

JOURNAL

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



**Scotland and Wales
election outcomes**

**AIC joins Farming and
Food Partnership Board**

**UK-EU SPS
agreement update**

 **aic**[®] AGRICULTURAL
INDUSTRIES
CONFEDERATION



An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

The Iran conflict is no longer a short-term event; its impact on global markets will continue as inflationary pressures move through the wider economy. Thank you to Members who shared insights on impacts to their businesses. AIC has remained closely engaged with Government, speaking regularly with ministers to ensure they understand the scale of disruption across global supply chains and domestic production.

Confidence at farm level is critical to sustaining orders and forward planning. In the current climate, customers need to feel supported to continue investing in fertiliser inputs, helping safeguard production and the 2027 harvest.

Elections in Scotland and Wales have resulted in new governments. AIC Scotland and AIC Cymru will work with stakeholders to support policy delivery, with engagement at the Royal Highland Show and the Royal Welsh Show. With many new representatives, building understanding of the supply chain will be important.

AIC has secured a seat on the Farming and Food Partnership Board, reflecting its long-standing role in improving farm profitability and supply chain efficiency.

Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC



Policy update

UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) negotiations are now moving into sector-specific detail, and the UK Government has indicated its willingness to implement a deal by mid-2027. AIC is engaging with officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and European associations. We are also running Member webinars and lobbying for targeted transition periods, particularly for crop protection, maximum residue levels (MRLs) and organics, where supply chain adjustments will be required.

In early March, the Government provided a suite of updates for UK businesses on progress towards an SPS agreement. This included European Union (EU) legislation that the Government is proposing to adopt in Great Britain, guidance notifying businesses of forthcoming supply chain changes, and a call for evidence on business insight and communications. Most significantly, this is the first time the Government has openly confirmed its intention to implement an SPS agreement by mid-2027. However, it has acknowledged the need for targeted transition periods, and AIC is lobbying for these to include crop protection, MRLs and the organics sector, where additional time will be needed.

Much of AIC's policy and communications work has focused on monitoring the **impacts of conflict in the Gulf region** on global fertiliser and fuel supply chains. AIC has been in contact with Members to gather initial concerns, which have informed ongoing dialogue with the Government and devolved administrations. AIC is in regular discussion with Government departments and ministerial teams, Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of the House of Lords (Peers), other parliamentarians, farming unions and the media.

Members can access a recording of AIC's UK-EU SPS agreement cross-sector update webinar, along with sector priorities, on the **AIC website**.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

Sustainability and the environment

Phase two of the *Addressing Water Pollution from Agriculture* stakeholder meetings has commenced, with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) developing detailed reform options to inform a consultation on draft consolidated regulations. AIC is working collaboratively with stakeholders and has offered to contribute to task and finish groups on nutrient management planning and limits.

Alongside this, AIC has been invited to join the steering groups of two Defra-funded projects, managed by the Food Data Transparency Partnership, focused on standardising sustainability data and reporting:

The *Food Data Infrastructure and Governance (FIG)* project is developing a data sharing infrastructure (DSI) and governance model. While *Frame-Ag* is establishing minimum technical expectations for farm carbon calculators, together with a suite of standard agricultural emissions estimation models.

In parallel, AIC is engaging with Defra ahead of the Sustainable Farming Incentive 2026 (SFI26) launch, with Window 1 opening for applications on 30 June 2026 for small farms and those without existing Environmental Land Management (ELM) agreements. There will be a second window in September open to all. The scheme rules and guidance on actions available to farmers were published on 2 June 2026.



Vicky Robinson,
Head of Sustainability



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager

AIC Stakeholder

In each edition of the Journal, 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 Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The FSA plays a key role in protecting public health and maintaining confidence in food and feed safety across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. As the independent regulator for food safety and hygiene, it works with industry and local authorities to ensure that food and feed are safe, traceable and meet regulatory requirements across the supply chain.

AIC works closely with the FSA to support the delivery of safe and compliant supply chains. This includes regular engagement on policy and regulatory developments, including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) matters, feed safety and risk management frameworks. Through this collaboration, AIC provides industry insight to help ensure that regulation is practical, proportionate and reflects the realities of supply chain operations.

The FSA also plays an important role in overseeing feed safety standards and recognising industry assurance schemes. This shared approach supports consistent compliance, reduces duplication of inspection and helps maintain high standards across the sector.

Through this ongoing partnership, AIC and the FSA continue to strengthen the integrity of the UK supply chain and support continuous improvement within AIC Member businesses.

FOCUS



Food
Standards
Agency
food.gov.uk

Arable supply chain policy, transparency and assurance reform

AIC has continued to engage actively with the Government and levy bodies and industry stakeholders on key commercial and policy developments affecting the UK arable supply chain. Significant attention has focused on the proposed Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) administration fees, with AIC representing Member concerns through discussions with AHDB and highlighting the importance of transparency, proportionality and clear value delivery to levy payers.

The sector has also continued engagement with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) following the *Contractual Relationships in the Combinable Crops Sector* consultation. While industry had anticipated clearer indications on next steps and potential regulatory outcomes, further detail remains awaited. AIC continues to press for practical, evidence-based measures that maintain competitiveness and flexibility within grain trading.

Alongside this work, AIC has remained closely involved in discussions following the *UK Farm Assurance Review* report, contributing to industry dialogue on assurance reform within cereals and oilseeds supply chains.



Seed policy, trade and SPS developments

AIC has continued to engage with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on plant breeding, seed trade arrangements and the implications of ongoing UK-EU sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) discussions. Regular meetings and consultation responses have been used to feed industry views into ongoing negotiations, with a focus on maintaining efficient seed movement, reducing administrative burdens and protecting access to key export and import markets.

The sector has also monitored developments linked to the Sustainable Farming Incentive 2026 (SFI26), ensuring the essential role of seed and crop establishment continues to underpin future Environmental Land Management (ELM) policy.

Alongside policy engagement, preparations have advanced for the 2026 Seed Trade Dinner and wider industry networking opportunities to strengthen collaboration across the supply chain.

AIC is also developing a comprehensive overview of the role of certified seed in sustainable crop production, highlighting contributions to food security, innovation and resource-efficient farming systems.



Rose Riby,
Head of Combinable Crops and Seed

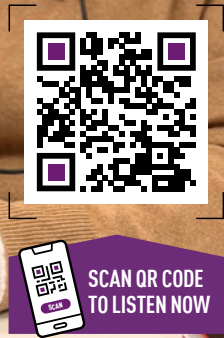
Ongoing discussions on the UK-EU reset and plant protection products

Discussions between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)'s sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) team and industry representatives continue regarding the potential impact of UK alignment with the European Union (EU)'s plant protection products (PPPs) approvals list and maximum residue levels (MRLs). A Government update on 9 March suggested that targeted transitional arrangements may be considered, but further clarity is awaited, likely following the upcoming UK-EU summit.

AIC is engaging closely with the Government, providing evidence on the impacts for crops where insufficient transition periods could affect PPP availability and crop protection options. Industry is seeking practical arrangements to allow existing stocks to move through the supply chain and support compliance with MRLs in force at the time of application.

The issue was explored in a recent episode of *The AIC Podcast*, highlighting the implications for crop production and supply chains across Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

AIC also bid a warm farewell to Hazel Doonan, thanking her for more than 20 years of dedicated service to Members and the crop protection sector. As she retires, we wish her well. We also welcome Ellie Vinnicombe, whose expertise and enthusiasm will support Members through future challenges and opportunities ahead.



SCAN QR CODE TO LISTEN NOW



Hazel Doonan,
Retired Head of Crop
Protection and Agronomy



Ellie Vinnicombe,
Newly appointed Head of
Crop Protection and Agronomy

Feed sector SPS priorities and market pressures

The sector has engaged closely with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) negotiations and sector priorities.

AIC has emphasised that adequate and pragmatic transitional arrangements are essential to minimise market disruption. Equally important is the need for the Government and its agencies to properly resource access to European Union (EU) decision-making bodies, such as the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF). Clear understanding of the agreement at EU Border Control Posts will be critical to support consistent implementation and avoid the market access issues experienced since Brexit.

AIC is also monitoring the impacts of the Iran conflict and gathering Member feedback on supply and availability of feed materials and additives. While no significant availability issues have been identified to date, increased costs are being observed for some feed inputs, resulting from shipping and logistics charges.



James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed

Iran conflict impacts and fertiliser policy response

The key risk in the current fertiliser crisis is not only supply disruption, but a potential loss of market liquidity later in 2026. If farmers delay purchasing due to uncertainty, cashflow pressure or limited access to credit, demand could weaken from mid-year. This could increase the risk of product being diverted away from the UK and leaving the sector more exposed in Q3 and Q4.

AIC has been lobbying strongly on behalf of Members to underline that fertiliser is a nationally important input for UK food production, and that early Government action is essential to avoid unnecessary disruption. AIC has raised these concerns directly with Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). AIC has also given evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee, and met Daniel Tomlinson MP, Minister at HM Treasury, to press the case.

AIC's four priority asks are: better support for farmer finance and fertiliser purchasing; early clarity on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) metrics; clarity on Russian-owned production in Europe; and consideration of a national fertiliser stock and data monitoring system.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser



Left to right: Robert Sheasby - Chief Executive - AIC,
Teresa Dougall - Managing Director - Scottish Quality Crops (SQC),
Graeme Logan - AIC Scotland Chair



Scotland policy engagement and election outlook

AIC Scotland spring meetings in April were well attended by Members, with input from the Scottish Government (ScotGov), Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) providing insight into the policy direction. This was alongside sector meetings covering Animal Feed, Combinable Crops, Fertiliser and Seed.

With the election results now confirmed, AIC Scotland is working with stakeholders to ensure that the manifesto asks of AIC Scotland are understood as the new Scottish Government begins to implement its policies. Engagement with Ministers is expected in the coming weeks, including at the Royal Highland Show.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

Wales election results and Sustainable Farming Scheme update

The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) closed in May, with tracking and entry support from farming unions indicating uptake of around 50%. This varied by county and farm type, with smaller, upland and sheep farms more likely to enter.

The election resulted in a seismic shift in Welsh politics, with a catastrophic fall for the Labour Party and a meteoric rise for Plaid Cymru, which now holds 43 Senedd seats, with Reform on 34 and Labour on nine. Plaid Cymru will form a minority Government. With Plaid committed to maintaining the SFS, alongside potential sensible amendments and an earlier indication of multi-year funding, this is likely to be a more favourable outcome for the sector.

AIC Cymru is now working with stakeholders to ensure that its manifesto asks are understood as the new Welsh Government begins to implement its policies.

AIC Cymru will hold a reception event at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in July.



Michael Muncey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager



Supporting sustainable commodity assurance across the supply chain

AIC has highlighted the launch and practical application of its Sustainable Commodities Scheme (ASCS) through a series of webinars held in March and April. These sessions were aimed at helping Members, Participants and wider stakeholders across the feed supply chain understand the scheme's purpose, benefits and certification requirements.

During the webinars, AIC Head of Feed, James McCulloch; AIC Services Technical Manager, Sue Whittington; and Intertek SAI Global Ltd Scheme Manager, Marie Keys, outlined why the scheme has been developed and why it is important for the wider agricultural supply chain. They also explained how the ASCS is designed to support businesses in meeting growing expectations around sustainable commodity sourcing and assurance.



Sue Whittington,
Technical Manager



FIAS Standard implementation and 20th anniversary



The Fertiliser Industry Assurance Scheme (FIAS) 2026 Standard is targeted for implementation in October 2026. The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has completed its review, and signed off the new Standard. Participants have been issued with an interim text version to allow preparation for updates to systems and, where necessary, to maintain compliance. Further support will be available over the summer.

We are also continuing FIAS 20th anniversary communications to celebrate the achievements and future of the Scheme in supporting a safe and secure fertiliser supply chain.



Roberta Reeve,
Technical Manager



The AIC Podcast: Insight for Members

Launched in March, *The AIC Podcast* is AIC's monthly podcast designed to help the agri-supply chain stay informed, compliant and ahead of change.



From major policy updates to assurance scheme breakdowns, the podcast brings together AIC sector heads, technical experts, Members and Participants to provide clear, accessible insight.



Listening helps Members stay informed and better understand emerging risks and opportunities.



Episodes are available via the AIC website and major podcast platforms, making it easy to listen on demand.

Wendy Ford,
Communications Manager



Assurance scheme Standards development and timelines

Representatives from the Feed Materials Assurance Scheme (FEMAS), Trade Assurance Scheme for Combinable Crops (TASCC) and Universal Feed Assurance Scheme (UFAS) have been working jointly on the next versions of the three Standards since late 2024, shortly after the current versions were implemented.

The initial timeline envisaged implementation in October 2027. However, at a recent meeting of the Feed and Food Assurance Steering Group, it was agreed to move this to 1 April 2028 to ensure sufficient time for approval by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and the development of Participant training materials ahead of the first audits.



Simon Williams,
Technical Manager

KEY DATES 2026	AIC Board and AGM 7 October
	AIC Services Board and AGM 14 October
	AIC Fertiliser Dinner Manchester – 5 November
	AIC Dinner & Conference 2026 Peterborough – 10-11 November
	AIC Scotland Meetings & Dinner Glasgow – 25 November
	AIC Seed Trade Dinner Edinburgh – 3 December



Agricultural Industries Confederation Ltd
First Floor, Unit 4 The Forum,
Minerva Business Park,
Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6FT.
Tel: 01733 385230
Email: enquiries@agindustries.org.uk

Design & Development by RDP

