

# JOURNAL

Spring 2022 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture

## Politics and policies

As the situation in Ukraine becomes more volatile, we continue to send out Member briefing updates.

## AIC Sustainability Roadmap

Making progress in Feed and Fertiliser Sectors.

## EU Exit

Difficulties Remain.

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## An update from AIC Chief Executive Robert Sheasby

Compared to the first quarter of 2021, this year is shaping up to be very different. AIC is engaged with Government across the UK and influencing a range of policy as it continues to develop. The policy positions being discussed now will set the tone for the future, and the impact of trade agreements currently being negotiated will not be fully felt for many years, once implemented.

As Covid restrictions loosen we are aiming to get several civil servants out of their offices and onto farms, to help them understand how the agri-supply industry works first-hand. If you are interested in hosting a visit, please do let me know.

At the time of writing, hostilities between Russia and Ukraine are escalating. We are in close contact with Government on the potential impact on supply chains. Please look out for Member briefings on this ongoing and volatile situation; we will keep you updated.

## Policy Update

### Farming Rules for Water

Progress has been made through ministerial intervention to rectify the current confusion around interpreting the Farming Rules for Water (in England) which are *outcome-based* regulations (more flexible than EU *prescription* regulations). Since the beginning of the year, groups of Defra members and industry partners – including AIC – have convened to develop new guidance on these rules.

The basic guidance will include a risk assessment framework to permit applications of organic materials such as manure and slurry when risk to water can be managed and demonstrated on-farm by farmers and their FACTS advisers.

The outcome all parties seek is the ability to use organic materials to benefit soil conditions, farm nutrient balance, and nitrogen use efficiency. The new guidance, expected in March, will require some FACTS advisers to work with their farmers on a transition plan to become compliant in organic applications, if they are not already.

### Influencing agricultural policy

AIC continues to hold meetings with key individuals in agricultural policy, to help shape and influence legislation.

In January, the AIC Board and Policy team met with Janet Hughes, Programme Director for the Future Farming and Countryside Programme at Defra. Janet oversees Defra's policy work in environmental schemes, such as Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Environmental Land Management (ELM), and productivity funding. The meeting allowed Janet to outline Defra's work to date, as well as for board members to feedback their experiences of SFI, stewardship, and productivity schemes. This included the role of advice under SFI and future ELM schemes, using the Feed Adviser Register (FAR) to support animal health and welfare outcomes, input availability, and the ways in which future environmental schemes will interact with other policies like integrated pest management (IPM) and nutrient management.

Following the meeting it was agreed that AIC will continue to regularly update Janet and the Defra team, including inviting them to attend specific AIC sector committees.



Edward Barker,  
Head of Policy and External Affairs

## Strength in AgriSupply Coalition

An unexpected legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic is a far stronger and extensive relationship between the agri-supply industry and government, and far wider engagement across government departments

Online meetings between the nine members of the AgriSupply Coalition members and various government officials were able to take place monthly, and these meetings may now have up to a dozen or more attendees from Defra and increasingly other departments including the Department for International Trade, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Treasury. In contrast, previous physical meetings may have had only one of two Defra officials.

The result of this extensive interaction is the Coalition is now valued by civil servants as a source of practical advice across a wide range of issues from international trade to animal welfare; from the nitty gritty of the Northern Ireland Protocol to the issues of seed trading. And staff within the Coalition members have stronger links with key policy makers.



**AgriSupply**  
**COALITION**  
advice + inputs + services + trade

## AIC Sustainability Roadmap: Making Progress in Feed and Fertiliser Sectors

The feed and fertiliser sectors have made good progress towards their Roadmap goals for *Common metrics, CPD, and Farm input efficiencies*.

On 22nd February, AIC launched the UK data subset of the animal feed carbon footprint from the Global Feed Life Cycle Assessment Institute. The training webinar was attended by 140 feed members, indicating a strong interest in working from a platform that utilises common metrics of measurement.

FAR Sustainability CPD was also rolled out early in January, covering how to make a difference from raw material sourcing, production, and improving efficiencies of feeding on-farm.

On the fertiliser side, it has been agreed to use a basic level measure of Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) and design the FACTS annual CPD training for 2022-23 accordingly. NUE is recognised internationally by the science community and all farmers and advisers aim to work together and make NUE improvements.



Jane Salter,  
Head of Environmental Policy

## EU Exit Difficulties Remain

Difficulties remain for many Members following the UK's exit from the EU. Inconsistent guidance, government system readiness, and human error at points of import are all having an impact. AIC continues to help Members work through these challenges, alongside other bodies.

Elsewhere, AIC recently responded to a Defra consultation regarding the future of AHDB following ballots in its Horticulture and Potato sectors. AIC is particularly concerned by the way in which applications will be made for emergency authorisations of crop protection products for use on minor crops and minor uses on major crops, since applications were often made by AHDB Horticulture.

AIC has recommended that this work still takes place within AHDB, given its importance to the wider cereals and oilseed sectors. AIC has recommended further industry and government dialogue on this issue.

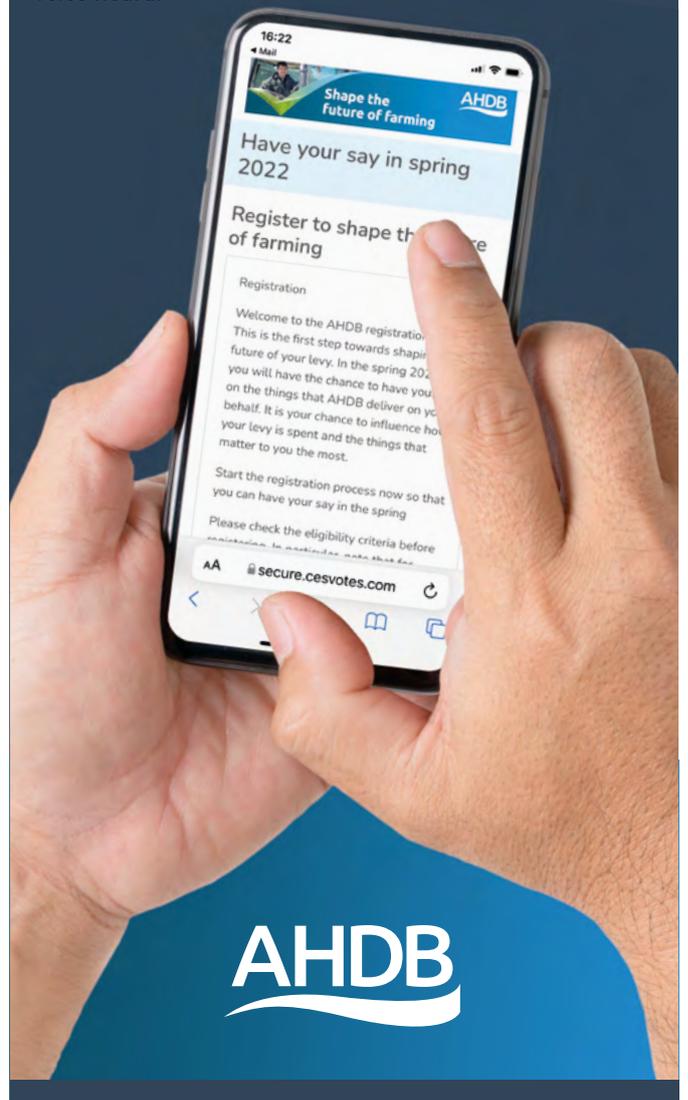


**Edward Barker,**  
Head of Policy and External Affairs

## Digital Grain Passport

Progress has been made in the digital grain passport, with a software provider appointed to build the system and separate proposals for governance of data are under consideration by stakeholders. AHDB has committed to own and operate the passport system for the first three years after the contract is signed. Longer-term partnership and funding models will be presented to industry and feedback encouraged.

AHDB is inviting all levy payers to have a say on its work programme across different sectors. In April, registered levy payers will be asked about the main challenges they are facing, and what AHDB can do to support them. Levy payers should register by 31st March via the AHDB website. AIC Members and their farming customers are invited to register and make their voice heard.



## Official Control Regulation Audits

Pesticide enforcement officers have started to inspect Member’s plant protection stores as part of enforcing The Official Controls (PPPs) Regulations. The Regulations apply to manufacturers, processors, importers, distributors, and sellers of professional plant protection products (PPPs).

The inspections aim to check how operators are complying with their duties under the PPP Sustainable Use Regulations and the Regulation for Placing PPPs on the Market. AIC is collating feedback from Members who have been audited to understand their experiences and will share this with Defra.

The requirements for users of professional PPPs to register with Defra will apply from 22nd June 2022. This will include businesses that use PPPs professionally or have duties relating to professional use of PPPs (e.g. storage for use on site and / or record keeping). Seed sector Members who apply professional PPPs as seed treatments will also need to register before the June deadline. AIC will advise Members when registration is available.



**Hazel Doonan,**  
Head of Sector Crop Protection

## Member Workshop on GFLI and Feed Footprinting

AIC held a workshop in February on the use of a GFLI (Global Feed LCA Institute) data subset that enables Members to calculate greenhouse gas emissions for the feeds they manufacture.

Jane Salter, AIC’s head of environment policy, started by explaining the background to the environmental policy landscape and how using GFLI data helps deliver progress on net zero commitments. Nick Major, in his capacity as board member of GFLI, explained how the data had been developed and highlighted its depth of scientific and technical credibility.

Andrew Pearson, policy manager at AIC then demonstrated how to use the UK data subset that AIC has made available to Members, while Michael Marsden of AB Agri provided some practical examples of how modifying formulation can impact the GHG emissions of rations.

A lively question and answer session followed with some valuable input from Members. The UK data subset and guidance is now available [on the Members section of the AIC website](#).



**James McCulloch,**  
Head of Sector Animal Feed

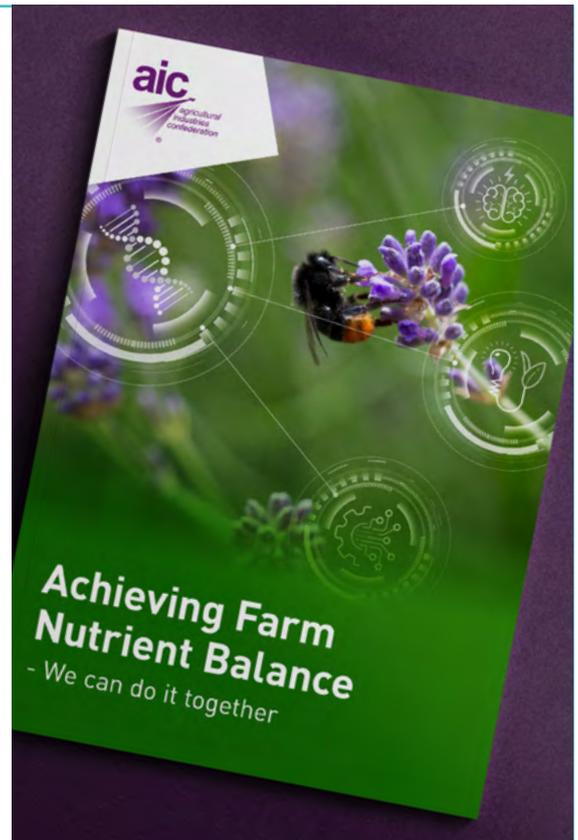
## Future Fertiliser Policy

AIC is leading a key campaign on achieving [farm nutrient balance](#), developing training with FACTS on (NUE). Additionally, Defra, AIC, and stakeholders are working to develop a risk matrix for organic applications.

AIC believes that Defra may intend to maximise the use of all available biofertiliser and circular economy products, rather than try to implement arbitrary targets for mineral fertiliser reduction, as seen in Europe.

However, the UK is already very close to using all available sources of biofertiliser, so any greater usage would require a push towards greater utilisation of the nutrients they contain. Better recovery from all safe and available resources – incentivised through ELMs and driven by future regulations – could effectively reduce the need for 10-20% in nitrogen inputs required in the next decade.

AIC continues to advocate for the use of NUE measures to help farmers and their FACTS advisers to monitor improvements in soils, and all forms of nitrogen applied to land, including better use of organic materials to reduce the losses to water and associated air emissions.



**Jo Gilbertson,**  
Head of Sector Fertilisers



## AIC Scotland

AIC Scotland met with the recently appointed Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Malcolm Offord, and highlighted the key issues currently affecting the fertiliser market, labour market, and ongoing trade friction with the EU.

AIC and NFUS have been working together on messaging to ensure farmers seek FACTS-qualified advice when making decisions on crop nutrition. In light of HGV driver shortages, growers are also asked to plan ahead when ordering product, to enable timely delivery to farm.



**Ian Muirhead,**  
Policy Manager, AIC Scotland



## AIC Wales

The announcement of continued full Basic Payment Scheme payments in Wales to 2023 provides some financial certainty to growers and businesses in Wales as we move towards a Sustainable Farming Wales Bill.

AIC Wales continues to inform and support the Welsh Government on evolving issues, including supplying the latest UK Roundtable statistics on sustainable soya sourcing, which was welcomed. AIC Wales now sits on the Dairy Industry Strategy Group to help promote and direct emission reductions in the dairy sector.



**Michael Muncey,**  
Policy Manager, AIC Wales

# NEW Certification Body for UFAS

From 1st March 2022, Kiwa Agrifood will take over as the sole certification body for the UFAS Scheme. AIC monitors the performance of certification bodies and regularly carries out contract reviews and tender processes to ensure that participants receive good service whilst minimising costs, and safeguarding the integrity of the schemes.

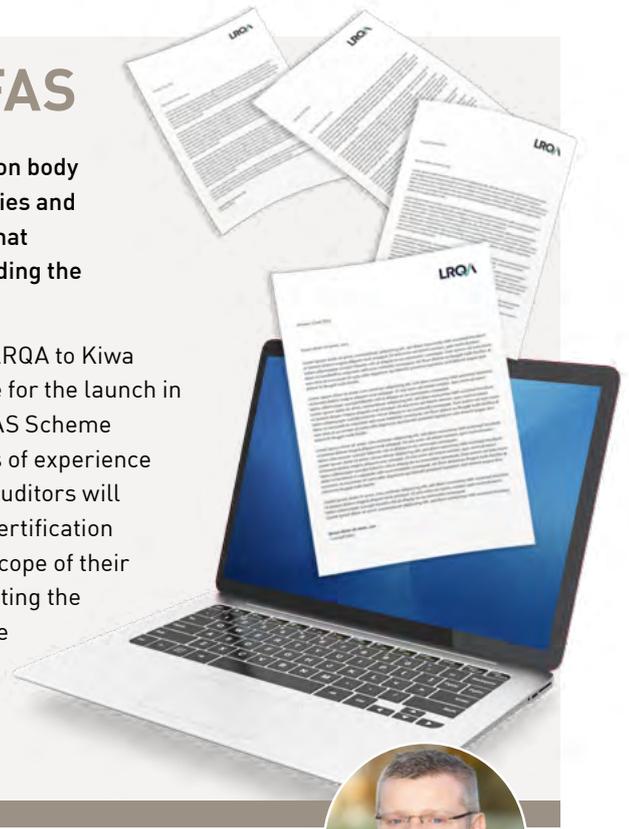


**Dawn Beswick**  
UFAS Scheme Manager

The transition from previous certification body LRQA to Kiwa commenced in 2021 and all systems are in place for the launch in March 2022. Kiwa has recruited a dedicated UFAS Scheme Manager – Dawn Beswick – who has many years of experience in the feed industry. All existing self-employed auditors will continue to deliver UFAS audits under the new certification body. Kiwa has also successfully extended the scope of their UKAS accreditation to include UFAS, demonstrating the impartiality of their systems and the competence of the team.



The Kiwa team can be contacted at [uk.feed@kiwa.com](mailto:uk.feed@kiwa.com) or on 01423 878873.



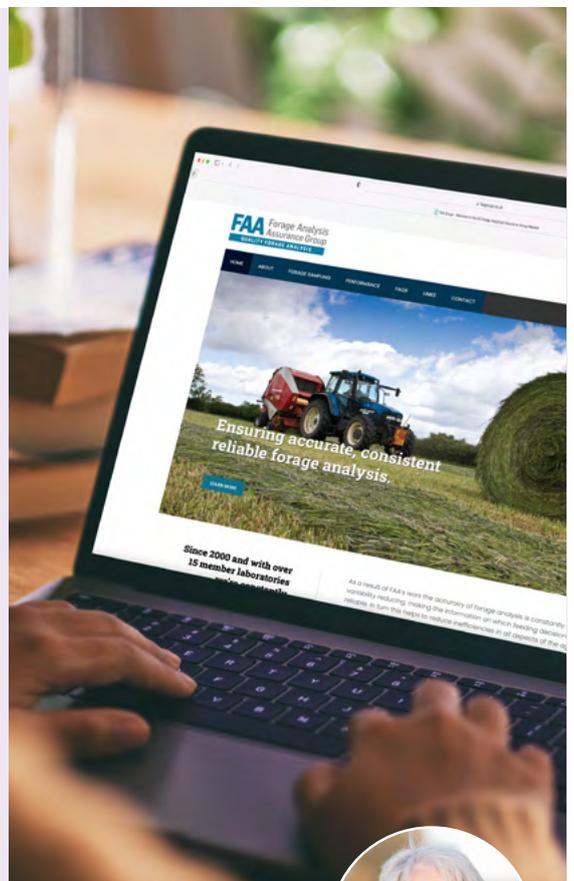
**Simon Williams,**  
Technical Manager

# Forage Analysis Assurance

Efficient use of silage is a valuable and cost-effective way of providing optimised nutrition to livestock – particularly ruminants. Reliable analysis of silage is key to enable farmers, nutritionists, and feed advisers to formulate and produce appropriate feed rations to achieve yield targets and reduce emissions. A grading system within the Forage Analysis Assurance (FAA) Group’s Proficiency Testing Scheme provides its laboratory members with the means to demonstrate their consistency of analysis, which customers can view online and by looking for the FAA Quality Mark on forage analysis reports.

AIC manages the FAA Group, raising awareness of the benefits of forage analysis in conjunction with the AIC Feed Adviser Register, and providing advice for forage users on good sampling techniques to get the best analysis possible from clamps and bales.

Visit the website [www.faaagroup.co.uk](http://www.faaagroup.co.uk) for further information.



**Roberta Reeve,**  
Technical Manager

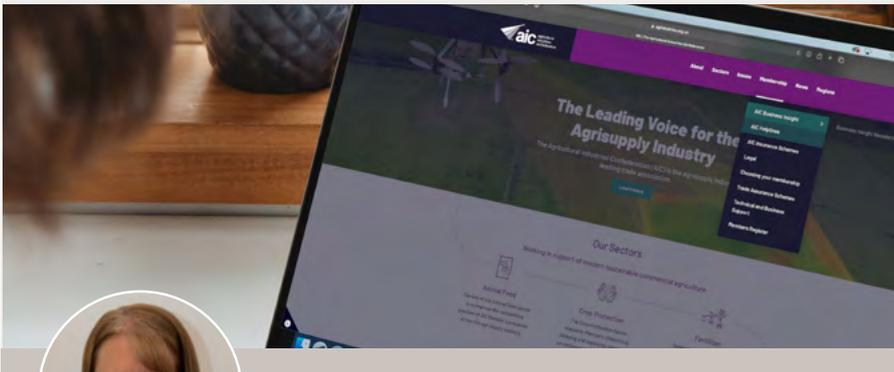
## Choose Your Member Briefings

Members are encouraged to update their personal profiles on the AIC website and choose which Member briefings and publications you receive.

Personal details can also be updated in the secure Members area of the website, including email addresses. If you wish to check your current information and communication preferences, simply login to the AIC website and select "edit profile" followed by "manage my contact preferences".

AIC was very proactive with contacting Members throughout 2021 via Teams or Zoom.

If you wish to book an online meeting with AIC please get in touch with Tracy Smith, Membership Manager via [tracy.smith@agindustries.org.uk](mailto:tracy.smith@agindustries.org.uk)



**Tracy Smith,**  
Membership Manager

## Dates for Your Diary in 2022

**27 April**

AIC Scotland spring meeting  
McDiarmid Park, Perth.



## Positive Response to New FAR Module



The Feed Adviser Register CPD training for 2021-22 will study sustainability and the challenges within the livestock sector, in line with the ambitions of the AIC's Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain, and Achieving Farm Nutrient Balance. The aim is to equip feed advisers with some of the tools they need to offer the professional advice their customers will be seeking.

The course begins with a background to sustainability, before considering UK policy developments and targets around net zero, feed aspects (such as raw material sourcing, soya, palm, and co-products), sustainable feed manufacturing and Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), before moving on to the sustainability of UK livestock production systems, the metrics used to demonstrate progress, and innovations within feed and nutrition.



**Sue Whittington,**  
Technical Manager



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