

JOURNAL

Spring 2020 | Working in support of modern, sustainable, commercial agriculture



Robert Sheasby,
Chief Executive, AIC



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The Political landscape

An update from
AIC CEO Robert Sheasby

2020 is moving fast, but with the wettest autumn for many years, it has been tough across every sector the AIC represents with delayed decisions certain to have knock on effects at least for the remainder of this year. We continue, however, to look to what the future will bring for your business.

The recent AIC Adding Value publication sets out our approach in much more detail, but put simply, we have to keep looking to the future. With the environment summit COP26 to be held in the UK later this year, alongside upcoming approval of the Agriculture and Environment Bills, each of the sectors are looking at what this will mean, not just this year but beyond.

Of course this does not stop our day to day work on your behalf. We continue engaging the UK Governments on new policies, connecting with civil servants and Ministers, as well as continuing to work with relevant stakeholders near and far.

Coronavirus is an emerging issue which AIC is monitoring, engaging with members and Government on the implications of it.

Please don't overlook how you and your business can help AIC reach further and quicker. If you would like to host one of your MPs, MSPs or other elected representative do let the AIC know so that we can help with this essential work. Remember they are now making decisions that affect every single one of us.



Make sure your voice is heard

January 31st this year was different. Government legislation meant that the UK started its journey to fully leave the EU at the end of 2020. Whatever your views on UK membership it is important now, more than ever, that we work together as sectors and as an industry to present clear messages to Government.

The one certainty is that Trade with the EU will not be as straightforward as it was. The Prime Minister going as far as to suggest an Australian style agreement i.e. no agreement. Not what we believe our Government wants, but indicating that the rest of 2020 will be dominated by trade talks.

With the first quarter-end of the year fast approaching, UK politics looks radically different to the end of 2019. We start the Twenties with a newly formed Government and Stormont reconvened. In Westminster, new Secretary of State George Eustice continues to progress Agricultural and Environmental Bills, both with an emphasis on public money for public good. Consultations and discussions take place in Scotland, Wales and we expect later this year, Northern Ireland.

Overlaying all this sits trade agreements, which the UK expects to make during the year. Front and centre will be negotiations on a trade deal with the EU and almost certainly in parallel with the USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Recent conversations with representatives of the USA indicate they would like to see a trade deal secured relatively promptly, however the negotiating objectives of the UK for such a deal are not yet known.



The AIC Board was joined at the beginning of the year by Defra trade representatives who are now ensuring 10 Downing Street understand issues affecting AIC Members. These meetings are key to informing Government and to establishing clear lines of communication between negotiators and representatives of those businesses likely to be affected by trade decisions.

Through the Agri Brexit Coalition and engagement with Government working groups we are able to make sure your voice is heard. As we move through the negotiations it is likely that from time to time AIC will be asked for input to questions Government have as trade deals move closer.

The recent Government consultation on tariffs is one case in point where AIC is seeking Member input. The AIC cannot win every nuanced point but we can make sure that Government understands the consequences on AIC Members of their decisions.

The Northern Ireland protocol whilst not an issue for every Member will almost certainly have implications for those trading into and potentially out of NI and into Great Britain, unless superseded by any agreement with the EU.

It will be really easy to confuse the noise of trade deals with the signal of a deal. The noise is the distraction, some of which is already coming from parts of the EU, but our own Minister will make similar distracting statements in order to secure a deal. Whatever happens, if something is important to you please let the AIC know so that we can ensure Government hear your concerns.

ELMS

A step closer to becoming reality?

In early February Defra approved AIC's proposal to undertake research as part of its Tests and Trials programme to assist in developing the government's future Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

AIC's research is specifically looking at how the established, trusted relationship between professional advisers and their farmer clients might support the delivery of combined objectives for the environment alongside farm productivity/business improvements.

ELMS is intended to be the system by which 'payment for public goods' fully replaces the Basic Payment and Countryside Stewardship Schemes by 2028. The findings of our research will be considered in the development of the new scheme.

Fifteen advisers from Member companies have been identified to demonstrate examples of how the provision of advice to their clients has assisted in making changes to farm activities; through the delivery of improved efficiency (and reduced emissions) or by supporting the implementation of resource protection, wildlife or biodiversity improvements in a way that integrates with the business objectives of the farm.

Farm visits and case studies will start in March 2020. Analysis and evaluation of the activities identified will be undertaken following these, with a final report being issued to Defra in March 2021.



Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager, AIC

Looking forward with a sense of clear intent

Few of us can be left in any doubt that the next 25-30 years will be shaped by the sustainability agenda – the intrinsic link between economic, social and environmental considerations. From daily conversations and media coverage, to the UK’s legally binding commitments to Net zero carbon and environmental targets, the clock is ticking and the expectations high.

One thing is clear to an increasing number of AIC members, that sustainability is about effecting a change in mindset within their businesses. Most important is to shift from single issue thinking to a more holistic approach and to develop dialogue linking business activity to those UN sustainable development goals where our industry sectors can deliver impact.

Our role is clearly pivotal as there are few things more important than food production and a resilient environment which can provide not only for ourselves but for future generations.

Through the AIC’s 5 sectors: **Animal Feed, Crop Marketing, Crop Protection & Agronomy, Fertiliser and Seed** we will plan how the agri-supply industry will combine its resources to adapt and influence change both at policy and delivery level before and beyond the farm gates. The AIC Board and AIC’s new Policy Forum are having a meeting of minds from which our longer-term plans will evolve.



It is encouraging that many Members are already on board when thinking about their unique strengths, identifying their biggest ‘hotspots’ and place in the process. What the AIC can offer is a direction of travel (roadmaps) which can serve to help Members make their own plans and to support businesses with the tools and common metrics they’ll require for conveying success.

What we must not do is produce roadmaps which look good and do nothing. They will need to be part of a

whole new approach to supporting change and measuring success, and the starting point will be looking back to what we have already achieved and are achieving. Not everything is broken but we need to build on what we know.

One of the priorities, certainly for the Feed and Fertiliser sectors is to have clear messages prepared in the run up to the UN COP 26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow this November. We must show leadership for ourselves and in supporting UK farmers and growers in meeting their net zero ambition, ten years ahead of the legal timeline. Communication will be key and the strength of our collaborative effort and support of our farming organisations will be needed more than ever.

We are bound to meet challenges, created by having to face so many aspects of change in a relatively short space of time. Quite quickly we will need joined up thinking on what success could look like in 2050 and joined up government policies which support the process, layer by layer.

AIC business links to Sustainable Development Goals



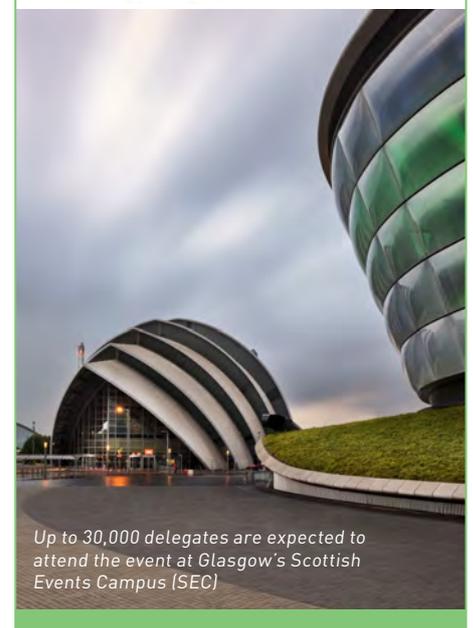
Ref: UN Global Sustainable Development goals



Further information:
Jane Salter, Head of Environmental Policy



2020 YEAR OF CLIMATE ACTION



Up to 30,000 delegates are expected to attend the event at Glasgow’s Scottish Events Campus (SEC)

IPM - A more ambitious National Action Plan

AIC will be seeking Members input when the consultation on the revision of the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides is launched this spring.

Revision of the plan has been delayed due to many issues including EU Exit; however, Defra have started to draft the consultation and AIC will respond to this on your behalf.

It is expected that the new National Action Plan will be more focussed on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and will aim to deliver on the ambitions of the 25 Year Environment Plan – which intends to put IPM at the heart of crop protection and reduce the use of, and better target, plant protection products.

AIC Members, through their investment in training and R&D on IPM techniques, as well as their continued support and work with the Voluntary Initiative will be key in delivering the aims of the new National Action Plan.



Hazel Doonan,
Head of Sector Crop Protection

So, what do agronomists, storekeepers and delivery vehicle drivers do?

We all know what agronomists, storekeepers and delivery vehicle drivers do, but can we explain it in a succinct way to stakeholders, including the public?

To help communicate the roles of some key actors within the crop protection and agronomy sector, AIC has developed infographics for the roles of agronomists, storekeepers and delivery vehicle drivers - one public facing, the other policy facing.

These outline the skills and extensive training undertaken by individuals in each role; provision of expert advice, ensuring plant protection products (PPPs) are stored safely and securely and delivering PPPs to farm in a secure and timely way which enables AIC Members to help farmers produce healthy crops.



Fertiliser Tariff proposals

The UK wants to simplify the tariff structure and move away from specific rates for each commodity code and look instead to band rates. Any commodity code with a current applied tariff between 0% & 20% would be rounded down to the nearest multiple of 2.5%, ie. 2.5%, 5%, 7.5% etc. Those rates below 2.5% are being considered to be set to zero.

The UK is also proposing removing any tariffs on products imported into the UK where there is currently no domestic UK production. This tariff removal would also apply to intermediate goods, imported into the UK which are then part of a UK finished product.

The overall aim appears to be seeking to strike a balance between limiting any potential rise in consumer price inflation with appropriate levels of support for domestic manufacturers. Final positions will undoubtedly be influenced by agreed trade deals.



Jo Gilbertson,
Head of Sector Fertilisers

Working for clarity on seed labelling and plant passport requirements

The new Plant Health Regulation came into force 14th December 2019, and requires a specific range of seeds across the EU (and UK) to have a plant passport. This is irrespective of Brexit and applies to seed that is staying in the UK, in order to demonstrate the seed does not contain a specific pest.

Detailed information and the full range of relevant crops, and the necessary forms to submit in order to have authorisation to provide a plant passport, are available on www.gov.uk/guidance/issuing-plant-passports-to-trade-plants-in-the-eu. Whilst common in other sectors of the seed industry, plant passports will now be required on seed for a number of combinable crops from the 2020 harvest: *Brassicca napus* (oilseed rape), *Glycine max* (soya bean), *Linum usitatissimum* (flax/linseed), and for vegetable use *Pisum sativum* (peas) and *Vicia faba* (broad bean). The requirement is that the EU flag and the words 'plant passport' are visible at the top of the certification label. AIC has been in communication with Defra to gain more clarity for industry, and to press on clear liaison with the label manufacturers.

In February Dalton Seeds hosted five civil servants from Defra and APHA to demonstrate the requirements of the seed industry, and proactively work together towards solutions.



Peter Fox and Matthew Dalton show seed label requirements

Trade Priorities for the Feed Sector

AIC Feed sector have been active in identifying areas where legislative divergence from EU regulations may have positive benefits for the sector in terms of trade post-Brexit and where any negative implications in terms of UK/EU trade are minimised.

The Feed sector has identified the following areas for consideration:

- UK adoption of novel genomic techniques.
- UK code of practice on setting MRLs for pesticide residue in imported feed materials and processing factors.
- UK rules on establishing MRLs for fragments of rDNA in fermentation feed additives.
- A streamlined UK feed additive authorisation process.

Feed and food safety remain paramount but the Feed industry must be able to operate in a legislative and trade environment which embraces innovation and opportunity.



James McCulloch,
Head of Sector Animal Feed

Soya and responsible sourcing – an update

Whilst the UK Animal Feed industry imports comparatively very low levels of soya and palm products, the industry is far from complacent when considering it's responsibilities in terms of sustainable sourcing.

To that effect, AIC have been fully engaged with responsible sourcing agendas, including an active role in UK roundtables on sustainable soya and palm oil. In particular, AIC has called for the maintenance of the Amazon Soya Moratorium which has ensured, since 2006, that no soya used in animal feed is sourced from the Amazon biome. In addition, AIC is contributing to the recently re-convened FEFAC Soya Drafting Group which is charged with reviewing the FEFAC Soya Sourcing Guidelines.

AIC will continue to develop better data to identify the provenance of soya coming into the UK and will encourage the industry to source soya based on zero illegal deforestation whilst driving the move to deforestation free soya by development of the FEFAC soy sourcing guidelines.



New Chairs for FIAS Committees



Andy Bell

FIAS Steering Group Chair

FIAS Steering Group Chair, Andy Bell, is Operations Director of Origin Fertilisers and has worked within the fertiliser industry since 1995. Managing manufacturing, storage and transport operations across 12 sites in the UK and experienced as a qualified engineer, in road haulage operations, as a Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser and NEBOSH qualified, Andy has a significant understanding of the strategic and practical issues affecting the fertiliser industry.



Ben Blayds

FIAS Working Group Chair

FIAS Working Group Chair, Ben Blayds was appointed as CF Fertilisers Logistics & Distribution Manager in 2018. Now responsible for the UK & Europe supply chain with a focus on contract management, compliance & improving CF customers' experience further, Ben has completed his Frontline Leadership course in Management with the Centre for Creative Leadership in the US and is training to become a qualified Dangerous Goods Safety Adviser.



New FEMAS Working Group Chair elected

Independent consultant Tim Oliver has been appointed Chairman of the FEMAS Working Group. Tim has had a long and varied career in the animal feed industry, including a significant role in the development of AIC's suite of feed assurance schemes, including being the first approved FEMAS auditor.

"The approach of FEMAS has always been to consider risks along the entire supply chain, but also to evolve with developments in the feed industry and technology. I am looking forward to working with AIC and the FEMAS Working Group to ensure that FEMAS remains a robust, effective and practical feed safety scheme."



TASCC Review

The review of the TASCC code of practice is already underway.

All three working groups (Transport, Testing and combined Storage and Merchants) will meet during 2020. The UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) has informed AIC that a period of six months is needed to review new Code editions before issue.

This will impact the total review timetable. Therefore, the TASCC Review Group will be extending the review to February 2021. This will give time for UKAS to look through the revised code and be in line with other AIC schemes.



SiloMOT, a new app to improve on farm safety

AIC have been involved in the development of a new app, SiloMOT produced by Silo Manufacturer Collinson.

The application has been developed to help farmers manage silo maintenance and address any corrosion or damage issues before they become critical.

The app is suitable to assess all silos. Simply download SiloMOT from the App Store or Google Play, register your silo and the app will guide you through a short survey to assess the critical structural elements of the silo. On completion a report will be produced outlining if remedial work is required to keep your silo safe and operational.

Further information can be found on the following link - www.silomot.co.uk



AIC Scotland Press Conference 5th December 2019

December 2019 saw the return of our annual press conference and networking lunch for key Scottish Agri journalists. The conference was well attended and provided an excellent audience for the launch of our new AIC Scotland policy document – A Future Agricultural Policy for Scotland.

‘The future policy doc is our strategic contribution to the development of a successful post Brexit agricultural policy here in Scotland that works for the whole rural economy.’

The launch provided a great platform to raise the profile of AIC in Scotland and to field a broad range of questions from journalists on a number of key issues from NPBT’s to the future of e-passports for grain movements’.



Ian Muirhead,
Policy Manager
AIC Scotland



AIC appoints new Policy Manager to shape forward-thinking agenda

AIC is delighted to announce the appointment of Andrew Pearson as Policy Manager. Andrew’s role will involve working across all five sectors of AIC, analysing the latest information and data in order to develop solutions for the most pressing issues facing agri-supply businesses and UK agriculture.

Andrew brings extensive experience and expertise, having worked as a Land Quality and Estates Manager for over seven years along with previous roles as a Contaminated Land Officer and Environmental Health Technician. Andrew has a successful record of delivering projects to minimise health, safety and environmental risk and promote sustainability.

As Policy Manager, Andrew will assist in building AIC’s intellectual property and meeting the policy objectives determined by Members through AIC’s committees. In his role, Andrew will also ensure Members have access to important information on current trends in support of policy objectives.

Careful development of AIC policy is absolutely vital to ensure our Member businesses continued success. Andrew will be a valuable asset both for AIC and its Members at this time of transformation, helping to ensure our involvement in creating a policy agenda that is sustainable, productive, and forward-thinking.

Andrew Pearson,
Policy Manager



Membership Matters

It’s been a busy few months for AIC Membership with declarations being sent out and forms being returned. I would like to thank all companies that have returned their forms and look forward to receiving all declarations in due course.

I have recently visited a number of Member companies, having the opportunity to talk through how AIC can add value is essential to ensuring we are delivering the best Membership proposition to all our Members irrelevant of the business size or Sector.

To arrange an AIC Membership visit, please contact me, Tracy Smith, direct on:- 01733 385232 or tracy.smith@agindustries.org.uk I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Tracy Smith,
Membership Manager

Dates for your diary in 2020

23 April	AIC Scotland AGM & Committee meeting
6 May	Fertiliser Sector golf day Oulton Hall, Leeds
25 June	Fertiliser Sector Communications meeting and BBQ – Orton Hall Hotel
29 Oct	Fertiliser Sector Annual Dinner - York
10 Nov	Pre-Agribusiness Supper Orton Hall Hotel
11 Nov	Agribusiness 2021 East of England Showground, Peterborough
18 Nov	Fertiliser Sector Scottish Communications Meeting Edinburgh
3 Dec	Seed Industry Dinner The Principal, York

