engage with Scottish policymakers and stakeholders throughout the period, including attendance at the Royal Highland Show, the Pesticide Stakeholder Group and meetings with the Scottish Government's Brussels office. Discussions covered key issues affecting Members, including Scottish agricultural support, glyphosate regulation, the UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and precision breeding.

AIC Scotland also submitted evidence to the Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry into the Rural Support Plan, advocating for productivity, long-term regulatory certainty and greater recognition of the agri-supply sector's role in supporting Scottish agriculture and rural communities.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs





AIC Cymru policy and stakeholder engagement

AIC Cymru was present at the Royal Welsh Show, hosting a successful drinks reception in the International Pavilion and partnering with the Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW) to co-sponsor a cheese and wine reception for newly elected Senedd Members.

The Show had a positive atmosphere, supported by encouraging rhetoric and early actions from Plaid Cymru. The announcement of £1 billion over the next three years for agricultural and environmental support was welcomed, with funding redirected through the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), Universal Actions and future Optional and Collaborative Actions.

Early amendments to the SFS, including earned recognition for farms with existing veterinary plans, have been positively received. AIC Cymru also welcomes the review of farm bureaucracy, which will examine the cumulative impact of forms, inspections and regulatory requirements to identify both longer-term reforms and quick wins.

The AIC Cymru Committee also welcomed Sarah Banks, Group Head of Technical and Sustainability at Wynnstay, as a new Member.

Michael Muncey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager



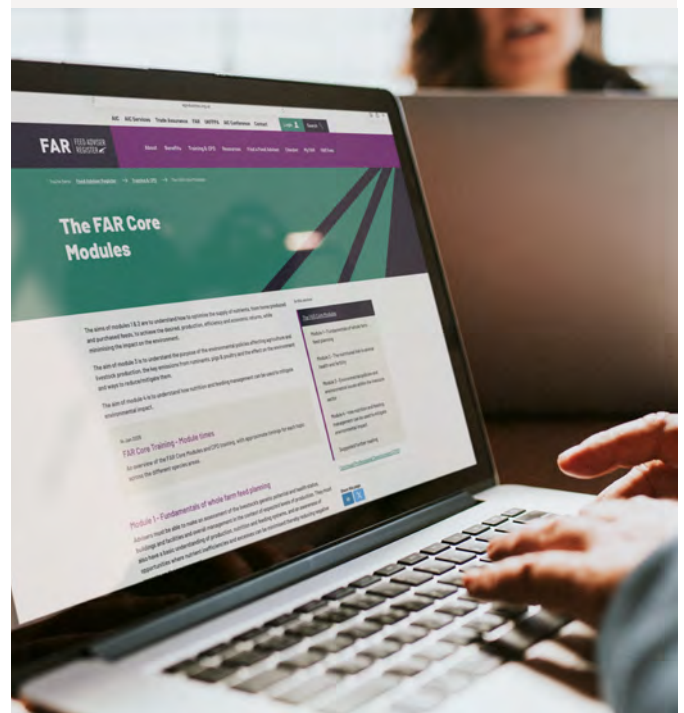
Keeping FAR training up-to-date

The Feed Adviser Register (FAR) is reviewing its core training modules to ensure registered Feed Advisers continue to provide farmers with the latest evidence-based advice.

All core Modules 1 to 4, across every livestock sector, are being updated by industry experts to reflect the latest science, legislation, feeding recommendations and best practice. Assessment questions are also being reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

Where possible, the original authors of the training materials are involved in the review. Where they are no longer available, experts from the same organisations have been invited to contribute. Module 3 is also being digitally updated to provide a more consistent and user-friendly learning experience.

Once complete, the refreshed training will help ensure FAR-registered Feed Advisers have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality advice. This will give farmers confidence that the guidance they receive is current, practical and supportive of productive, efficient and sustainable livestock farming.



FAR FEED ADVISER REGISTER

Sue Whittington,
Technical Manager



Non-conformance data report

AIC publishes a report to support Participants in improving audit processes and enhancing compliance with the Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops (TASCC) Standard. The report is published quarterly on the TASCC webpage and provides an overview of non conformances raised across each standard, including the General Section.

The data is reviewed by the TASCC Working Group, which includes scheme participants, stakeholders, the certification body and AIC representatives. Non-conformances are categorised and presented visually, highlighting the ten most frequently identified issues. A detailed table also shows the relevant clauses and the frequency with which they occur, helping participants identify areas requiring attention.



Gill Barrow,
Technical Manager

FAA Group completes successful proficiency testing year

The Forage Analysis Assurance (FAA) Group completed another successful silage Proficiency Testing Scheme year, with strong performance from 15 laboratories across the UK and Ireland helping ensure confidence in forage analysis results. The group also continues to develop and refine its Near-Infrared (NIR) calibrations for grass, maize and whole crop silages. To raise awareness of its work, FAA Group and AIC recently hosted the Irish Farmers Journal at The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in Northern Ireland and attended the UK Dairy Day in September.



Sarah-Jane Godfrey,
Technical Manager

More AIC Conference speakers confirmed for 2026

More speakers have been announced for the AIC Dinner and Conference 2026, taking place on 10-11 November 2026 in Peterborough. This year's theme, *Delivering for the Agri-Food Supply Chain in a Changing World*, will bring together leading voices from politics, industry, trade associations and the wider food and farming sector to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing UK agribusiness.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Tom Bradshaw, President, National Farmers' Union (NFU)
- Alexander Döring, Secretary General, European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC)
- Garlich von Essen, Chief Executive, Euroseeds
- Vanessa Adamson, Retail and Consumer Insight Manager, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)
- Tom Richardson, Managing Director, Warrendale Group Ltd



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



The Conference will be chaired by journalist and broadcaster Anna Jones, and representatives from the Addington Fund will also take part in the dinner programme. For more details and to book tickets, go to www.aicconference.org.uk

KEY DATES 2026

AGM 7 October

AIC Fertiliser Dinner Manchester – 5 November

AIC Dinner and Conference 2026 Peterborough – 10-11 November

AIC Scotland Meetings and Dinner 25 November

AIC Seed Trade Dinner Edinburgh – 3 December

Few Seats Remaining



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