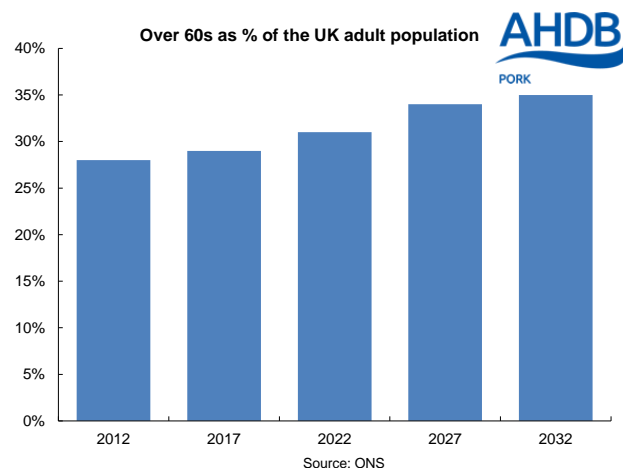


Changing consumption trends require innovation

The reasons behind consumers' shopping choices have changed as their lifestyles have altered. There has been a steady drive for convenience, linked to changing household structure and busier lives. Consumption of all proteins at home declined over the year ending 24 May 2015, according to the latest data from Kantar Worldpanel. This comes amidst a recovery in the frequency of consumers eating out and competition from alternative convenient meal options. Over this time, the number of meals featuring pork was down 4%. However, innovative new dishes such as pulled pork could help to keep the category relevant.

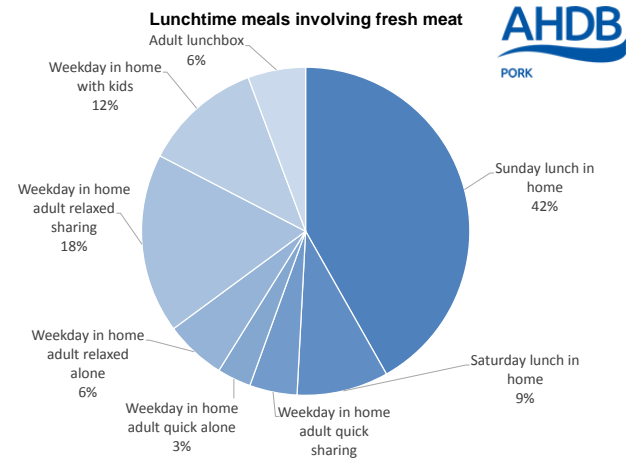
Family size has been changing for a long time, with more one and two person households, which, as a result, means fewer family meal occasions. This change in household size has affected the way we cook and the quantity of products we buy. In particular, there is a clear reduction in the number of roast dinner meal occasions, which usually require larger joints of meat.

The ageing population is also a focus for the industry, as the older age group grows. In 2012, over 60s accounted for 28% of the UK population; it is predicted by the ONS that by 2032 they will account for 35%. On the face of it, this would appear to be good news for pork, as it has an older shopper profile compared to other red meats. However, over 65s are more likely to cook with a microwave as they feel it's not worth cooking for one or two, despite having the knowledge and tradition.



Cooking from scratch has declined in 18 of the last 20 years. There is an increased desire to cook but decreased time for it, with the average cooking time for the main meal now 31 minutes. These changes in household structure and increased time pressures have influenced the type of meals Britons consume. Over time, the emphasis has shifted to dishes rather than a primary protein, as was the case 20 years ago. This has been a challenge for pork, given that only 10% of meal occasions containing pork are dish-based meals,

the lowest of any of the major proteins. The exception is Sunday lunch, where more time is available for preparation. Some 42% of fresh meat consumed at lunchtimes is eaten for Sunday lunch, showing the strength of this traditional occasion.



With the growing change in lifestyles, consumers have less time and so providing meal solutions will be key to success in the future. Examples could be cuts of meat that are ready marinated or meal packs that include all the ingredients for a dish such as meatballs, rather than the traditional way of presenting meat in cuts. While convenience is a particularly strong driver for the ageing population, as they do not have the desire to cook for themselves, it is also a strong focus for the millennial generation. While the first cohort of millennials are now in their early thirties, most members of this group are at the beginning of their careers and will be important consumers in the decades to come.

Consumers are willing to pay more for these convenient solutions and these lines could further benefit from a gradual easing of purse strings as consumer confidence increases. Budgeting has become less important; working to a strict budget is now the fastest declining attitude change since 2012. Another important trend linked to the recent rise in consumer confidence is healthy choices. Nearly a third of consumers choose products because of their health implications, which has steadily risen since 2013.

The long term population change, alongside busier lives, has created the need for more convenience and this causes a problem for pork which is traditionally associated with protein centred meals. There is a need for innovation in order for pork to compete with other meal solutions. This can also help to address issues with carcass balance by encouraging use of cuts which are less often used at the moment. AHDB Pork's recent campaign promoting pulled pork, which will be repeated next year, is aimed at addressing these issues, as well as changing consumers' perceptions of pork, particularly among younger age groups, by showcasing how delicious and easy to cook pulled pork is.