Further supply growth likely to keep prices under pressure

Latest AHDB forecasts for UK pig meat supplies show that the increase in domestic supplies over the last year is likely to continue. Recent production growth and low levels of sow slaughtering suggest a broadly stable breeding herd. Combined with continuing productivity improvements and a further modest rise in carcase weights, both slaughters and production are forecast to continue rising at around the rate seen recently for the rest of this year before possibly slowing down slightly next year.

Although the gap between UK and EU pig prices remains high, there is no sign it is leading to an increase in pig meat imports. With retail buyers still apparently committed to UK sourcing wherever possible and plentiful domestic supplies available, there is little reason to think this will change. Meanwhile, the weak euro is making it harder for exports to compete and, unless the pound weakens, export growth may be limited this year.

Balancing these factors, total supplies on the UK market are forecast to grow this year, albeit at a slightly slower rate than in 2014. Demand will need to rise if the sustained pressure on pig prices is going to be relieved. So far this year, retail demand for pig meat has been subdued, however, keeping prices down.

Go to: http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/media/73910/outlook-for-uk-pig-meat-supplies-july-15.pdf

Source: Defra, HMRC, AHDB Market Intelligence
Free farrowing discs
AHDB Pork offers free farrowing discs to hang up in the pen to monitor a sow’s progress at farrowing. The disc can either be hung above the farrowing pen on a string with a bulldog clip or attached to the pen side somewhere easily accessible, so all stockmen can see what time the sow was last checked and how many piglets had been born at that point. Each time the farrowing sow is checked, the arrows on the disc should be adjusted accordingly, enabling all farrowing house staff to follow the progress of the farrowing and intervene if necessary.

After each sow has finished, the disc can be moved to the next farrowing sow and it is useful to have several discs in each farrowing house.

Attention to detail during farrowing is essential to get newborn piglets off to a good start and it has a major influence on overall litter productivity, which is a key focus area for breeding units aiming for more pigs weaned per sow per year; one of AHDB Pork’s key performance indicators for the ‘closing the gap’ part of its Going for Growth strategy is to help producers wean an extra piglet per sow per year.

To request free farrowing discs, email pork.kt@ahdb.org.uk or call 024 7647 8792

New training calendar
The new AHDB Pork training calendar is due out in early September, providing all the dates and venues across the regions.

AHDB Pork skills and training coordinator Sam Bowsher said: “There will be nine training courses together with a further nine ad hoc sessions covering both technical and management subjects.

For this year, we have revamped the session briefs, updated the content and worked with the trainers to develop an interactive system of delivery to make them both more interesting and more relevant.”

Foot dip signs
Free foot dip signs are now available to pig producers to help reduce the risk of disease spread on pig units. They sit alongside the popular no entry gate signs also produced by AHDB Pork.

Putting up signs which encourage visitors to dip their boots before entering a unit or remind staff to use the foot dip between different sheds will pay dividends. It is simple and cost-effective but could be really beneficial in terms of stopping disease.

AHDB Pork offers free farrowing discs to hang up in the pen to monitor a sow’s progress at farrowing. The disc can either be hung above the farrowing pen on a string with a bulldog clip or attached to the pen side somewhere easily accessible, so all stockmen can see what time the sow was last checked and how many piglets had been born at that point. Each time the farrowing sow is checked, the arrows on the disc should be adjusted accordingly, enabling all farrowing house staff to follow the progress of the farrowing and intervene if necessary.

After each sow has finished, the disc can be moved to the next farrowing sow and it is useful to have several discs in each farrowing house.

Attention to detail during farrowing is essential to get newborn piglets off to a good start and it has a major influence on overall litter productivity, which is a key focus area for breeding units aiming for more pigs weaned per sow per year; one of AHDB Pork’s key performance indicators for the ‘closing the gap’ part of its Going for Growth strategy is to help producers wean an extra piglet per sow per year.

Optimum grade pigs boost returns
Pig producers can improve returns by aiming for at least 85% of finished pigs to meet the top grade specifications for the ‘optimum box’ on their abattoir contracts. Understanding and meeting the contract specification and increasing the uniformity of finished pigs can have a big impact on profitability.

Processors want to receive a particular type of pig to best meet the demands of retailers and consumers for particular cuts, sizes and trends such as the preference for low fat pork.

Pigs which do not meet the optimum contract specifications require more processing which incurs more cost, which can then affect the price received by suppliers. It is essential producers understand their contract and the product they need to supply and it’s recommended that they review this at least quarterly.

It is important that there is minimal weight variation in a batch of pigs. The processor has already allocated the pigs to a customer before they arrive, so if a batch is different from normal, or highly variable, it can be more difficult for them to sell these pigs.

There is guidance in Action for Productivity factsheets 11: Increasing uniformity of finished pigs and 22: Improve your marketing return. Click here or call 024 7647 8792.
**Pig Production**

**Pig Production**

**Part of the AHDB Pork 'Going for Growth' strategy is about engaging more with pig producers and the wider industry.**

Four regional forums were set up in October 2014, made up of producers, vets and allied industry representatives, to provide a clear two-way feedback route between the industry and AHDB Pork. The forums are a means of listening to the wider industry and they enable members to provide direct input into proposed AHDB Pork technical activity and feedback on the quality and relevance of AHDB Pork work.

The main objectives are:

- To discuss how best to go about improving key performance indicators for closing the physical pig performance gap in the region
- To get feedback on AHDB Pork knowledge transfer activity and collect new ideas
- To achieve better coordination within the regions and work more effectively with other businesses to avoid duplication
- For the forums to be a ‘critical friend’ to AHDB Pork.

They each meet twice a year, in autumn and spring, with the chairs of each forum representing their regions on the AHDB Pork board’s technical subgroup.

**To download the guide, go to:**

**Finisher pig buildings guide**

For producers planning the design and build of new finishing accommodation, there is a comprehensive guide available free from AHDB Pork: ‘Finisher Pig Buildings Design and Build – a blueprint for English farms’.

It outlines the key issues surrounding the construction and management of a new pig finishing building, either as a new enterprise or part of an existing one. For businesses considering investment in new housing, either as part of a modernisation programme, or as a new enterprise, this document enables an assessment of the opportunities and issues involved with constructing and operating a pig finishing building.

The guide’s nine chapters cover building designs, focusing on both solid and slatted floor options, slurry pit construction, feeding system options, ventilation systems and renewable energy opportunities.

The finance chapter informs producers about all the funding options available, including mortgage possibilities, leasing, hire purchase and various guarantee schemes.

**Regional producer forums**

Part of the AHDB Pork ‘Going for Growth’ strategy is about engaging more with pig producers and the wider industry.

Four regional forums were set up in October 2014, made up of producers, vets and allied industry representatives, to provide a clear two-way feedback route between the industry and AHDB Pork.

The forums are a means of listening to the wider industry and they enable members to provide more direct input into proposed AHDB Pork technical activity and feedback on the quality and relevance of AHDB Pork work.

The main objectives are:

- To discuss how best to go about improving key performance indicators for closing the physical pig performance gap in the region
- To get feedback on AHDB Pork knowledge transfer activity and collect new ideas
- To achieve better coordination within the regions and work more effectively with other businesses to avoid duplication
- For the forums to be a ‘critical friend’ to AHDB Pork.

They each meet twice a year, in autumn and spring, with the chairs of each forum representing their regions on the AHDB Pork board’s technical subgroup.

**Hazard perception tool coming soon**

AHDB Pork is developing an interactive Biosecurity Hazard Perception Tool to highlight the practicalities of protecting herd health on farm.

Veterinary team manager Martin Smith says: “Filming for the Biosecurity Hazard Perception Tool is now complete and it should be available to stockpeople and farm managers later in the autumn.”

The aim of the tool is to demonstrate good biosecurity practice to pig unit staff and, importantly, highlight mistakes which could be compromising the protection of their herds.

The tool involves a series of interactive online video clips for pig stockpeople and farm managers to complete. Whenever an example of bad biosecurity appears, participants will have to click the mouse, a bit like the hazard perception part of a driving test. A series of multiple choice questions will follow each clip, to further consolidate the key information.

Some examples of the training modules include: visitors, vehicles, movements of staff and livestock, pest control, medicine management and deadstock collection.

**Image courtesy of Rade Digital**
Pulled Pork pulls it off

The official Pulled Pork campaign results have been announced and they were very positive! AHDB Pork set out to rejuvenate the image of pork by working closely with the processors, multiple retailers and independent butchers to encourage the young consumer to buy fresh pork shoulder and cook pulled pork at home.

Sales of fresh pork have been in decline for some time, however, the campaign has helped buck the trend with fresh pork sales increasing by £7.8 million during the campaign period. And with a successful phase one completed, AHDB Pork is extremely pleased with the results and is looking forward to bringing you more inspiring and innovative campaigns!

AHDB Pork – autumn campaign

The autumn will be a busy few months promoting pig meat on a variety of important and potential export markets. September sees the export team head to China for the China International Meat Industry Show in Qingdao. The AHDB Pork stand will provide our exporters the opportunity for meetings with existing clients in the sector and make valuable new contacts.

The largest food show in the world, ANUGA, takes place in Cologne at the start of October. The Pork division of AHDB will join forces with colleagues from AHDB Beef & Lamb on the British Meat stand located in a key area of the show dedicated to meat.

The last show in 2013 attracted more than 150,000 trade visitors from 187 countries. British Pork will be back on the menu in China in November, where pork will take centre stage for UKTI’s Great British Week promoting British food and drink. The event is scheduled to coincide with the Food Hotel China show in Shanghai.

AHDB pork, beef and lamb are arranging a mission for exporters to sub-Saharan Africa. Population and income growth in the region are driving increased demand for protein imports. The mission gives exporters the opportunity to see what the market requirements are. Across the world, we are showing we mean business!

To find out more, go to: http://pork.ahdb.org.uk/pork-promotion/pulled-pork-campaign

To find out more, go to: www.eblex-bpex-export.org.uk/