

Media Release



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Brexit no deal the worst of all worlds for UK pig industry

A Brexit ‘no deal’ could leave the UK pig industry facing a disastrous situation where exports to the EU are blocked but imports continue to flood in.

The latest set of Defra technical papers on a no deal includes an explanation of the implications for exports of live animals and animal products. In order to export to the EU, Export Health Certificates would be required from the end of March 2019, with consignments needing to travel through a Border Inspection Post within the EU.

The EU would require the UK to be a listed third country, but Defra acknowledged it ‘cannot be certain’ of the EU response to such a request or its timing. It is expected the process could take at least six months. Without listed status no exports to the EU could take place.

NPA chief executive Zoe Davies warned this scenario could have catastrophic consequences for a sector increasingly underpinned by export trade. In the first seven months of this year more than 110,000 tonnes of pig products were exported to the EU, equating to nearly 60% of all UK pigmeat exports.

Dr Davies said: “A no deal could be the worst of all worlds for the UK pig industry. If exports are blocked but we continue importing pigmeat from the EU in large quantities, as the Government appears willing to do, it would blow a huge hole through the economics of the UK pig sector.

“Because of carcass balance issues, the UK would be swamped with pigmeat that had little value on the domestic market, dragging down the pig price and making it very difficult for many pig businesses to continue operating.

“As we have repeatedly stated, EU trade is critical to ensure the UK pig sector can function properly. It is therefore essential that the Government does everything in its power to secure frictionless trade after we leave the EU.

“But in the event of a no deal, we expect a much more forward thinking and cohesive plan from the Government than the flimsy and uncertain arrangements contained in this document. If the situation persists, it could result in the collapse of the supply chain with producers and processors going out of business.”

NPA senior policy advisor Ed Barker said the document also made it clear it would be difficult to export live animals after we leave the EU.

“It offers no real answers about what would happen to movements of pork products and live pigs across the Irish border. This could cause huge problems on both sides of the border.

“The Government’s approach to imports is also a concern. Brexit actually provides an opportunity to limit imports from areas that pose biosecurity risks to the UK pork sector. But from the evidence of these documents, the Government seems happy to do the total opposite.”

Notes to editors

You can read more about the NPA’s position on Brexit in our Health and Harmony Command Paper response [here](#) and in our Brexit Opportunities and Challenges briefing paper [here](#)

More information

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