

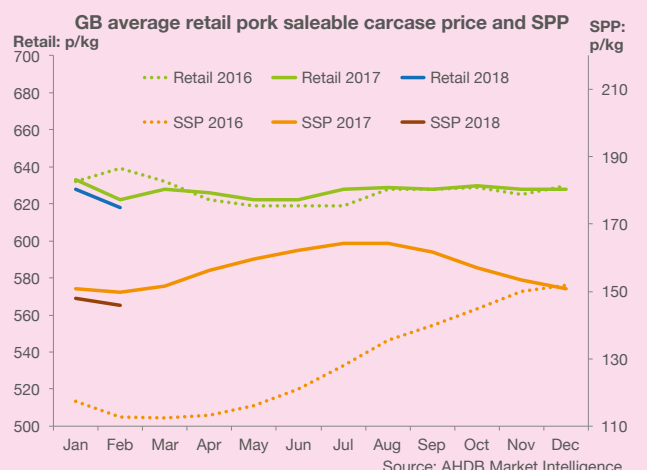
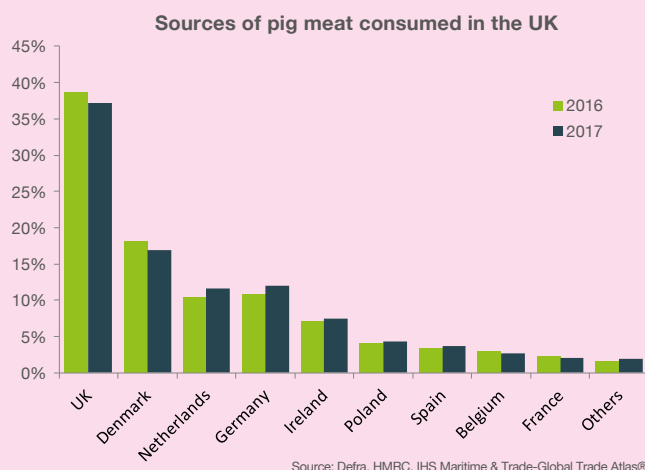
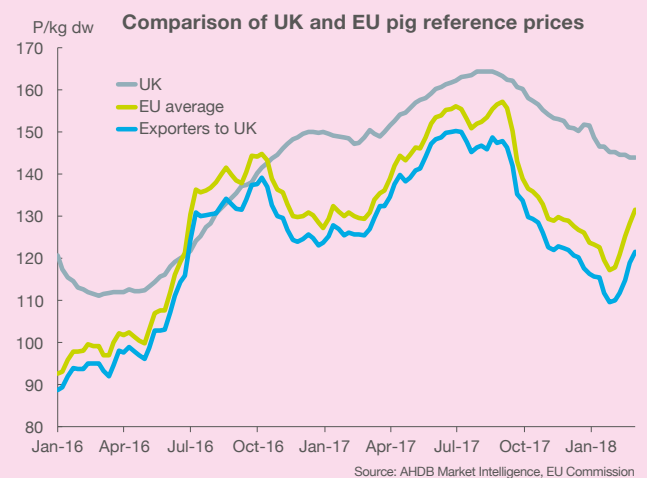
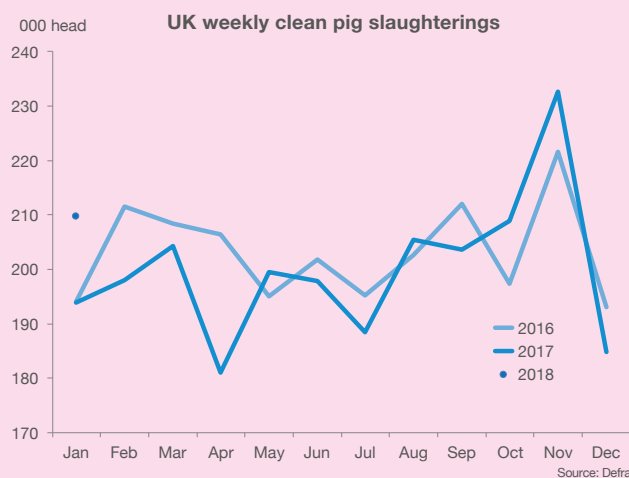
Pork sales growth stalls in January

In contrast to the latter half of 2017, the new year got off to a slow start for the pork retail market. Fresh/frozen pork sales volumes for the 12 weeks ending 28 January recorded a marginal decline on year-earlier levels, driven by falling sales volumes during the final four weeks of the period. Nonetheless, with rising retail prices, the value of the market was still 3% higher year-on-year.

The other red meats also recorded declining sales volumes across the same period. However, fresh/frozen poultry sales increased 3% the previous year. In contrast to the other meats, poultry prices were 2% lower than year-earlier levels, which may have attracted shoppers.

Nonetheless, processed pork products recorded a more positive performance in the 12 weeks ending 28 January.

Bacon and ham sales volumes both increased 2% year-on-year, and sausages were up 1%. With rising retail prices, value growth was even stronger at 4% and 7% respectively. Growth in these categories compensated for the decline in fresh pork, meaning total pig meat sales volumes were up just over 1% on 2017 levels during the period. The value of the market overall was 5% higher.



Focus on gilt retention

Retaining more young sows is vital if breeding herds are to improve physical and financial performance. At any time, 20–25% of production should be from gilts. A key target should be to maintain a gilt pool, from 90kg to service, of at least the equivalent of 12% of the target herd size.

A typical 45%+ replacement rate means that nearly half the herd will have been replaced during the year. Management of this parity, therefore, has a large impact on overall productivity and profitability.

Gilt Watch, a new AHDB Farm Excellence initiative, aims to help the industry improve gilt retention and ensure increased output over the full lifetime of sows: more than 30 independent producers are monitoring gilt performance and working together to find out where improvements can be made.

It typically costs around £250 to rear a gilt, so it's essential to make sure they get past their first or second parity and reach their full lifetime potential to get a return on that investment.

Visit: pork.ahdb.org.uk/pig-production/gilt-watch/



Pig Pro has received a helpful upgrade



Following close consultation with a number of large pig producers, some additional functionality has been added. This will make it easier than ever to keep up to date with the training obligations of businesses and the personal development of staff.

One important improvement is in the ability for businesses to customise their own Pig Pro accounts. Training requirements of assurance schemes can now be captured, as well as business-specific, in-house training programmes. Mandatory training such as manual handling, health and safety and first aid can also be added, with training renewal dates set up as alerts.

As a business management tool, Pig Pro will take away much of the strain. The compliance function is sophisticated enough to set requirements based on an individual staff member's job role or by the number of people per unit that need certain training.

If employees move between units or leave the business, the system uses the information to automatically identify

shortfalls and then advise the business of what other training may be needed.

A three-year plan, will allow for user feedback to be incorporated as the system is developed. Samantha Bradley, Knowledge Exchange Officer – Skills Development, said, "Pig Pro has been set up with the idea that it will need to evolve as the industry does and must take into account feedback of users to keep it easy to use, useful and engaging.

"We are hearing some great feedback from businesses, individuals and training providers who are using the system. It's really positive to see more and more training events being uploaded by a growing number of Pig Pro-registered training providers. One of the aims of Pig Pro was to provide a place where we are able to promote as many events as we can, to a wider audience, and this is working well."

Updated 'How to' guides for all user accounts have been uploaded to the help page of the Pig Pro website:

<https://pigpro.ahdb.org.uk/Home/Help>

Diary Dates

Tuesday 10 April – Stockman Development Scheme (Yorkshire): Weaner Management

Wednesday 11 April – Stockman Development Scheme (Suffolk): Finisher Management

Tuesday 17 April – Stockman Plus Scheme (Exeter): Weaner Management

Tuesday 17 April – Stockman Development Scheme (Lincs.): Safe use of Veterinary Medicine

Wednesday 18 April – Stockman Plus Scheme (Suffolk): Finisher Management

Wednesday 18 April – Essex Pig Club

Wednesday 25 April – Stockman Development Scheme (Berkshire): Farrowing Management

Tuesday 1 May – Stockman Plus Scheme (Lincs.): Finisher Management

Tuesday 8 May – Stockman Development Scheme (Yorkshire): Finisher Management

Midweek Meals Campaign Round-Up

The second burst of the Midweek Meals marketing campaign from AHDB Pork, positioning pork medallions as a perfect midweek meal, has come to a close.

Building on the success of the first burst of advertising, and to capitalise on good New Year intentions, the January/February campaign introduced new messages about pork and healthy eating.

With consumers regularly reaching for chicken as the main protein in their midweek meals, and the surrounding negative perceptions of pork being fatty, it was deemed important to set the records straight; to educate people about different cuts of pork and how they can fit into a healthy lifestyle.

As such, AHDB Pork worked in consultation with Trading Standards to set new health and nutrition claims that promote pork as a lean option for mealtimes. The TV and print advertising heroed the claim that:

- **Pork medallions are just as healthy as chicken breast.***

This key claim was featured at the end of the campaign's TV advert and viewed by an estimated 74% of the target audience six times during popular programmes such as *Come Dine with Me*, *Coronation Street* and *This Morning*.

A print advert appeared in various monthly magazines and weekend supplements,

including a feature in the Mary Berry recipe pull-out in the *Daily Mail's You Magazine*. Bespoke recipes were also created for *Slimming World* and *Weight Watchers* magazines, providing access to health-conscious consumers.

New healthy recipes rated as 'all green' across the nutritional traffic light system featured on the lovepork.co.uk website were promoted across social media and Google search advertising, along with engaging 'how to' and short recipe videos. They have also been a firm favourite with press, being featured in the likes of *The Independent*, *The Sun*, *Pick Me Up*, and *Take A Break*.

Collaborations with popular YouTube vloggers have helped to spread key campaign messages to a young, health-conscious audience as well as young families. Their videos inspire followers with simple and relevant pork medallion recipes that fit perfectly with their lifestyles.

Campaign messages continued in stores with stickers on packs of pork medallions and fillets, tear-off recipe leaflets on retailer shelves, adverts in various retail magazines and sampling in stores.

With such a wide-reaching campaign and strong health messaging, we look forward to being able to share with you a successful campaign evaluation soon.



*Both pork and chicken are naturally rich in protein. Protein helps muscle growth. This relates to pork loin and fillet medallions trimmed of visible fat and skinless chicken breast.