

# JOURNAL

Summer 2024 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



**General Election called – how Members can get involved**

**Making the case for Food Security Committee at Farm to Fork Summit**

**Plans for UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism revealed**

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## An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

This has been another extremely busy quarter for AIC, culminating in a General Election being called for 4 July 2024. AIC's manifesto will be used to maximum effect as we seek to engage with prospective parliamentary candidates from across the political spectrum, impressing upon them the agri-supply industry's vital role.

If Members wish to meet with candidates in their area, AIC stands ready to support them. Please speak to our policy team and go to [www.agindustries.org.uk/election-2024](http://www.agindustries.org.uk/election-2024) for more information and to view the manifesto.

In May I was invited to the second annual Farm to Fork Summit held at 10 Downing Street where I had the pleasure of speaking with the Prime Minister, Chancellor and Environment Secretary and others about the importance of UK food security and giving businesses the confidence to invest.

In March, Pulses UK Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of a proposal for their trade body to join AIC. The AIC Board has ratified this move, and I'm delighted that they are now set to become a part of AIC, we welcome them wholeheartedly.

Two decades after AIC was formed of three separate industry trade associations, it is fitting that another trade association will now join, enhancing the benefits of having a united voice for all Member businesses to UK and devolved Governments and stakeholders, as well as wider agriculture.



Robert Sheasby,  
Chief Executive, AIC



## Making the case for Food Security Committee at Farm to Fork Summit

AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby joined the second annual Farm to Fork Summit held by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at 10 Downing Street on 14 May. He urged the Government to establish such a committee with advocates from all parts of the food supply chain to plan for the long term.

The Summit saw leading food and farming industry representatives – including retailers, processors, and trade bodies – get around the table with policymakers to discuss opportunities to promote UK food security, sector growth, innovation, and sustainability.

Mr Sheasby was part of a group focussed on innovation chaired by Farming Minister Mark Spencer MP, working alongside Food Standards Agency chair Professor Susan Jebb, NFU Scotland President Martin Kenedy, NFU Cymru President Aled Jones, and Dr Peter Quinn, Chair of the UK Agri-Tech Centre, among others.

He also held conversations with the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt MP, Environment Secretary Steve Barclay MP, the Foreign Secretary Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rebecca Pow MP.



Ed Barker,  
Head of Policy and External Affairs



## AIC gives evidence at Efra inquiry on fairness in the supply chain

**As part of an inquiry into “Fairness in the Food Supply Chain”, on 19 March, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) Committee heard evidence from AIC’s Robert Sheasby and other trade bodies, as well as food processors and manufacturing businesses.**

MPs heard how improving the UK’s long-term food security can help to ensure fairness in the supply chain and protect against the inflationary impacts of global market volatility.

Before the committee hearing, Mr Sheasby took to the airwaves to feature on BBC Radio 5’s Wake Up to Money show and BBC Radio 4’s Today programme to discuss how inflation has impacted agricultural supply businesses and explained why the UK would benefit from having a Food Security Committee that is independent of government and takes a long-term view.

Scan the QR code to watch video highlights >>



## Fresh SFI data suggests minimal impact on farm productivity

**The latest official statistics suggest that the uptake of actions and options under Defra’s Farming and Countryside Programme is having a negligible impact on farm productivity in England.**

Specifically on the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), figures up to 1 April 2024 show that 150,000ha of land has been entered into actions where farmers can generate income from making space for benefitting the environment on less productive areas.

Crucially, this equates to around 2% of the total farmed area in England - and more than half of this land is in less productive land classifications (grades 3b-5).

In March 2024, Defra announced a cap on the amount of land farmers in England can take out of food production under SFI. This followed concerns raised by AIC Member businesses and others advising farmers on applications.

A limit of six wildlife actions appears to have been precautionary yet prudent as only 2% of farms in SFI agreements (approximately 210 farms) had put 80% or more of their farm into these actions.



**Vicky Robinson,**  
Head of Sustainability



**Andrew Pearson,**  
Policy Manager

## AHDB levy rebate consultation

**In April, levy-collecting Members were sent a letter from the AHDB asking for views on proposals to amend the rate that can be claimed for administrative costs of collecting the levy.**

Currently, levy-collecting businesses – including those buying and processing cereals – can claim back 5% of the combined grower and buyer levy to cover the associated administration costs of this work.

Working with its Members, AIC has written to the AHDB to voice concerns over a reduced rebate rate and possible implementation date of October 2024.

AIC has requested an urgent meeting with AHDB to discuss these points on Members' behalf.

## Sector gets a rebrand

**AIC's Grain & Oilseeds sector has been rebranded as Combinable Crops, as approved by the sector committee in April.**

The revised sector name and icon will aid understanding among stakeholders and policymakers, while also reflecting AIC's enhanced representation of the pulse sector, through its merger with Pulses UK.



## Latest on BTOM implementation

**The Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) continues the phased approach of biosecurity controls to the import regime of plants and plant products moving from the EU, Switzerland and Liechtenstein to Great Britain.**

The latest phase of import controls came into force on 30 April 2024, meaning high-risk plants and plant products must now come through a Border Control Post or Control Point where identity and physical checks will be carried out. Checks will no longer take place at Places of Destination.

Alongside this, documentary checks and physical and identity checks at the border will be introduced for medium-risk goods imported from the EU.

## APHA extends seed certification deadline for spring sown crops

**Due to the adverse drilling conditions this Spring, many crops were drilled very late.**

For this season the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), in conjunction with the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), extended the deadline for spring crop entries 2023/2024 to 29 April 2024 for lower-category crops only. This followed a request made by AIC.

This covers certified seed (CS), certified seed of the first generation (C1), certified seed of the second generation (C2), certified seed of the third generation (C3 – flax/linseed only).



**Rose Riby,**  
Head of Combinable Crops and Seed

# Hedgerow legislation enters into force in England

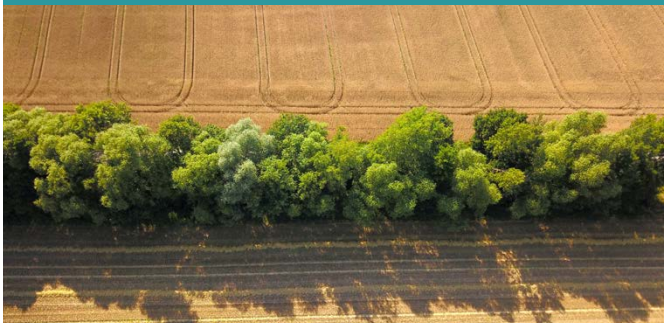
The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 were passed before Parliament dissolved ahead of the General Election.

The legislation entered into force on 23 May and aims to enhance the protection and management of hedgerows across England.

The regulations apply to hedges on agricultural land and came into force immediately, with the exception of the buffer strip requirements which will only apply immediately where land already has a buffer strip.

On land without a buffer strip, but which is not used for crop production, the rules apply from July.

Where land is currently in crop production, the rules apply from the end of the first harvest after the legislation comes into force.



# Grassland Integrated Pest Management (IPM) infographic published

An infographic explaining how Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices are used effectively in grassland has been published by AIC.

It was created to assist Members in conversations with policymakers and industry stakeholders on IPM and the many important actions taken to deliver this on farm, supported by BASIS registered agronomists and feed advisers.

Scan the QR code to view the infographic >>



**Hazel Doonan,**  
Head of Crop Protection & Agronomy



# FAQs on deforestation and due diligence regulations

**AIC has published an online resource of Frequently Asked Questions to help provide Members with clarity on the requirements of having to comply with pending UK Forest Risk Commodity and EU Deforestation Regulations.**

Full details and accompanying guidance documents for both sets of regulations are not yet available. The very recent General Election announcement may well impact the timeline for the UK regulation. AIC aims to routinely update this FAQs webpage as more information becomes available and additional questions arise.



# FSA consultation on feed additive applications

**AIC is working with Members on a response to an FSA consultation on several feed additive applications for authorisation in Great Britain.**

These applications have been submitted for new, new use only, modifications and renewal with or without modifications of existing authorisations of feed additives and one feed for nutritional purposes (PARNUT).

Full consultation details are available on the FSA website. AIC will respond to the consultation on behalf of Members.

# AIC secures valuable access to feed lifecycle analysis data

**In March, AIC secured access to feed lifecycle analysis (LCA) data by becoming a member of the Global Feed LCA Institute (GFLI), bringing additional benefits to Members.**

The move supports the ambition of AIC's Feed Executive Committee to drive progress on important sustainability matters.

This data will prove invaluable when discussing food LCA data strategy in the UK with the Food Data Transparency Partnership (FDTP) and other important stakeholders operating in this space.



**James McCulloch,**  
Head of Animal Feed



## Plans for UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) revealed

Details of the proposed UK Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) were released for public consultation on 21 March, with the Government setting out how it intends to structure and administer such a levy scheme. Businesses have until 13 June 2024 to submit their views.

Included in the scope of the proposed UK-CBAM are: Mineral or chemical nitrogen fertilisers, Ammonia in granular and liquid forms, Nitric acid and sulphonitric acids, Nitrates of potassium, and Mineral or chemical fertilisers containing two or three of the fertilising elements nitrogen, with phosphorus and/or potassium.

Scan me for AIC Consultation response Template for Members >>



## Proposals for a revised UK-REACH under consultation

Defra has devised an Alternative Transitional Registration model (ATRM) for UK REACH, with a consultation running until 11 July 2024.

This model aims to uphold existing human health and environmental protections by gaining better information on the use and exposure of substances in Great Britain, while reducing costs to businesses transitioning from EU REACH to UK REACH.

AIC will look in detail at the consultation proposals especially relating to the implications for products already registered under EU REACH.



Jo Gilbertson, Head of Fertiliser

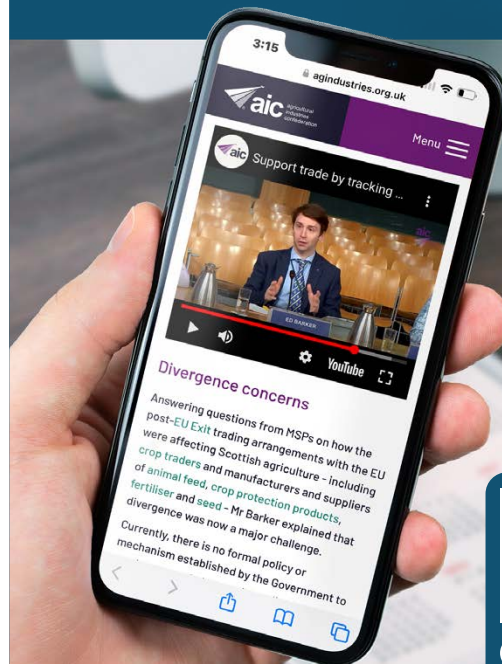
# AIC gives evidence on post-EU Exit trading arrangements at Holyrood

AIC's Head of Policy and External Affairs Ed Barker gave evidence before the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee in March.

Answering questions from MSPs on how the post-EU Exit trading arrangements with the EU were affecting Scottish agriculture, Mr Barker said that divergence – when laws and regulations in the UK and EU differ or do not align – was now a major challenge.

Examples included precision breeding legislation in England, which creates internal market challenges, but also Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), deforestation and due diligence legislation, and farm support policies.

Mr Barker explained that there is currently no formal policy or mechanism established by the Government to monitor or track the growing policy divergences between the UK and EU, with trade bodies and businesses left to undertake this crucial work themselves.



Scan me for video highlights



Ian Muirhead, AIC Scotland Policy Manager

## Member engagement at spring meetings

There was a strong attendance from Members at AIC Scotland's spring meetings on 24 April 2024 in Perth.

The morning opened with an introduction from AIC Scotland Chair Sarah Bell, followed by an update on activity and key issues from AIC including an overview of AIC's sustainability work with Head of Sustainability, Vicky Robinson. Sector Committees for Combinable Crops, Feed and Seed were also held.



## Political change in Wales as SFS postponed

Along with Vaughan Gething MS appointed as the new First Minister of Wales on 16 March, we saw Huw Irranca-Davies MS announced as the new Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs.



**Rt Hon Vaughan Gething MS**  
First Minister of Wales

A face-to-face meeting with the Minister has been requested so that AIC Cymru can highlight the much-valued close working relationship with the previous Rural Affairs Minister and how we can build on this.

On 14 May it was announced that the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) implementation would be postponed by a year to 2026.



**Huw Irranca-Davies MS**  
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

In responding to the consultation, AIC Cymru has voiced major concerns over the current policy. The Welsh Government's own primary economic impact assessment forecast the loss of over 5,000 jobs, livestock numbers reduced by hundreds of thousands, and a loss of £199 million from the sector as a consequence.

The new Minister now has an opportunity for true co-design of the scheme, and AIC Cymru has been proactive in offering its input, expertise, and engagement in this process.



**Michael Muncey,**  
AIC Cymru Policy Manager

## Updated UFAS, FEMAS and TASC Standards from 1 October 2024

The implementation of the revised UFAS, FEMAS and TASC Standards has been delayed until 1 October 2024, because approval of the updated Standards by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) has taken longer than expected.

It is essential that the schemes have UKAS accreditation to maintain their valuable Earned Recognition with the

Government and agencies, hence the decision to postpone the implementation.

AIC Services has hosted a series of seminars across the UK and Ireland to inform scheme Participants of the changes, help them prepare, and answer any questions. It has been pleasing to see strong levels of engagement with Participants at these events.



**Gill Barrow,**  
Technical Manager



**Simon Williams,**  
Technical Manager



## AIC Dinner & Conference 2024

The AIC Dinner & Conference is set to return on 12-13 November 2024 at the Holiday Inn – West Peterborough, with tickets to the agri-food supply chain's flagship event available to book soon.



This year's Conference, *Capturing "Added Value" within the agri-food supply chain*, has a quality line-up of thought leaders from the worlds of politics, business, academia, and trade.

Key speakers already confirmed include NFU President Tom Bradshaw, and Will Jennings, General Manager at Rabobank. The popular pre-Conference Dinner will be hosted on the evening of 12 November at the same venue.

Visit [www.aiconference.org.uk](http://www.aiconference.org.uk) for more details.



**John Kelley,**  
Chief Operating Officer

## FIAS audit format – new remote options

**From March, FIAS Participants with scopes of non-hazardous transport and invoice only merchandising defaulted to a remote audit for two out of every three audits with the other taking place on site. All other scopes remain routinely on-site.**

These changes retain the benefits of remote auditing learnt during the corona virus pandemic and provide Participants with more options.



**Roberta Reeve,**  
Technical Manager

## AIC website – set up personal preferences on login

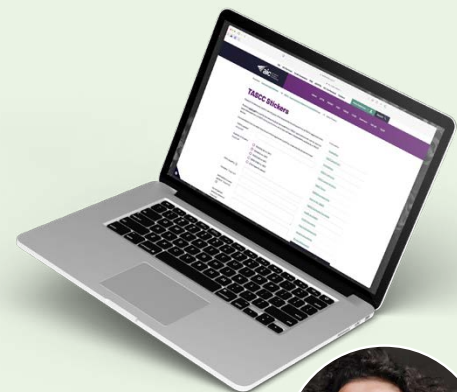
Did you know that you can update your personal preferences and opt-in options via your profile on AIC's website? When logging in click the icon in the top right corner, click on 'Edit profile' and 'Contact Preferences' to select the topics which are of interest to you. You can also choose how you wish to be contacted and tailor your opt-in preferences for Member briefings. Go to [www.agindustries.org.uk/log-in](http://www.agindustries.org.uk/log-in)

## TASCC sticker orders go online

**A new online form has been created for Participants to order TASCC Stickers quickly and easily.**

This form can be found on the TASCC page of AIC's website. Sticker orders can only be placed via the webform.

To place an order, Participants must first login to AIC's website and then go to the TASCC Stickers webpage. In line with the validity of the certificate, TASCC stickers will also be valid for three years.



**Gill Barrow,**  
Technical Manager

### Dates for the diary

**AIC Cymru Drinks Reception**  
Royal Welsh Show – 22 July

**AGM**  
9 October

**AIC Fertiliser Dinner**  
York – 7 November

**AIC Dinner & Conference**  
Peterborough – 12-13 November

**AIC Scotland Meeting & Dinner**  
28 November

**AIC Seed Trade Dinner**  
5 December



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