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A year on from the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the disruption is still weighing on the agri-supply industry.

AIC Scotland has played a key role in helping the Scottish Government understand the key impacts emanating from the war in Ukraine. One important change has been the increasing realisation by policy makers of the importance of food security when developing policies to support the agricultural industry.

As a result the Scottish Government established a short life Food Security & Supply taskforce which has now concluded its work. One of the key outcomes has been the establishment of a food security unit within Scottish Government, the purpose of this unit is to ensure food production is central to agricultural policy development.

Save the Date – AIC Scotland Spring Meeting

AIC Scotland's next meeting is on 26 April at McDiarmid Park in Perth. Tea and coffee will be available on arrival from 9.30am, with the joint meeting starting at 10am.

This year's meetings will also include a sector meeting for Crop Protection and Agronomy Members.

Led by AIC Sector Head Hazel Doonan, this will start at 8.30am.

To book your place, go to www.agindustries.org.uk/events-calendar/aic-scotland-spring-meeting or email Julia Corr at julia.corr@agindustries.org.uk.





Rugby World Cup tickets

For rugby enthusiasts, AIC's Head of Policy and External Affairs Ed Barker has donated four tickets to the Scotland v Romania game on 30 September at the Stade Pierre Mauroy in Lille (an hour from Calais and accessible by Eurostar train), with kick-off at 21:00 local time. Funds raised from the tickets will be donated to RSAB.

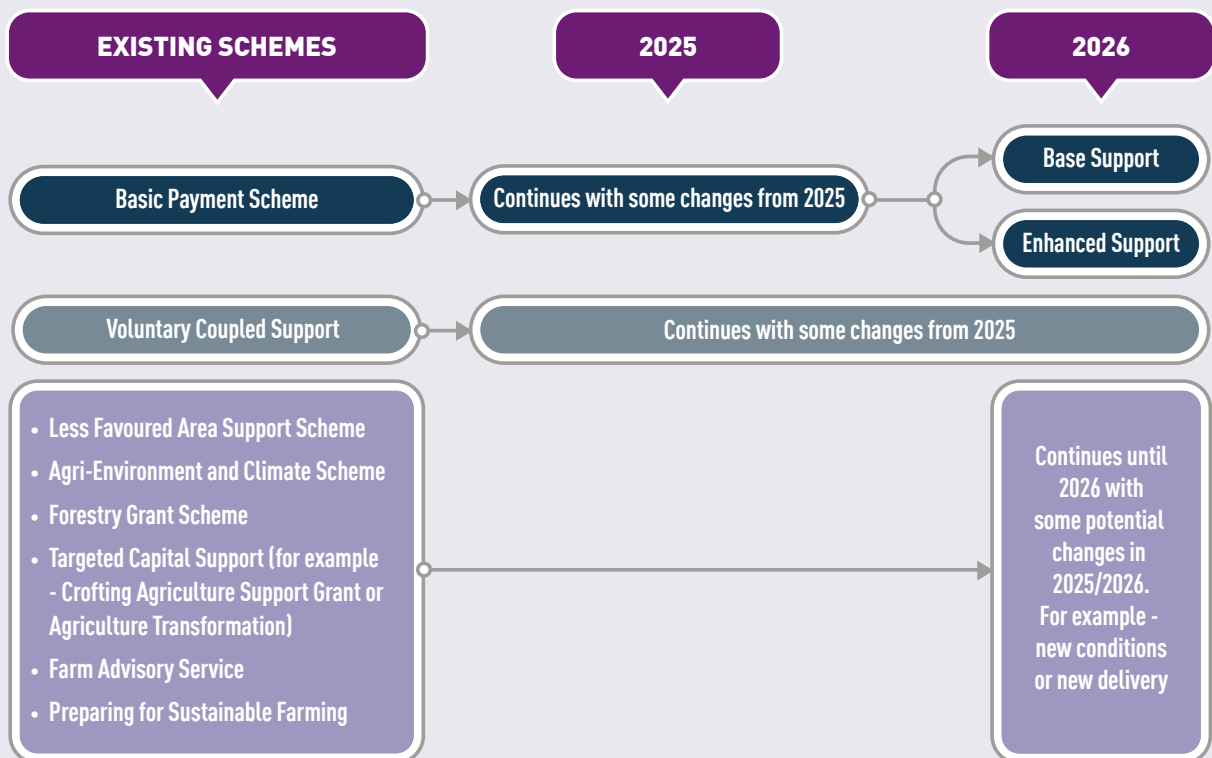
For your chance to win, email a "sealed bid" to ian.muirhead@agindustries.org.uk by 15:00 on 24 April. The winner will be announced at the AIC Scotland meeting on 26 April.



Scottish agricultural policy update

Following pressure from AIC Scotland and others, further detail on changes to agricultural support in Scotland has now been published.

The Scottish Government "route map" sets out key dates (see below infographic), detail on proposed options and indications on when further information will be available.



To trigger payments, a range of conditions and actions will be required from farm businesses.

In February a list of draft measures was published. These will be consulted upon, and measures outlined may form some of the conditions attached to accessing Tier 1 and 2 payments.

Find a full list of draft measures on the [Rural Payments Scotland website](https://www.ruralscotland.gov.uk/rural-payments-scotland-website). There are a range of measures covering the main farming systems, many of which may present opportunities for member businesses.

Members can feedback to government on the proposals by emailing measures.agreform@gov.scot.

Political engagement

2023 is set to be a year of significant change in Scottish politics, following the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon and election of Humza Yousaf as First Minister. This may create an opportunity for the successful candidate to reappraise their approach to agricultural policies on gene editing and net zero targets.

In January, AIC Scotland held in-person meetings with Scottish MPs and Scotland Office ministers in Westminster. This was an opportunity to forge valuable links, ensuring a solid understanding of the importance of the agri-supply industry and the issues Members face.

A number of MPs subsequently asked parliamentary questions on key issues, including gas price volatility.

In February, AIC Scotland's Ian Muirhead was invited to give evidence at the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee session on the Scottish Agriculture Bill.

Major issues of strategic importance to Members were highlighted, including productivity, precision breeding techniques, and the need for a balanced approach to support which puts productive farmers at the centre of support proposals.



Ian Muirhead meeting with Under Secretary of State for Scotland, John Lamont MP in Dover House, Westminster.



Funding and support latest

The Preparing for Sustainable Farming (PSF) fund will run for two years from spring 2023 with support measures for soil testing and analysis and carbon audits, alongside new support to deliver options for animal health and welfare.

An initial list of seven animal health and welfare options allows producers to choose a maximum of two per year.

Though likely to widen in scope, initial measures are aimed at veterinary advice such as testing for liver fluke, bull fertility and gastrointestinal parasites. Payments will be made on evidence of investigation and advised action defined by a vet or expert adviser (a professional from outside the business with relevant qualifications and experience to provide appropriate advice).

Find full details on the [Rural Payments Scotland website](#).

Meanwhile, voluntary coupled support (Scottish Suckler Beef Support Scheme and Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme) will continue with changes to conditions from 2025. Targeted capital grants (Less Favoured Area Support Scheme, Agri-Environment Climate, Forestry Grant Scheme) will continue until 2026.

Member feedback on the latest policy proposals is welcomed. See page two for more information.

RSABI – Mental Health First Aid Training

AIC Members are invited to register for free training as part of a pioneering mental health initiative for Scottish agriculture, run as a collaboration between RSABI and training consultants IED Training Solutions Ltd.

The training is open to any organisations and individuals who work with farmers and crofters, and aims to develop skills to recognise mental health issues and direct people to appropriate professional help.

Members interested in finding out more can visit www.rsabi.org.uk or email mentalhealthtraining@rsabi.org.uk.



Digital Grain Passport update

Following Member feedback on the development of a Digital Grain Passport, a number of concerns have been voiced by AIC in recent months.

AIC is clear that a business case must be prepared for Members and the entire supply chain to ensure any proposal makes good business sense.

A Leadership Group, with representation from AIC, UK Flour Millers, Maltsters Association, SCOPA, NFU and NFU Scotland, has established two sub-groups to focus on development and data.

These sub-groups will take feedback from AIC's Digital Grain Passport working group. A business case is expected to be drafted this spring and could be ready for wider feedback ahead of this harvest.

To be involved in the AIC working group, please email AIC Scotland Policy Manager Ian Muirhead

(ian.muirhead@agindustries.org.uk) or Head of Arable Marketing Rose Riby (rose.riby@agindustries.org.uk).

Visit www.agindustries.org.uk/digital-grain-passport for the latest information.



Gene editing update

AIC Scotland continues to engage with Scottish Government ministers, officials and MSPs on the advantages of gene editing technology.

In January AIC submitted evidence ahead of a Scottish Government debate on gene editing, highlighting the environmental benefits and the need to recognise that with reducing availability of plant protection products, gene-edited plant varieties will be vital to meet climate change challenges.

Given that England has now legislated for gene editing through the Precision Breeding Act, it is of paramount importance that equivalent legislation be considered in Scotland. There are major issues which may occur without this – disruption to trade within the UK, issues around labelling, testing and segregation in supply chains – which would be costly and unworkable for the industry.

Scottish Government officials are having ongoing discussions with their Westminster counterparts on the issues raised by AIC and what solutions may be available in case of a policy divergence.

Scottish Government is watching developments of European Union (EU) proposals on gene editing closely and, given its policy of EU alignment, this raises the possibility of a change in stance on this issue.



Planned events

AIC will be at this year's Royal Highland Show on 22 and 23 June. If you would like to book a meeting, please email Ian Muirhead.

Planning for a possible 20th Anniversary reception to be held at the Show is underway. To help gauge support, Members are asked to complete a quick poll via this link: bit.ly/3JTjflU

