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Welcome

Welcome to AIC Scotland's autumn newsletter – my first since joining AIC's team in May. Although I officially started in May, I was fortunate to attend the Scottish Meeting in Perth at the end of April. I would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome and the support I've received from those I have met in meetings and during site visits since.

I am keen for all Members to continue engaging with both myself and the relevant Policy Team colleagues, to ensure we understand the challenges and opportunities on the ground. I am always eager to get out on site whenever possible – seeing really is understanding. Your Chair, Graeme Logan, is equally enthusiastic to be involved in these visits.

Very much looking forward to meeting many of you at our upcoming AIC Scotland Meeting & Dinner.

Book now for AIC Scotland Meeting & Dinner, 27th November 2025

A great opportunity for the agri-supply sector in Scotland to come together and discuss ongoing policy developments and practical issues with our policy team. Followed by our annual dinner, this event represents a key date in our calendar providing Members with insight and influence. Robbie Duncan, Director of Quest Farm Supplies in Ayrshire will be the after-dinner speaker. Robbie's extensive career in the agricultural sector and his passion for the industry have made him a highly respected figure in the farming community and in demand on the global circuit.

BOOK NOW

Venue: voco Grand
Central Glasgow



Early fertiliser orders amid changing weather and supply chain risks

AIC encourages Members to engage with farmers and agri-supply customers to secure fertiliser orders for spring 2026. Geopolitical tensions, EU tariffs, and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism may disrupt supply chains. Meanwhile, changing weather patterns are accelerating crop growth and compressing delivery timelines. Early engagement enables better planning, sourcing, and distribution. AIC urges prompt ordering, regular communication, and delivery readiness.



AIC drives FAST dialogue on Scottish Agricultural Reform

The Food and Agriculture Stakeholders Taskforce (FAST) continues to engage with the Scottish Government. AIC attended a roundtable with Baroness Minette Batters hosted by National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS), discussing the Profitability Review from a Scottish perspective. Ian MacDougall emphasised the role of AIC Members in the agri-food supply chain.

Recent meetings with senior Government officials addressed adjustments to basic payment and greening requirements for 2026–2027, and proposals for a new multi-annual programme from 2027/28. While concerns were expressed regarding timing, a framework is expected by the end of 2025.



Left to Right: Robert Sheasby, Mairi Gougeon, Jim Fairlie, Ian MacDougall

Political engagement roundup

Special Adviser to the Scottish Government, Ian Muirhead, hosted Robert Sheasby and Ian MacDougall at Holyrood for a roundtable with Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon and the Minister, Jim Fairlie. Topics included agricultural policy reform, the EU-UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement, renewable fuels, sustainability, and precision breeding. AIC's contribution to policy development was recognised.

With 2026 Scottish Parliamentary Elections approaching, the next six months present an opportunity for AIC Scotland to engage with political parties, both current and prospective Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). A concise and focused manifesto is being developed, and Member feedback is welcomed, either individually or during November sector meetings. This work is supported by strong relationships through the Food and Agriculture Stakeholders Taskforce (FAST) and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS).

Local engagement remains key, if you can connect with your local MSP or MP, please contact AIC for support. Members are also invited to several upcoming "on-farm" days via QMS and FAST.

The Future Farming Investment Scheme (FFIS) received high application volumes. Successful applicants will be notified by early October, with a business priority list expected. Calls for increased funding for farmers have followed.

September's release of the 2025 Basic Farm Payment (BPS) and greening support has boosted farm cashflow. Understanding changes for 2026 and proposals for 2027 is essential. AIC Members will have the opportunity to offer guidance and advice at farm level to support this transition.

EU-UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) update

AIC continues to shape EU-UK Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) alignment, advocating pragmatic solutions for Scotland's agri-food sector. At Holyrood, Stephen Kenyon (Executive Chairman of Harbro Ltd) represented AIC Scotland before the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, highlighting trade and regulatory impacts. His evidence emphasised streamlined export processes and reduced certification burdens. As glyphosate regulation evolves, cross-sector policy engagement remains essential. AIC calls for collaboration across devolved administrations to safeguard Scottish agricultural autonomy ensure regulatory coherence.



QMS initiatives

AIC is a stakeholder in two major Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) initiatives that support a sustainable red meat supply chain from farm to fork, both in the UK and global markets. These initiatives offer business opportunities for AIC Members in supplying animal feeds, forage, and fertilisers.

The Scottish Red Meat Resilience Group (SRMRG) brings together supply chain Members to collaborate and support the sector. Its goal is to pool expertise and present unified views from Scotland's red meat sector to influence policy at both Scottish and UK Government levels.

Launched this summer, the "Meating our Potential" campaign aims to increase the Scottish suckler herd by two cows per farm annually over the next three years to meet consumer demand. SRMRG helped develop the programme, which was endorsed by Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon at the Royal Highland Show.

This endorsement came in response to the Climate Change Committee's recommendation to reduce livestock numbers by 26%, a proposal the Scottish Government rejected. The Cabinet Secretary joined sector representatives in signing the "Meating our Market Potential" pledge board. QMS has created an online industry hub to support the initiative, offering Feed Adviser Register (FAR) Members access to tools and knowledge to help customers meet the "two cows" objective.

The QMS-led Climate and Nature Industry Leadership Group enables AIC to engage with other stakeholders in red meat production and supply, sharing knowledge and developing joint actions to influence policy. This also allows Members to work and future "toolboxes" which will allow companies to work with their customers to deliver actions alongside those developed through AIC's publication, *Agri-supply: An action plan for sustainable efficiency*.



SRMRG stakeholders launching the "Meating our Potential" campaign at the Highland Show



Ian MacDougall signing the support pledge for the "Meating our Potential" campaign.

With contributions from farmers, Scotland Food and Drink, NatureScot, and sustainability/Net Zero experts like John Gilliland, the group's latest meeting provided feedback focused on three objectives:

1

Data – By December 2026, consolidate a comprehensive picture of existing farming practices across climate (including emissions and sequestration), nature, and biodiversity. This will holistically and fairly showcase the environmental role of producers and the wider industry.

2

Communication – By March 2026, create a central, accessible narrative on agriculture's environmental contributions, underpinned by collective data and evidence. This will form a shared resource pool for industry, with open usage to support strong, consistent engagement with stakeholders, decision-makers, and influencers by October 2026.

3

Action – By March 2027, develop tools and incentives to encourage ongoing sustainable land management practices and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. These will enable the sector to demonstrate year-on-year environmental improvements aligned with realistic targets.

Scotland Food and Drink is also progressing a Climate Transition Plan. AIC has begun engaging to identify common ground across six food areas, focusing on emissions assessments (not full life cycle analysis), and barriers to action. As this project develops, AIC will reach out to Members through the policy team for support.

Harvest 2025

Scottish farmers and AIC Members have faced unpredictable weather and a challenging supply and demand picture.

Although the physical harvest has been early and compact, Scottish arable farmers and National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS) have raised concerns about the combinable crops supply chain, particularly regarding perceived unfairness over imports, prices, and malting barley contracts. AIC has worked closely with NFUS to inform and support open dialogue and understanding.

Thank you to the Member businesses who hosted NFUS Combinable Crops Committee and policy team visits, they were very well received. AIC also attended an NFUS roundtable with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the Scotch Whisky Association, and the Maltsters' Association of Great Britain (MAGB) to consider the challenges. AIC will attend the next NFUS Combinable Crops Committee in October.

Separately, AIC also initiated and attended a cross-policy meeting with NFUS, where it was confirmed that NFUS is restructuring its policy team to strengthen supply chain influence.



AIC annual parliamentary reception

Scottish Chair, Graeme Logan (Glasson Grain), and Ian MacDougall attended AIC's Westminster reception in September. This event provided AIC Scotland with the opportunity to engage with Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), including the Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Alistair Carmichael, Liberal Democrat MP for Orkney and Shetland. Mr Carmichael addressed those present, offering strong support for the agri-food sector and emphasising the importance of industry-Government collaboration.



Ian MacDougall (L) & Alistair Carmichael (R)

aic® AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES CONFEDERATION
DINNER & CONFERENCE 11 & 12 NOV 2025



This year's AIC Dinner and Conference will bring together thought leaders from politics, business, academia, and trade to explore the theme: 'Managing New Global Norms in the Agri-Food Supply Chain'.

The event will begin with the Conference Dinner, held at the Holiday Inn West, Peterborough, which will formally open the Conference. AIC's Conference will follow the next day at the same venue. Scan the QR to book your place, aicconference.org.uk.

"Spirit of Scotland" showcase

Robert Sheasby and Ian MacDougall attended the Scotch Whisky Association's "Spirit of Scotland" Showcase in Edinburgh. This event offered a chance to discuss growth and challenges in the malting barley sector and engage with political representatives.

