

UK pig production to move up later this year

The current tight supply of pigs is expected to ease by the second half of 2017, according to the latest AHDB Pork forecasts. Slaughtering is then expected to rise further in 2018.

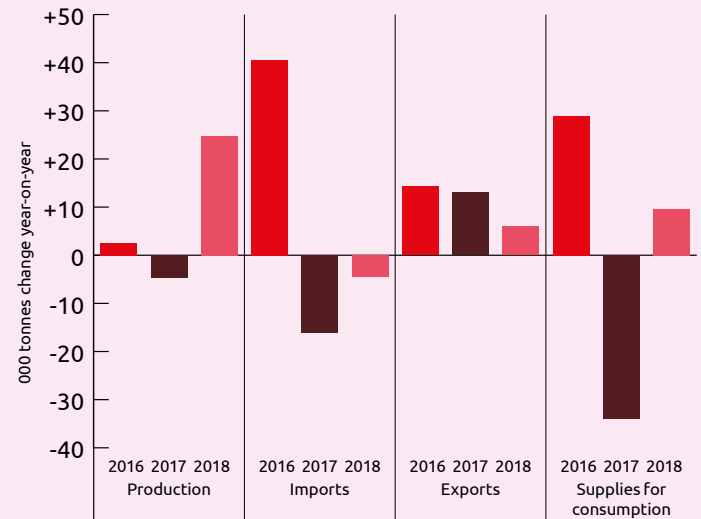
The breeding herd is currently thought to be edging up again, a trend expected to continue in the coming months due to improved financial conditions. Coupled to anticipated improvements to physical performance, by Q4 2017, slaughtering and production are forecast 2% and 3% higher, respectively, year on year.

Trade balance will remain critical for the UK pig market outlook, with currency movements remaining a watch point. It is assumed that imports will ultimately

level off or even ease back, partly since EU production is now declining. On the export side, falling UK production is currently limiting export availability. However, an upturn is expected during the latter half of the year, in line with a rising UK production and helped by ongoing demand from China.

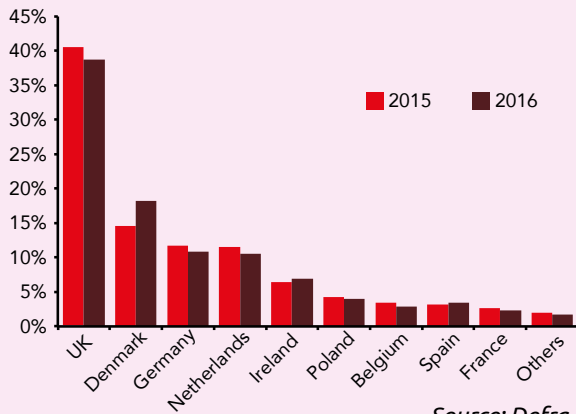
Taking into account the expected production and trade developments, supplies available for consumption in the UK are forecast to be tighter, especially in the first part of the year. This in turn will help ensure ongoing firm market conditions. However, the decline in consumer demand for pork and external factors could impact on this reasonably positive outlook. >

Actual and forecast trends for UK pig meat supplies



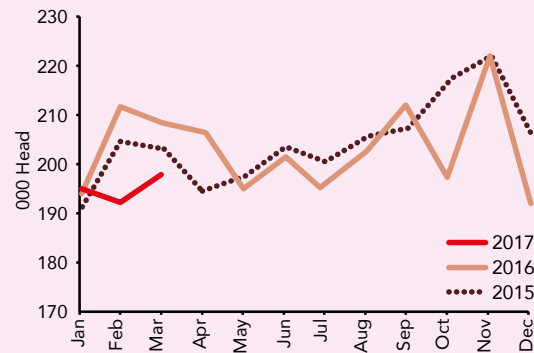
Source: HMRC, AHDB Market Intelligence

Sources of pig meat consumed in the UK



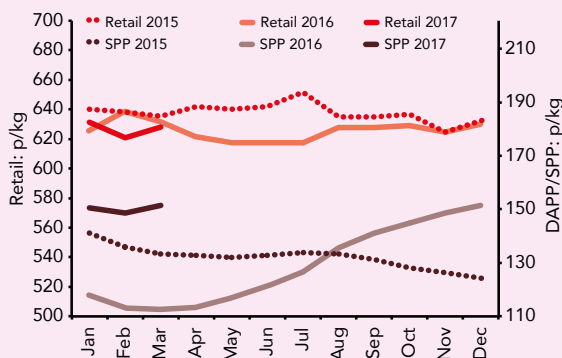
Source: Defra, HMRC

UK weekly clean pig slaughtering



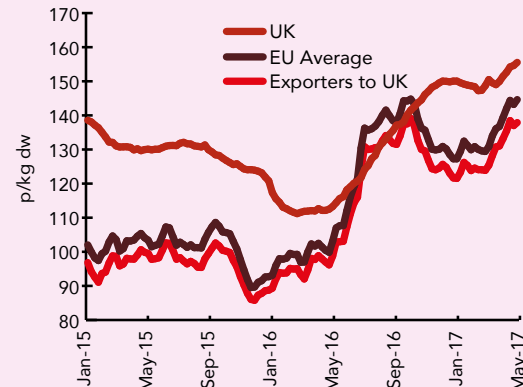
Source: Defra

GB average retail pork saleable carcass price and DAPP



Source: AHDB Market Intelligence

Comparison of UK and EU pig reference prices



Source: AHDB Market Intelligence, EU Commission

Regional Eradication

PRRS, or porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, is a very important disease that, as its name indicates, can severely affect both breeding and growing animals.

There are many factors that can affect the development of disease, its severity and its circulation on farms, so it is extremely important to have a methodical approach to its prevention and control.

As a starting point, it's important to do an analysis of the farm from a biosecurity perspective to try to identify and highlight risk areas. The next step is to evaluate extensively all the other vectors of disease transmission, such as visitors, pig movements and flow, management practices, location, etc.

Diagnostic tools can then be used to assess whether PRRS is present on the farm and assess its importance.

When deciding on interventions, it is important not to focus on just one point, such as vaccination, but to have a holistic approach. Most of the time, vaccination is part of the control programme, but it needs to be implemented with other equally important measures, such as biosecurity, management practices and gilt acclimatisation.

A 'one size fits all' approach won't work, control programmes need to be tailor made for each farm's conditions and goals. In some situations, whole-herd vaccination may be needed to reach herd stabilisation more quickly. In these cases, it is paramount for the staff to understand the importance of complying with vaccination practices, correct storage and handling of vaccines and why it is important to do it correctly, ensuring the best possible outcome. During vaccination, specifically during piglet vaccination, the use of needle-free devices will help to minimise the possible horizontal transmission of PRRS from pig to pig.

Regional control programmes, such as the one already underway in East Anglia, rely on vaccination to lower the reproduction ratio of wild virus and ultimately push the virus off the pig population. Again, best practice during vaccination is extremely important. PRRS control is a team effort and all stakeholders need to take part actively. Only by doing so will the chances of controlling this disease be maximised. If you want to get on board with the East Anglian regional control programme, please get in touch with your vet or regional KE manager. >

Zinc Alternatives

As you may be aware, the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use has recommended that the licence for the use of Zinc Oxide is revoked and the product should be withdrawn from the market.

We would like to work with producers who have successfully removed zinc oxide from their rations and make case studies available that demonstrate the range of alternative options available for consideration. If you wish to remain anonymous you can, we just need to create a picture of how to manage successfully without the use of zinc oxide.

If you can help with a case study or can simply provide some information, please get in touch with your KE manager or email pork.kt@ahdb.org.uk so we can discuss the matter further. >

British pork triumphs on Hong Kong island



Wicks Manor at Hofex. Also present for Pork were Broadoak Farms, CK Meats, Emmetts, Karro Food Group and Westaway Sausages.

Hofex in Hong Kong has been hailed a great success for the British meat section. The event that took place 8 to 10 May featured six UK pork exporters presenting and offering tasting samples of premium pork, sausages, ham, bacon, pork burgers and even black and white puddings (all made from 100% British pork). Despite the very competitive environment, with an impressive show presence from Spain, Italy, the USA, Germany and Australia, the British pavilion was one of the liveliest and most visited across the days.

Pork and sausage workshops were a highlight of the exhibition with Chef Spencer Lei of Café Deco preparing traditional sausage breakfasts and sophisticated meat dishes like South Chinese-style sweet marinated belly pork for lunch.

Following a media launch at the show, we now selling three brands of British premium pork to retail and food service outlets with many supermarkets stocking British pork. Unique selling points include provenance, taste,

high pig welfare, anti-microbial control and food safety. Good marketing in Hong Kong will continue to be essential if we are to separate our product from cheaper Brazilian, Thai or US pork, notwithstanding the high end competition coming from Mangalitsa, Iberian or Korobuta pork. Next in our sights is pork from native British breeds. At the moment, opportunities are small but there are plans afoot to develop this unique segment.

We are delighted that exports of premium branded and processed pork products to Hong Kong are going from strength to strength. We have built the support of committed importers specialising in premium meats. AHDB Pork will be supporting the Restaurant & Bar fair in September and will be helping with the PR, in-store promotions and other events such as the British Food Festival. We have learned that in an ultra-competitive and fast-changing market such as Hong Kong, continuous marketing support and product development is essential. >



Open Farm Sunday 11 June

Over 300 farms, including an incredible 60 featuring pigs, have signed up to "LEAF Open Farm Sunday" in order to showcase the world of British farming to the public. Last year was a record-breaking success with over a quarter of a million visitors exploring their local farms and learning where their food comes from.

AHDB is supporting farming's annual open day by providing various educational resources for farmers to use on their big day or throughout the year. These useful items can be ordered online by visiting www.ahdb.org.uk/education/get-involved

During the month of June, Open Farm School Days will also be taking place where teachers and schoolchildren can visit a farm and experience the 'classroom in the countryside'. It's important to encourage the next generation to come and see how and where their food is produced.

Visit www.farmsunday.org or contact Elsa.Healey@ahdb.org.uk to find out more.



Classroom Posters

The latest poster 'Red Meat – the factors affecting food choice' has been sent out to 4,000 teachers for use during the summer school term and will provide good insight for the younger generation.

The Meat and Education programme has developed a range of classroom posters which support food technology teachers to deliver the curriculum. Feedback from a recent teacher's survey highlighted how these useful and relevant resources make a significant contribution to the success of food education.

The Meat and Education programme, is a joint initiative by AHDB, HCC Meat Promotion Wales and Livestock & Meat Commission for Northern Ireland, and covers nutrition, healthy eating and cooking techniques of red meat. There are more downloadable teaching resources available at meatandeducation.redmeatinfo.com/resources >

Summer Prep

With summer upon us, it's important to make sure pigs don't become heat stressed. If pigs are subjected to high temperatures for too long, it can result in reduced growth rates (by up to 50g/d) and, in the breeding herd, farrowing rates could decline by as much as 25%.

The following checklist will get you started with your summer preparations but, for more advice and top tips on keeping your pigs cool during the warmer months, whether you are an indoor or outdoor producer, visit the AHDB Pork website pork.ahdb.org.uk where you will find a range of useful factsheets.



Ventilation

Ensure there are enough fans for the size and number of pigs; consider using supplementary fans for large pens reliant on natural ventilation. Clean and maintain fans and check they are working properly – try using a smoke plume to monitor air movement.

Water

Make sure there are sufficient drinkers in each pen and that they are all working properly. If in doubt, supply additional water in troughs. Pigs can't sweat but can keep cool if their skin is damp; provide areas of wet concrete or misters during hot periods.

Shade

Sunburn is common in early summer as pigs are exposed to the first strong sunlight since winter. Make sure you provide shade for outdoor pigs so they can move out of direct sunlight.

Wallows

Wallowing is the main method used by outdoor pigs to cool down. Now is the perfect time to get wallows dug out so they'll be ready for summer.

Breeding herd

Where possible, serve at either end of the day when it will be cooler and ensure AI doses are kept in an

insulated container (16–18°C) until required. Heat stress can affect a boar's semen quality for up to eight weeks afterwards, record periods of hot weather on a calendar and, if using on-farm collections, pay special attention to semen quality during this risk period.

Flies

Don't wait until flies become a problem before you start thinking about them. Effective control is integral to maintaining high health and productivity and having a control system in operation forms part of assurance standards.

