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**Dynamic duo in historic win!**

ANDREW NEILSON and David Mitchell celebrating after this were announced as joint SAFFC (Scottish Association of Farmers and Food Canners) Champions of the Year at the Royal Highland Show – the first time in the competition's history that there has been a perfect tie in the points. Our massive show coverage starts on page 14. Photograph by Rob Harvey. [rob@thscottishfarmer.co.uk](mailto:rob@thscottishfarmer.co.uk)

**The Royal Highland Show ... biggest and BEST coverage**

PAGES 14 TO 50  
AND 70 TO 93

**Have robot tractors finally landed?**

PAGE 52

**Food is still too cheap**

By John Sleigh

DESPITE food prices rising at their fastest pace in 40 years, NFI Scotland president Martin Kennedy believes the food in the shops is still too cheap to properly reflect the cost of producing it. Inflation has edged up to 9.1% in the 12 months to May, according to the Office for National Statistics, with bread, milk and meat climbing fast. The end product price needs to rise. The retailers are not taking the food crisis as seriously as we are, said Mr Kennedy. Whilst acknowledging that the public are facing rising prices, he pointed out that farmers are struggling with 250% inflation on their inputs and called on consumers to pay a little bit more. Warning of the long-term effects on national food security if farmers are left to struggle, the union president said shoppers should pay more now, so we can be a hell of a lot better off further down the track. Consumers have seen sharp rises on the shelves. According to AFDC, lean mince has risen 71p/kg to £5.99/kg and lamb legs are up £1.07/kg to £12.64/kg. A four-pint carton of semi-skimmed milk has also risen 21p from last March to £1.55 today and a 800g loaf of bread now costs £1.18 on average up 11p on last year. However, not all food has gone up – potatoes have fallen in price on the year from £1.56/kg to £1.28/kg and pork is cheaper now at £4.16 down 19p/kg. But all in all, food analysts acceptable for growing produce. He said: "We avoided trying to set it at a minimum simply because overall consumer tastes can change and you can have more foods imported. Things like rice which we cannot grow. But for the foods we can grow, we do believe we should keep it at broadly 75% home grown. It has been stable for about 20 years at that level. Obviously a little bit higher in the 80s when we had production subsidies and all sorts of other distortions. But by historical standards it is generally still quite high. It was only 50 to 60% in the inter war years and in the late 19th century it was again quite low. So it is high compared to historical standards," he argued.

company Kantar stated that the annual grocery bill in the UK is up by an average of £80. Mr Kennedy warned against retailers turning to cheaper foreign imports to bring costs down. He said: "I can't see our ability to import our way out of this. He added that the National Food Strategy, newly published in Westminster was a "missed opportunity" to set targets on food security, as the report only goes so far as to aspire to broadly maintain the level of food security at the moment. But according to Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, George Eustice, the UK should continue importing 25% of the food which it could grow or rear itself. The Cornish MP insisted that a 75% self-sufficiency level was quite acceptable for growing produce.

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