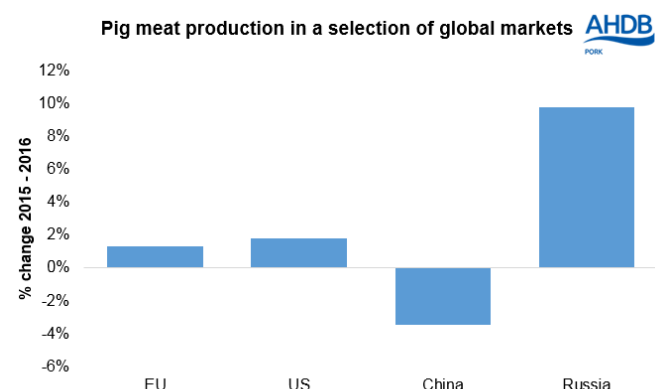


## Pigs 2022 providing food for thought

The recent Pigs 2022 conference provided a wealth of information, opinion and insight over the two-day event. The first day provided the “International Outlook Conference”, with presentations from stalwarts of the industry, while the second day played host to the “Innovation Conference”, which looked to address some of the big issues affecting the industry today.

The International Outlook Conference covered a range of topics, including an overview of the global market, an insight into the United States pig industry in the Trump era and an outline of how Denmark is facing the challenges of the global market. After a short break, the audience were brought up to speed with scenarios surrounding the impact of Brexit on the pork sector, before a presentation highlighting what consumers want from pork and finishing with a projection for the future of the British pork industry.

Richard Brown’s (GIRA) global market outlook informed that worldwide meat consumption was increasing. Pork was the major global protein, but has been overtaken by chicken. As is well known, China is incredibly important (in recent years) to the global pork market. Chinese pork consumption is still growing, and imports into China are only coming from a handful of key regions. The US has been expanding their pork production, with the introduction of new packing plants and barns, while EU production is in decline. However, the EU does still account for 21% of global pig meat production. Russia has been gearing up production in a move to increase their export capacity (and on the back of rising pig prices). They are orienting this ambition towards the Asian trade, so could move to be a key competitor for the important Chinese market.

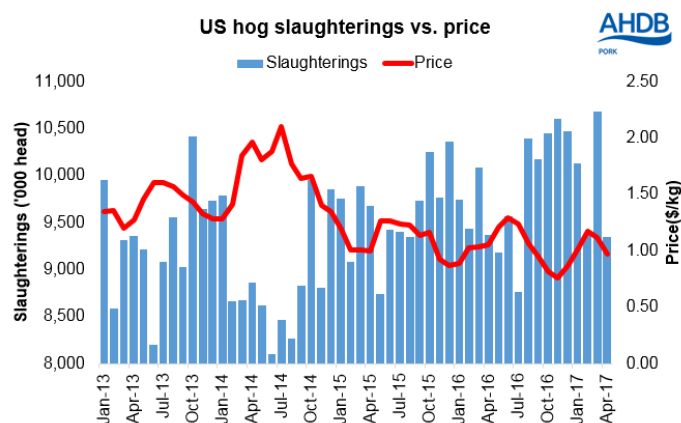


Sources: Eurostat, USDA

However, there was also a timely reminder that one of the key values for Chinese imports is being able to deliver consistently “on-spec”, so emerging markets will need to focus on this in order to compete.

Nicholas Giordano from the National Pork Council – US, offered a snapshot of the US Pork Industry. This industry is becoming more consolidated, and is largely centred on the feed production and processing capacity in the Mid-West. Production has been increasing since the PEDv outbreak of 2014, and new and renovated plants look to add a further

10% to production levels by the end of 2018. With this increase in production comes a more dominant export agenda, with currently around 25% of all production exported. That said there are a number of challenges facing the US pork industry including trade retaliation, currency fluctuations and stagnant domestic population growth. However, with challenges come opportunities. The growing global population, domestic regulatory reform and a focus on new bilateral FTAs are just some prospects that could bear fruit for the industry.



Source: USDA

Asger Krosgaard from Danish Crown provided an overview on how Danish Crown is geared to face the challenges of a global market. Danish Crown sees the UK as part of its home market, and plans to develop the UK business further after Brexit. It has developed a strategic model to underpin their business decision making. This includes (1) owning the leading position in its home markets, (2) being driven by consumers, (3) creating value for customers and (4) acting as a single unit, following many years of mergers.

There was coverage of various topics in the afternoon sessions. Bruce Ross, an independent EU analyst, gave the room a whistle-stop tour through the implications of Brexit on the UK pork industry. More Brexit insight can be found in AHDB’s series of [Horizon reports](#).

Connor McVeigh from McDonalds followed and described what consumers were now wanting from its restaurants. There was a push for animal welfare improvements, responsibility for the environment and food that was 100% British. When describing the consumers buying decision, price was at the top of the agenda, followed by animal welfare and then traceability. One very interesting point was that when consumers taste scored McDonald’s products, those featuring bacon always scored the highest!

Finally, Cranswick’s Adam Couch wrapped up the day by giving his overview of the future of the British pork industry. He pushed the fact that the UK was recognised for the safety and quality of its meat, and now it was time to extol the health benefits of pork. There is a need to keep the offer relevant and today’s consumer want to be sold the meal not the meat. There was a welcome conclusion to his presentation when he reaffirmed the UK pork industry, in his view, had a positive future.