



## COVID-19

# Supporting local lockdowns

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AIC Scotland have been busy representing the agri-supply industry across a wide range of forums and supporting member businesses navigate their way through COVID-19 restrictions. A big thank you goes to our Members for their continued input, your insight allow us to better support the industry.



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As we move into a different phase of the pandemic, the AIC continues to focus much of its time in helping member businesses mitigate the risks of local lockdowns and demonstrating to the government that we are a trusted partner.

We have been providing regular industry updates to Scotland's government officials, detailing how Members are adopting measures to control the spread of the virus and protect employees and customers.

Clearly this renewed focus comes at a time when governments around the world are increasingly concerned about a second spike of the virus. We will continue to lobby the government to ensure that any localised lockdown measures recognise the critical nature of our industry and allow businesses to continue to operate.

We are working on contingency plans with UK colleagues in the event of closures. For example, if a feed mill closes, we're looking at how we co-ordinate feed supplies to avoid animal welfare issues.

We've also been successful in helping Members procure vital PPE dust masks through a Scottish Government procurement hub set up with manufacturer Lyreco.

For any Members having difficulty procuring PPE, please contact Ian Muirhead directly at [Ian.Muirhead@agindustries.org.uk](mailto:Ian.Muirhead@agindustries.org.uk)

## Protect Scotland app launched

The Scottish Government have launched the Protect Scotland app. It is designed to help existing contact and trace teams track people down who may have come into contact with COVID-19.

We are encouraging all our Members and their employees to download the app to help the national effort in suppressing the spread of COVID-19.





## Programme for Government initiatives

The Scottish Government have published their programme for government and there are a range of initiatives which will benefit the agricultural and rural sector, including:

- £10 million has been allocated to the Sustainable Agriculture Capital Grant Scheme which is a 5 week pilot scheme. Farmers will be eligible for a 50% grant for a range of capital equipment to reduce emissions and boost productivity. For details, visit the Scottish Government Rural Payments website.
- More sector specific pilot support schemes will be developed using a farmer-led approach supported by scientific and research providers. These pilots will test new approaches which could form the basis for agricultural support payments going forward.
- As part of the Government’s commitment to establishing a statutory national nitrogen budget sheet, there will be a programme of stakeholder engagement. This will enable better understanding of nitrogen flow and support targets for reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Broadband voucher scheme for a range of equipment to provide superfast broadband by 2021.
- Updated climate change plan and associated sector detail to be published by December 2020.

For an overview of all relevant initiatives please visit:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021/>

## EU exit update

**In less than 100 days the transition period with the EU will be over, but there is still an overriding sense of uncertainty about what we’ll be facing at the start of 2021.**

Disagreements on state aid and fisheries policy has meant a final deal looked challenging. Then the UK Government published its Internal Market Bill which has created a fractious relationship between the UK and EU as well as between Westminster and Holyrood.

As a result of this, we now have to seriously consider all possible trading scenarios that could arise in 2021. There could be a comprehensive deal, a limited tariff-free agreement or no agreement at all; each carry their own unique challenges.

The AIC are engaging with Westminster and Holyrood to ensure member concerns are clearly articulated. We are also receiving the most up-to-date information and advice, which we will relay to Members, so watch this space!



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## AIC Scotland AGM

Our AGM and committee meetings will be held on the 26th November from 10am with sector meetings. In addition to the usual updates we will be joined by our newly appointed Head of Policy and External Affairs Ed Barker. This is a great opportunity to meet Ed and hear some key updates on the EU-UK trade negotiations.

**Full details and online meeting links will be sent to Members soon.**

## Help shape our manifesto

Ahead of the next Scottish Parliament election we will be producing a manifesto outlining our key policy asks to the main political parties. We are giving you an opportunity to shape this manifesto by completing a short online survey. Your answers will inform our manifesto setting out our priorities as an industry for the next four years.

### Working with key stakeholders

We continue to strengthen relations with key stakeholders in rural Scotland, ensuring we speak with one voice to the government and that Members' concerns are clearly understood by all. What does this mean in practise?

- Weekly virtual round table meetings hosted by NFUS with key stakeholders including AIC, Institute of Auctioneers and Appraisers, Scottish Land and Estates and QMS.
- Cereal supply chain summit - meetings with AIC, NFUS, Scottish Quality Crops and Scottish Government – These meetings have been invaluable in ensuring that arable producers understand the issues affecting our grain trade Members and supply chain pressures resulting from the pandemic. In collaboration with the NFUS, we've effectively managed expectations around harvest 2020 highlighting that it won't be 'business as usual'. The pandemic has also created issues within certain grain supply chains, so we've worked with arable producers to ensure they understand that there may be delays in the uplift of grain and to plan accordingly.



## ARD stakeholder update

The agriculture and rural development group continues to be a good source of up-to-date information on devolved policy. At the most recent meeting a range of updates were provided.

- The agriculture and climate change stakeholder group will meet in the autumn to discuss the updated climate change plan and implications for our sector.
- Rural Support Bill (Scotland's equivalent of the UK Ag Bill) passed its final stage to provide a legal framework to secure a period of stability before new support mechanisms are trialled.
- Tied to this process is the work of the future policy group which will make recommendations to Scottish Ministers before Christmas. The next stage will be to create pilot projects trialling new approaches for supporting farmers i.e. to support productivity improvements whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- It is anticipated that the government will set up industry-led groups within sectors such as arable, dairy and sheep to work up practical support proposals similar to the Suckler Beef Climate group chaired by Jim Walker.

Public entrance at the Scottish Parliament



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## Informing industry consultations

We have provided responses on behalf of the industry to a range of consultations, including:

- UK Internal Market Bill.
- Update of Scottish Biosecurity Codes.
- FSS – Centralised Animal Feed Official Controls Delivery Model.
- Climate Change Stakeholder Group – Grassland research.
- Zero Waste Scotland – Protein plan for Scotland.

## AIC Scotland – your voice in virtual Holyrood

We have recently been successful in engaging with rural and environment spokespeople including Scottish Conservatives (Rachael Hamilton and Annie Wells) as well as with Deputy First Minister John Swinney.

We have regular contact with Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing and Minister for Rural Affairs Mairi Gougeon. We recently met with Mr Ewing to discuss the concerns our Scottish fish feed manufacturers have about export tariffs in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The issue of crop protection product availability is an ongoing issue which we were able to address in a recent call with Mairi Gougeon.

To support your business, AIC Scotland can arrange virtual meetings with your local MP or MSP to discuss the issues that matter to you – get in touch with Ian Muirhead to arrange.



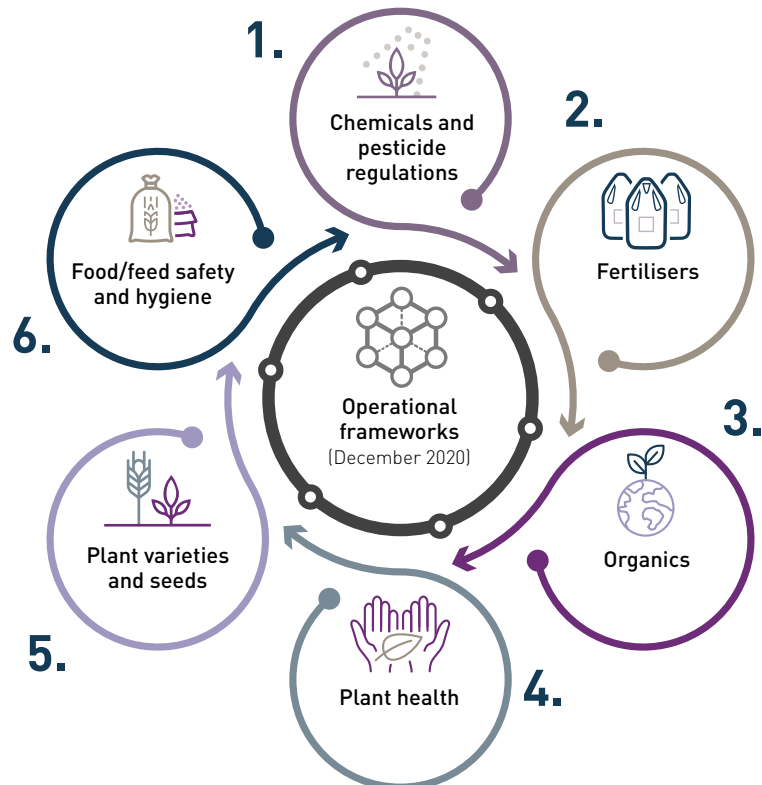
Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Robin Barron vice chair AIC Scotland and General Manager East of Scotland Farmers.

## Common frameworks – ensuring regulatory alignment

DEFRA and the devolved governments are working together to produce frameworks which will provide the basis for co-operation and co-ordination across a range of policy areas. The pandemic has slowed down progress but we expect the next phase of work will include stakeholder technical engagement. The aim is to have operational frameworks by December 2020 in the following sectors:



Further information:  
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All frameworks will benefit from further stakeholder engagement to ensure that proposals are workable and meet the needs of those industries affected.

For more details about the frameworks, please visit the AIC website:

[www.agindustries.org.uk/resource/ensuring-uk-wide-regulatory-alignment.html](http://www.agindustries.org.uk/resource/ensuring-uk-wide-regulatory-alignment.html)

## Farm Advisory Service (FAS)

Influencing the future of advice



AIC Scotland participated in recent survey work looking at the future of advice provision for Scottish agriculture. We are working hard to ensure that FAS recognises the crucial role our Members play in providing farmers with specialist advice through FAR, FACTS and BASIS. There is increasing need for advice to help farmers become more efficient and reduce their environmental footprint.