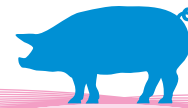


The PINK PAGES



Highest production costs since 2013 push producers into the red

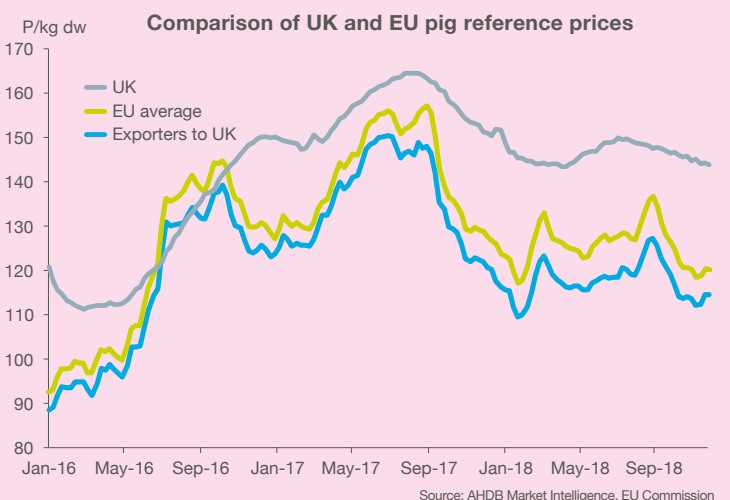
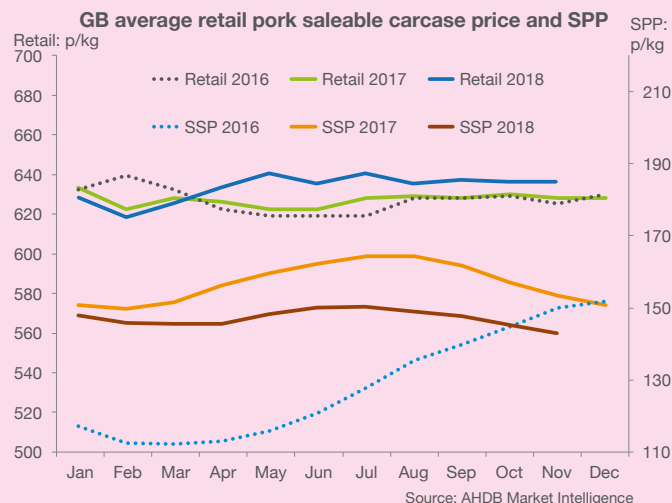
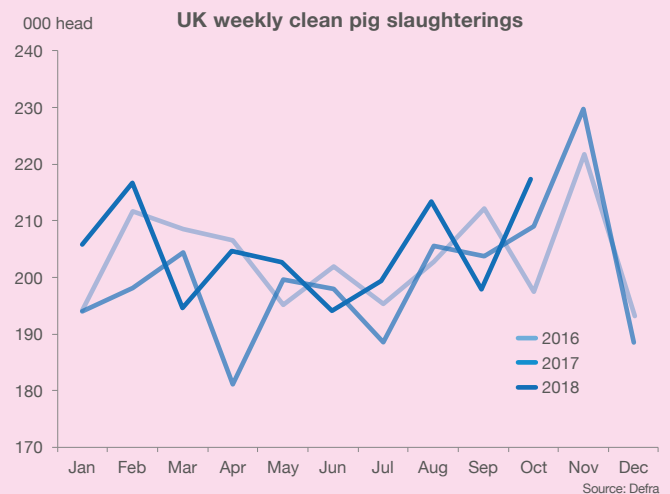
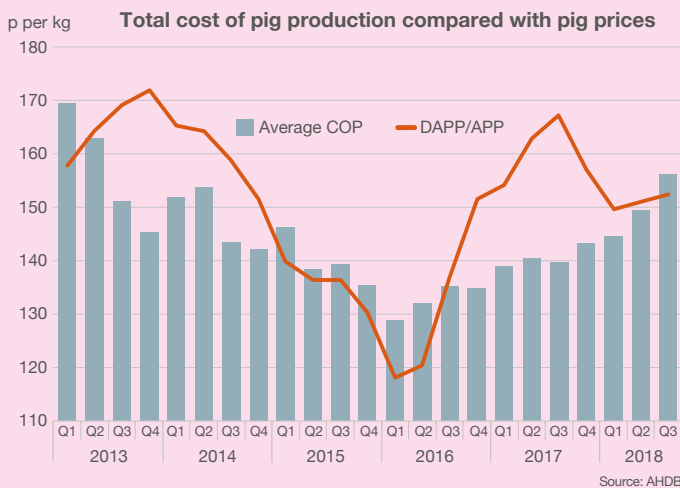
Pig production costs in the third quarter of 2018 were the highest since early 2013, at 156p/kg. Prices, in contrast, changed little in the third quarter, with the EU-spec APP averaging 152p/kg. This meant producers were estimated to be losing, on average, £4/pig sold during the quarter.

The average GB production cost between July and September was 7p/kg higher than the quarter before. The rise was entirely driven by higher feed costs, which accounted for 62% of the total cost of production. Higher feed prices were important, although consumption at the finishing stage has also increased.

This reflects a worsening average feed efficiency at this stage, according to the latest figures from Agrosoft. The finishing Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) was 2.79 in the 12 months to September, compared with 2.67 in the 12 months to June.

Pig prices have fallen, while feed prices have remained fairly stable, therefore producer margins have likely worsened further. Note, however, that these estimated margins include some non-cash costs such as depreciation and family labour, which don't affect business cash flow.

Three new tools have been developed so producers can measure their own cost of production. Go to the website ahdb.org.uk/Pig-production-costs-calculators and download yours. Fill in your own costs and see if there are savings you could start to make.



Scheme to help monitor pig herd health relaunched

Producers are being invited to join a scheme that will give them access to post-mortem information on their pigs to help monitor herd health and potentially save money.

Jointly run by Vetscore Limited and Eville and Jones Commercial Services Limited, AHDB's Pig Health Scheme provides information on diseases that producers may not be aware of, or just live with, such as a low-level cough, Enzootic Pneumonia and Pleuritis.

Pigs are assessed at slaughter, by trained veterinary assessors, for 12 different conditions in the lungs, heart, liver, tail and skin. Reports are then made available to discuss with the unit's vet.

Lauren Turner, Pork Processing Projects Manager, said: "The Pig Health Scheme will allow you to get information on diseases that you may not be aware of, and may help explain falls in performance that seem to have no cause, but gradually lose you money over time by reducing growth rates."

There's no cost to join and producers can sign up through their Pig Hub account at: pighub.org.uk

More information on the scheme can be found at pork.ahdb.org.uk/health-welfare/health/safe-traceable-pork/pig-health-scheme/



Nuffield scholar explores global antibiotic use

Dr Georgina Crayford (pictured right), senior policy advisor at the NPA has published findings from her AHDB-sponsored Nuffield Farming Scholarship on antibiotic use in pig production from seven countries around the world. Dr Crayford also explores methods of engaging farmers and encouraging behavioural change.

Dr Crayford explains that the aim should not be to achieve zero use of antibiotics in pig production, nor simply reduce the use of antibiotics. The focus should be on reducing the need for and optimising the use of antibiotics.

She recommends that pig farmers should be encouraged to implement the necessary practices for improved infection prevention through participatory, farmer-led initiatives and behavioural nudge techniques.

AHDB's Gilt Watch and strategic farm activities are examples of how the farmer-led approach, as recommended in Dr Crayford's report, is beginning to be implemented in the English pig sector. These initiatives are bringing pig farmers together, providing them with a forum to share experiences, learn from each other and develop action plans to improve.

Among the closing recommendations of Dr Crayford's report, she urges pig farmers to evaluate the cost of antibiotic medication and the impact of long-term endemic disease on the bottom line, posing the challenge to farmers to consider whether their business would continue to be viable if certain diseases became untreatable due to antibiotic resistance, or if certain antibiotic products were no longer permitted to be used in livestock.

Dr Crayford's Nuffield report can be downloaded here: pork.ahdb.org.uk/media/276440/georgina-crayford-nuffield.pdf



Diary dates

For details, and to register for any of these events, visit: pigpro.ahdb.org.uk

7 January

Exeter Pig Club

8 January

Otley Pig Discussion Group

Stockman Plus (East): Breeding herd

9 January

Stockman Development Scheme (Central): Service and dry sow management

Stockman Development Scheme (South): Service and dry sow management

Stockman Plus (North): Breeding herd

10 January

Darlington Pig Discussion Group

15 January

North Riding Pig Discussion Group

Stockman Development Scheme (East): AI and breeding

16 January

Essex Pig Discussion Group

22 January

Stockman Development Scheme (Lincs.): AI and breeding

Webinar: Health and antibiotics

24 January

South Yorkshire Pig Club

30 January

Exeter Pig Club

4 February

Oxford Pig Club

6 February

Stockman Development Scheme (Central): AI and breeding

Cooking Pork with Lucy Mecklenburgh and Cecilia Harris

The Love Pork midweek meal campaign launches once again on 14 January. The chicken man will be back on our screens to persuade people to consider quick-to-cook, lean cuts of tender pork as an alternative to chicken, to add variety to midweek meals. The TV ad is being supported with PR, social media, advertising and retailer activity.

This campaign follows recent success, with Kantar research revealing that £13.2 million incremental revenue has been delivered so far, with almost half a million more shoppers buying fresh pork during campaign bursts.

As January is the time of year when people focus on health and well-being, we have collaborated with the popular reality TV star, Lucy Mecklenburgh and her friend, business partner and personal trainer, Cecilia Harris.

Lucy, famous for her appearances in *The Only Way is Essex*, *Bear Grylls' Celebrity Island* and *Tour de Celeb* runs a successful online fitness and nutrition platform with Cecilia: 'Results with Lucy'. They are also prolific on social media channels such as Instagram – sharing workouts and healthy food ideas.

They have produced a wonderful video for us, where Lucy shares recipe inspiration to help Cecilia spice up her family's midweek meals. Together they cook a simple, yet delicious Pork Tacos recipe – and have a lot of fun in the making! The video will feature on the Love Pork website, social media channels and in digital advertising. We will also be looking out for PR opportunities with Lucy in the New Year.

So look out for the video coming soon on the Love Pork website and why not give the recipe a go yourself!
lovepork.co.uk/pick-pork



Every unit should measure water intake

All producers should know how much water their pigs are drinking each day, believes Mark Jagger, fieldsman for Tulip. Measuring daily water intake can help reduce medication use, feed conversion ratio and mortality as it tells producers a great deal about pig health and performance.



The topic came up at recent workshops run by AHDB and ForFarmers. Mark said: "Since we've been tracking water usage on a daily basis, either manually or automatically, we've seen that water intake goes up and down in a fairly regular pattern. If it goes down for just one or two days, you know that pigs are healthy but if it is down for three days, there's usually a problem starting, whether it be looseness, coughing, or meningitis, for example.

"So when you see the water usage dip, you know there's a problem coming, particularly if it's a similar time to when there have been issues in previous batches. You can then make the decision to treat the pigs more promptly, which can help reduce use of antibiotics, as it's more likely a shorter treatment is needed.

"An automatic water recording system might cost each unit around £10 a month subscription, but producers who have reduced medication, feed conversion ratio and mortality as a result, find the investment cost is quickly repaid.

"Another option is to go in and record the water reading manually, first thing each day, which gives you a good idea of water usage. However, an automated system is easier, more accurate and enables you to download data reports from previous months."

At the meetings, Mark also emphasised the need to first get the basics right with water quality and quantity before producers medicate, acidify or supplement via water.

For more information, visit: pork.ahdb.org.uk/environment-buildings/water-soil-and-air/water-quality-and-quantity