

Media Release



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NPA PRESS RELEASE

Farm leaders join forces to fight for British pig industry

The British pig industry is seeking special support from independent butchers, supermarkets and shoppers over the coming months, to help it survive the worst period of low prices for over half a decade.

In an unprecedented move, the sector's lead organisations have joined forces to explain why the industry is worth helping. They cite the significant contribution British pig farmers make to the rural economy, also their higher animal welfare standards, which are the envy of the world.

Leaders of AHDB Pork, Assured Food Standards, British Pig Association, National Farmers Union Scotland, National Pig Association, Pig Veterinary Society and Quality Meat Scotland have issued the following statement:

1. Even though this country is only 40-50 percent self-sufficient in pork, our farmers are losing up to £10 on every pig they sell, as a result of European Union over-supply. Without the support of the rest of the food-chain, serious contraction in the national pig herd is inevitable. This will mean even more imports of lower-welfare pork in future.

2. Some players in the British industry have already signalled their intention to scale back or quit. To prevent a much larger exodus before the European Union market starts to rebalance towards the end of this year, we are calling on all players who rely on a thriving domestic pig sector to take the following actions:

PROCESSORS: Don't exploit the current period of over-supply to increase your margins. You're already in profit, your suppliers aren't.

INDEPENDENT BUTCHERS: Your customers assume the pork you sell is British. If you must sell cheap imported product, be honest and label it prominently as such.

FOODSERVICE: A majority of diners prefer their meat to be British. Serve British pork and please remember to signal the fact on your table and wall menus.

RETAILERS: If you already source 100 percent British fresh pork, thank you. If you don't, make a commitment immediately to source at least another five percent British.

CONSUMERS: Pork is particularly good value at present as pig farmers are being paid at 2007 levels for their pigs. Please always make a point of checking the pork, bacon, ham and sausages you buy are British.

Pig farmers: Keep taking a pride in the excellent job you do to produce healthy, nutritious British pork. Your commitment to improving efficiency and animal welfare deserves recognition by consumers and everyone in the production chain.

With your help, we can safeguard the future of the higher-welfare British pig industry.

MERYL WARD
Chairman, AHDB Pork

JIM MOSELEY
Chairman, Assured Food Standards

GUY KIDDY
Chairman, British Pig Association

RICHARD LISTER
Chairman, National Pig Association

JIM MCLAREN
Chairman, Quality Meat Scotland

ALLAN BOWIE
President, National Farmers Union Scotland

MANDY NEVEL
President, Pig Veterinary Society

Notes for Editors:

- The European pig-cycle is at its lowest point for seven years, driven by higher output and a Russian embargo on European Union farm products. The strength of sterling versus the euro and generally lower-welfare continental pig farming methods mean imported European Union pork is 20p-30p a kilo cheaper than British pork.
- Surveys have demonstrated consumers prefer British higher-welfare methods which include no castration, no gestation stalls and quality assurance audits by vets. Much of the national pig herd is kept outdoors in arks, or indoors in straw yards. Most continental pig producers still castrate boars without anaesthetic and confine sows in gestation crates, or "stalls", for some of the time.
- National Pig Association is the representative trade association for British commercial pig producers and is allied to the NFU and represents the pig interests of NFU members.

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