

# FAR update

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FEED ADVISER REGISTER SCHEME



## Welcome

Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of the FAR Update. In this issue, I am excited to share the on-farm nutrient balance calculator developed as part of this year's CPD to study how to improve nutrient balance on-farm and, coupled with this, all FAR Members have access to the BASIS Classroom Reducing Ammonia Emissions online training.

James McCulloch discusses the recent Dairy and Sheep Welfare strategies and our new Head of Sustainability, Vicky Robinson shares the work on the Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework and Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain.

Please send any questions or suggestions to [far@agindustries.org.uk](mailto:far@agindustries.org.uk) or via the contact details on the back page.



**Sue Whittington**

Technical Manager

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## FAR Improving Farm Nutrient Balance CPD and on-farm nutrient balance calculator

The most recent FAR CPD aims to aid Advisers on farm helping their customers to measure a farm's nutrient balance. The training includes a simplified farm nutrient balance worksheet which is available for all Advisers completing the training to use.

This training is in support of the AIC-led wider industry campaign for improving Farm Nutrient Balance and as part of AIC's roadmap aspiration to improve input and nutrient efficiencies by 30% by 2050.

This CPD course has been developed by industry experts and consists of two parts:

- **Part 1** – Why farm nutrient balance is important from a policy and practical perspective.
- **Part 2** – How to calculate it and make improvements for each livestock species in different production systems with examples using AIC's Farm Nutrient Balance worksheet.

The worksheet is available for all Advisers to use with their customers on farm to calculate individual farm nutrient balances and help livestock farmers make improvements on their farms.

The Feed and Fertiliser sectors have committed to work more closely on

training to enable a more integrated approach to whole farm nutrient management, and this training dovetails with FACTS CPD on Nitrogen Use Efficiencies in cropping systems and the better utilisation of manures and other organic materials. Complementary training on Farm Nutrient Balance for FACTS is anticipated.

The training is hosted on the FAR portal hosted by VBMS Ltd and can be accessed via [far.vbms-training.co.uk](http://far.vbms-training.co.uk) using individual log in and passwords which will be provided to you by email from VBMS.

# BASIS Classroom – How to reduce ammonia Emissions from farming

The industry consortium behind the alternative to a ban on urea (known as “Option 4”) has been working together to produce a training module on actions to take to reduce ammonia emissions from manures and fertilisers across the UK.

FAR Advisers may find this course a useful refresher of their previous training on ammonia as the conversation develops on implementing the new requirements for urea fertilisers, alongside future farm policies which will affect the livestock sector.

The course forms part of the wider ambition for improving farm Nitrogen Use Efficiencies - a positive step for ammonia mitigation and food chain sustainability.

It has received positive feedback and dovetails into existing FAR and FACTS CPD and FAR Module 3.

You can access the course for free until the end of March 2024 on the BASIS Classroom website.

Visit the BASIS website to enrol: <https://basis-classroom.co.uk/courses/reducing-ammonia-emissions>



## Dairy and sheep welfare strategies

AIC are pleased to see that nutrition is deemed to be central in delivering the health and welfare strategies for dairy and sheep. The role of on-farm advice is also recognised in the strategies with ‘vet-led’ health and welfare reviews. AIC is now closely involved in discussion groups convened to plan the roll-out of the strategies.

### The six strategic goals for dairy cattle welfare are:

**Thriving cows** – ensuring all dairy animals are bred and reared to live a long life.

**Healthy feet** – ensuring a proactive lameness management plan is in place on every UK dairy farm.

**Comfortable cows** – maximising cow comfort in housing and at pasture.

**Appropriately nourished cows** – ensuring a healthy body condition throughout the year.

**Healthy udders** – continued improvements to udder health to reduce cases of mastitis.

**Positive welfare** – moving towards ‘positive welfare’ by providing an environment that allows animals to exhibit normal behaviours such as curiosity or play.



### The six strategic goals for sheep welfare are:

**Healthy feet** – reducing lameness for all sheep to improve overall health and welfare by increasing mobility, productivity, and longevity.

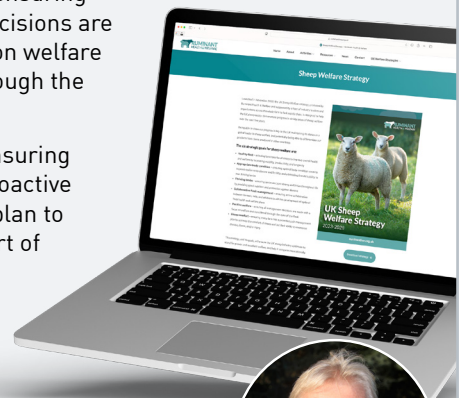
**Appropriate condition** – ensuring optimal body condition score to improve resilience to disease and fertility, and a breeding female’s ability to rear thriving lambs.

**Thriving lambs** – ensuring lambs are born strong and thrive throughout life by providing good nutrition and protection against disease.

**Collaborative flock management** – ensuring active collaboration between farmers, vets, and advisers to aid the development of optimal flock health and welfare plans.

**Positive welfare** – ensuring all management decisions are made with a focus on welfare and considered through the eyes of the flock.

**Sheep comfort** – ensuring every farm has a proactive pain management plan to optimise the comfort of sheep and aid their ability to overcome disease, illness, and/or injury.



**James McCulloch,**  
Head of Feed

## UK Soy Manifesto commitment to deforestation free soya in their supply chains by the end of 2025?

AIC remains fully engaged with all parties in trying to deliver the UK national transition plan commitment for a deforestation and conversion free (DCF) soya supply chain.

Recent developments have seen the consultation on the AIC DCF standard which closed in early October. AIC is now reviewing consultation responses prior to considering any amendments to the standard.



**James McCulloch,**  
Head of Feed



## AIC's new Head of Sustainability

Introducing Vicky Robinson, who joined AIC in late June. Vicky has previously worked at Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF), where she was their Technical Director, and also spent 22 years at Natural England working on agri-environment schemes.

Vicky is leading our sustainability policy work across all sectors, balancing the needs of AIC Members with the increasing emphasis on sustainability within our food system. Her work recognises the pivotal role that the agricultural supply chain provides in balancing the provision of nutritious food integrated with the needs of the environment, economic, and social systems.

AIC developed its first Agri-Supply Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain in 2020 in response to these challenges to support Members in building a more resilient future. Vicky's work will include updating our Roadmap, as well as supporting the recently launched Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework which feeds into the update. She will also be helping Member businesses with their net zero transition.



## AIC Sustainability Training and Self-Assessment Framework

AIC launched the Introduction to Sustainability for the Agri-Supply Industry online training and the Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework earlier this summer. The Training is designed to provide a basic knowledge of sustainability terminology and application within the agri-supply industry, and it is available on AIC's portal hosted by VBMS Ltd which also hosts the FAR training.

The Framework will help Member businesses better understand where they are on their sustainability journey and monitor their progress as they develop actions to improve their sustainability credentials.

The Training and The Framework complement the commitments made in AIC's Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain. We hope that uptake of the framework will be sufficient to allow AIC to collate and share anonymised data with Member businesses for the purpose of cross-sector and cross-industry benchmarking, and help us understand progression with Roadmap targets and where support from AIC may be needed.

Please visit AIC's Sustainability policy webpage for more information, including FAQs for The Training and for The Framework.  
<https://www.agindustries.org.uk/sectors/policy/sustainability.html>



SCAN ME



**Andrew Pearson,**  
Policy Manager

## AgriScot and Royal Ulster Winter Fair 2023

FAR and FAA were pleased to be at AgriScot on 22 November.

Come and visit FAR and FAA at the Royal Ulster Winter Fair on 14 December at our stand in the Eikon Hall Stand Number 9.



## Methane-suppressing feed technology “essential” to cut emissions, Government says

Methane-suppressing feed technologies have been described as “an essential tool to support the decarbonisation of the agricultural sector” by the Government as it publishes its response to a call for evidence on the topic.

The Government’s announcement on 26 October provides fresh insight into the possible next steps for policymakers on this novel technology. It comes after AIC responded to a Government consultation, putting forward some thoughts on how policy might influence farmers’ uptake of the range of pioneering technologies, practices, and innovations.

The valuable knowledge exchange between FAR advisers and their farming customers when considering which methane mitigating technologies to adopt was highlighted as a vital element in helping reduce methane emissions.

The Government has confirmed it will continue to work closely with the industry and farmers to encourage widespread adoption of the technology in England as part of the solution to reducing agricultural emissions.



**Sue Whittington,**  
Technical Manager

## A note from the Membership team

If any Advisers have started a new position or are retiring, remember to let AIC know to ensure all information is up to date and accurate.

Don’t forget to check your My FAR details on AIC’s website. If any details are incorrect, training module details are missing, or you have any questions about accessing and completing the core training modules or annual CPD, please email [carolynn.palasiuk@agindustries.org.uk](mailto:carolynn.palasiuk@agindustries.org.uk)



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