

JOURNAL

SUMMER 2025 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



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INDUSTRIES
CONFEDERATION

Progress on UK-EU
SPS Agreement

AIC gives evidence at
House of Lords

AIC calls for joint action
on ETS-CBAM impacts



An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

Trade has dominated this quarter, with AIC engaging Members on developments with India, Europe, and the recent United States trade announcement. This included meetings with Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

A revised Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) option is in development for England, alongside policy development in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

AIC attended the Scottish Office roundtable on agriculture, contributing to discussions on how trade, legislation, and policy could support productivity. At the most recent AIC Cymru meeting, there was also input from the Welsh Government on policy development.

Across the sectors, Member support continues on the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), and the implications of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) in the fertiliser sector.

The wider geopolitical environment remains unsettled, complicating trade for many Members. AIC has ensured that Member concerns are communicated to Government to help inform decision-making.

Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC



Progress on UK-EU SPS agreement

On 19 May 2025, the UK and European Union agreed to establish a 'Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Area'. This is expected to result in full SPS alignment for most movements of animals, animal products, plants, plant products, pesticides, organics, and marketing standards. We hope this will help reduce the many trade barriers that have developed for AIC Member businesses across different sectors, including the need for export health and phytosanitary certification.

One of AIC's core priorities at the 2024 General Election was to remove the trade barriers between Great Britain, the EU, and Northern Ireland that have emerged over the past five years.

Since July 2024, the Government has made clear its intention to negotiate an SPS deal with the EU. AIC has been in frequent discussions with Ministers and civil servants across government departments, has kept Members updated on what the agreement will mean in practice, and will continue to do so as negotiations progress.

Working in support of modern sustainable commercial agriculture



Minister for European Relations
Rt Hon Nick Thomas Symonds MP
addresses guests of AIC's reception
in Parliament in September 2024.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy and External Affairs

AIC gives evidence at House of Lords

AIC gave evidence to the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee on behalf of the fertiliser sector, alongside Members The Lord Fuller OBE (Nitrasol, Brineflow) and Pawel Kisielewski (CCm Technologies).

The inquiry examined reactive nitrogen management, focusing on reuse opportunities, barriers, policy gaps, regulations, and interdepartmental coordination.

AIC highlighted a 40% reduction in mineral nitrogen use, driven by better agronomic advice, awareness, and precision. Key challenges include manure variability and geographic separation. AIC recommends improving storage, handling, and regulation, with FACTS Advisers central to sustainable use.

The evidence will inform a report due this summer, to be debated in the autumn.



AIC responds to Land Use Framework Consultation (England)

In January, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) launched a 12-week consultation on England's Land Use Framework (LUF), designed to guide land-use decisions amid competing demands.

The LUF outlines five land categories, including proposals to repurpose up to 9% of agricultural land by 2050. It promotes multifunctional use over full withdrawal from production.

AIC raised concerns about assumed productivity gains, citing limited evidence and declining output. The framework lacks detail on incentives and relies on other Defra initiatives.

AIC's draft response was shared with Members ahead of submission. The final LUF will be published later this year.



Ed Barker,
Head of Policy
and External Affairs



Vicky Robinson,
Head of Sustainability



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager

AIC Stakeholder

Each Journal edition 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 Coceral.

Coceral represents the European trade in cereals, oilseeds, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed, and agri-supply. Since its inception, AIC has worked closely with Coceral to ensure that the UK agri-supply and merchanting sector remains in close dialogue with European policymakers and associations.

Through this collaboration, AIC contributes to Coceral's strategic efforts in shaping EU policies that impact trade, sustainability and food security. This partnership ensures that UK voices are heard in Brussels, particularly on issues such as sustainable sourcing, food and feed safety, and the future policy design of agricultural trade.

Maintaining close collaboration with AIC's equivalent trade bodies in Europe has enabled Members to understand policy and trade divergences since the UK's exit from the EU. This will remain a core part of our work to support the Government and the European Commission in establishing a satisfactory future Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement.



Progress update on Digital Passport for combinable crops

The Digital Passport Leadership Group has continued to work with industry representatives to refine practical details and ensure the system works across the supply chain.

A funding request has been submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for the build, rollout, and transition. If approved, the Cereals and Oilseeds Sector Council will fund ongoing costs from year four. The group has also written to Daniel Zeichner MP, Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs, to seek support.

Rebate confirmed for 2025/26 as fee talks continue

**REVISED
REBATE
2025/26
3.28%**

Discussions with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) continue regarding the levy payment rate for 2026/27 and 2027/28. AIC expects further details soon, though resolution may be slightly delayed. Meanwhile, all Members should have received confirmation that the revised rebate for 2025/26 is 3.28%.

Industry calls for MRL alignment

AIC, along with the Grain and Feed Trade Association (GAFTA) and the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC), has written to the UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) urging alignment with EU residue definitions and maximum residue levels (MRLs) for fosetyl aluminium and phosphonic acid. The current divergence is disrupting bean exports, particularly to key EU markets.

Industry bodies are calling for regulatory alignment to safeguard trade. Beans, especially faba beans, are vital for sustainable farming and represent a growing export opportunity.



Rose Riby,
Head of Combinable Crops and Seed



UKOG engages Minister to address oilseeds sector challenges

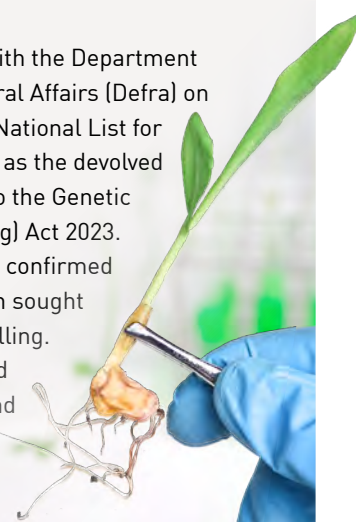
In April, AIC and UK Oilseeds Group (UKOG) members met Minister Daniel Zeichner MP, Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs, to discuss the future of the UK oilseeds sector.

Key concerns included pest pressures, declining domestic production, costly imports, and regulatory divergence from the European Union. The group emphasised the need for short-term support to rebuild grower confidence and reduce trade barriers, particularly around seed imports and duplicated testing.

UKOG will continue working with Ministers and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to progress practical solutions.

AIC engages on national list for precision-bred varieties

AIC Members have engaged with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on establishing an England-only National List for precision-bred plant varieties, as the devolved nations were not signatories to the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023. Precision-bred status must be confirmed before listing. The consultation sought views on mandatory seed labelling. While seed sales are permitted UK-wide, cultivation in Scotland and Wales remains subject to devolved GMO regulations.



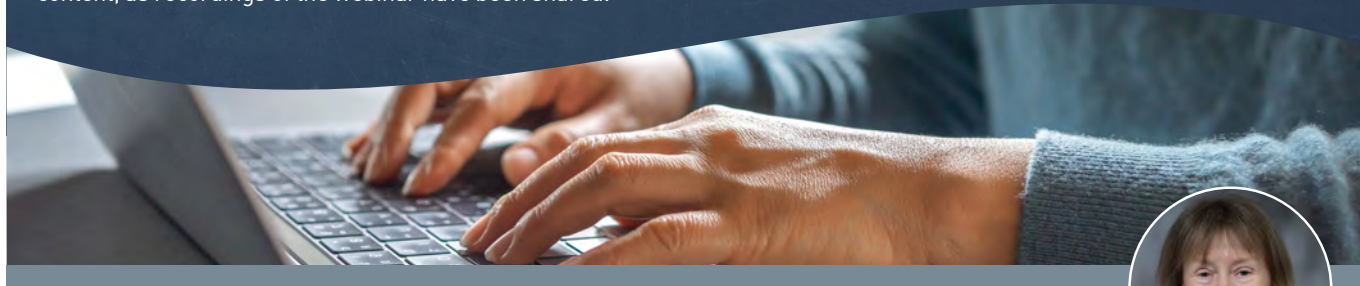
AIC welcomes publication of National Action Plan for sustainable use of pesticides

A major development this quarter was the UK Government's revised National Action Plan (NAP) for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides. AIC welcomes this, particularly the introduction of the Pesticide Load Indicator (PLI), a smarter metric for assessing plant protection product (PPP) impact. AIC supports the target to reduce each of the 20 PLI metrics by at least 10% by 2030.

Members are already advancing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) adoption through trials and data-driven technologies. The NAP also commits to stronger compliance and updated Codes of Practice for PPP users and suppliers. AIC has raised concerns about the online sale of professional PPPs to untrained users and is working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) to address this.

Webinars boost awareness of AIC Members' roles

Between January and March 2025, AIC Members delivered eight one-hour webinars to 132 attendees, ranging from policymakers to industry stakeholders - totalling 407 hours of engagement. Participants can continue to engage with the content, as recordings of the webinar have been shared.



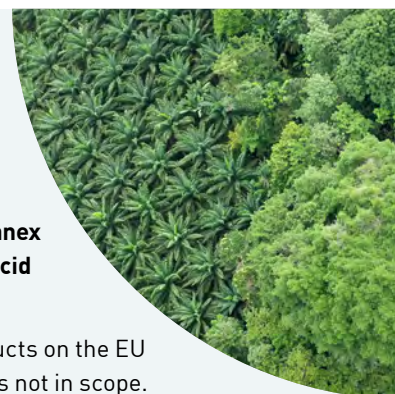
Hazel Doonan,
Head of Crop Protection and Agronomy



EU Commission proposes simplified EUDR amendments

The EU Commission published a new delegated act proposing amendments to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), aimed at simplifying the regulation. Updates to the annex clarify which palm-based products are in scope; palm kernel expeller and palm fatty acid distillate remain included. The scope of soya-based products is unchanged.

The Commission has simplified certain data requirements for businesses placing products on the EU market and clarified the scope of wooden packaging, while confirming compound feed is not in scope.



GB Feed Additive Register update

AIC, together with the British Association of Feed Supplement and Additive Manufacturers (BAFSAM), the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA), and UK Pet Food, is engaging with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) regarding the removal and revocation of several feed additives from the GB Register. These changes were introduced under the Food and Feed (Regulated Products) (Amendment, Revocation, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2025, without industry consultation and with no transitional measures. The industry partners are seeking an urgent meeting with the FSA to agree a pragmatic solution.

James McCulloch,
Head of Animal Feed



AIC calls for joint action on ETS-CBAM impacts

Following the Government's announcement that the UK and EU have agreed to link their Emissions Trading Schemes (ETS), AIC has written to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), requesting a joint meeting with Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) industry stakeholders to consider the implications holistically.

This development will affect CBAM, with modelling indicating a +0.1% GDP gain, though CBAM-specific impacts remain unquantified. AIC continues to advocate for a working CBAM calculator, clarity on allowances, and resolution of rate-setting timelines to support industry readiness and compliance.

AIC secures ministerial commitment on fertiliser regulation consultation

Following AIC's engagement with Daniel Zeichner MP, Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has confirmed it will launch a formal consultation on fertiliser regulation.

This follows AIC raising concerns about unregulated materials and environmental impacts. The consultation offers an opportunity for the sector to shape a modern regulatory framework that supports innovation and sustainability while addressing long-standing challenges.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Fertiliser

AIC Scotland appoints Ian MacDougall as Policy Manager

Ian MacDougall began his role as AIC Scotland Policy Manager with his first engagement at this year's spring meetings.

Robert Sheasby, AIC Chief Executive, said, "I am delighted to have Ian join the AIC to represent AIC Scotland Members to the Government and stakeholders across the Scottish rural economy. This is a pivotal time for Members as the policy landscape develops in agriculture and environment ahead of the elections for Holyrood in May 2026".

Ian MacDougall succeeds Ian Muirhead, who resigned before Christmas. Bringing a wealth of experience from his background in farming and consultancy, Ian's expertise will be invaluable in his new role at AIC Scotland.

We look forward to Ian's contributions and leadership as we navigate the evolving policy environment and continue to advocate for the interests of our Members.



Ian MacDougall,
AIC Scotland Policy Manager



The Sustainable Farming Scheme

AIC Cymru continues to prioritise the development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), which represents a major shift in Welsh agricultural policy. At our April meeting, we welcomed Mark Alexander, Welsh Government SFS Lead, for an informal Q&A. Discussions have become more constructive following the removal of the 10% tree cover requirement. The scheme now includes 12 universal actions and a simplified 2-hectare entry threshold.

Compliance will focus on outcome-based checks rather than evidence submission. An economic impact assessment is expected in June, followed by bilingual communications on scheme structure and payment methodology. AIC has proposed a dedicated session for the agricultural supply sector, recognising the role of trusted on-farm advisers in communicating the scheme. An industry-wide SFS leaflet has also been suggested.

Announcements are expected at the Royal Welsh Show, where AIC will be hosting an informal drinks reception on Monday 21 July. AIC will continue to engage with Members and stakeholders as further details emerge.

Michael Muncey,
AIC Cymru Policy Manager



FIAS Scheme review update

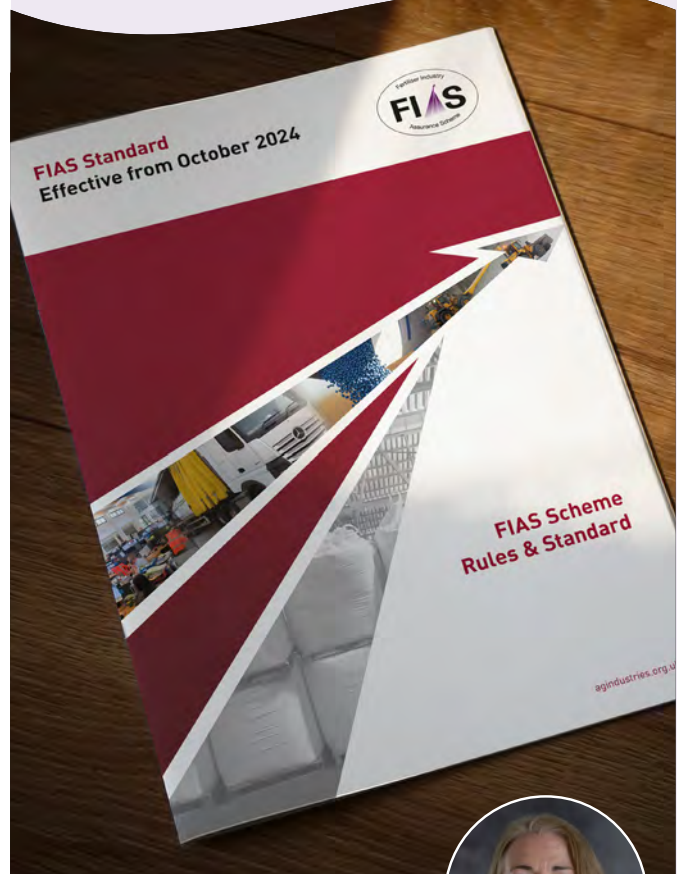
A review of the FIAS Standard by the FIAS Review Group began in January 2025. The current Standard, issued in 2021, has been thoroughly examined and discussed, clause by clause, to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Feedback from a survey of FIAS Participants and information on non-conformances since the last version have been used to support the discussions.

Once the proposed amendments gain approval from the entire Working Group, the revised version will proceed to stakeholder review and then to consultation.

Our aim is to have a final version ready to submit to the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) by the end of 2025 and to implement the new Standard around October 2026.

Participants are kept informed of the progress of the Review via the FIAS Update newsletter and Participant briefings. Feedback during the consultation period will also be encouraged.

We appreciate your continued engagement and look forward to your input in shaping a robust and effective Standard.



Roberta Reeve,
Technical Manager





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DINNER & CONFERENCE 11 & 12 NOV 2025

The AIC Dinner & Conference returns on 11–12 November 2025 at the Holiday Inn West, Peterborough. Tickets for this flagship agri-food supply chain event will be available soon.

This year's theme, "New global norms in the agri-food supply chain," features expert speakers from politics, business, academia, and trade. Confirmed so far are Dr Pete Falloon, the Met Office's Science Lead - Food Security and Sam Lowe, Partner at Flint Global. More speakers will be announced in due course.

The popular pre-conference dinner will take place on 11 November at the same venue. Visit www.aicconference.org.uk for more details.



John Kelley,
Chief Operating Officer, AIC
Managing Director, AIC Services



Certification body scheme owner audit

Each year, AIC conducts an audit of Kiwa, the Certification Body for each of its assurance schemes. The audit assesses scheme management, including systems, innovation and resource, and is carried out by an AIC Technical Manager and, where possible, a Scheme Working Group representative.

Traceability tests are conducted across a range of scopes, audit types, and auditors ensuring key performance indicators (KPIs) are met. Any findings, observations, and recommendations are recorded and discussed for implementation.



Gill Barrow,
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 by clicking 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



Tracy Smith,
Membership Manager

KEY DATES 2025	AIC AGM 8 October
	AIC Services AGM 15 October
	AIC Fertiliser Dinner York – 6 November
	AIC Dinner & Conference 2025 Peterborough – 11-12 November
	AIC Scotland Meetings & Dinner Glasgow – 27 November
	AIC Seed Trade Dinner York – 4 December

