

# Media Release



NPA press release

February 9, 2022

## **NPA sets out key asks ahead of crucial pig industry crisis summit**

The NPA will seek a number of commitments from Government and the pork supply chain to address the crisis currently crippling the pig industry at an emergency summit tomorrow.

The NPA, NFU and pig producers will be joined by representatives from all the major retailer and pork processors at an industry roundtable meeting at Defra's headquarters.

The NPA, which has held preliminary discussions with interested parties ahead of the summit, is seeking action to reduce the pig backlog, sell more British pork in retail stores and directly support producers who are suffering the most during this crisis.

Ahead of the summit, these are the key asks from the NPA and NFU:

1. Government to look at providing financial support for most badly affected producers, as has been provided in other parts of the UK and various EU countries.
2. The Government to simplify the skilled worker visa route, including easing the English language requirement or putting butchers onto the shortage occupation list, to make it easier for them to recruit much-needed butchers.
3. Processors to set out and stick to a plan for getting rid of the backlog of contracted pigs. The plan should prioritise those producers most badly affected by the backlog. It must be agreed with producers, and should not include very cheap deals, unless there is clear justification.
4. Retailers to agree to support processors in using the measures set out in the Government support package, for example working with them on product going into Private Storage Aid and supporting additional kills under the Slaughter Incentive Payment Scheme (SIPS), for example with a bigger financial incentive.
5. The Government to allow valuable cuts from pig carcasses from the extra SIPS kills to be sold in UK retail outlets, rather than only be exported or put into Private Storage, as is the case now.
6. Retailers to move more lines from EU pork to British pork and to stop selling imported bone in joints that need to be butchered here for retail packing. Processors to reduce penalties for producers for overweight pigs, especially where the carcasses are sold into markets which require no specification.
7. Retailers to agree to mass promotion of British pork, with key joints/cuts to be specified by processors.
8. Defra to publish whatever is agreed in a 'Pig Supply Chain Charter' that can be used to show progress in implementing the above measures.

Farming Minister Victoria Prentis agreed to convene the summit, following a joint request from NPA chairman Rob Mutimer and NFU president Minette Batters, reflecting the urgent need for action from all parties to address the deteriorating situation in the pork supply chain.

Current forecasts suggest that, unless things change rapidly, little real progress will be made in reducing the pig backlog, now estimated to be well in excess of 200,000 pigs, until late-spring, early-summer. Meanwhile, more and more farmers are running out of space and being forced to cull healthy pigs.

All pig farmers are facing a deepening financial crisis due to having to keep and feed more pigs on farm for longer at a time when feed prices have been at record highs for many months and pig prices are falling.

Mr Mutimer, who will be attending the roundtable with NPA chief executive Zoe Davies, said:

“This summit is an important opportunity to bring everyone together and really thrash out solutions to a crisis that has just been getting worse and worse on farms. The situation is dire.

“Getting the backlog down by the summer will simply be too late for many pig farmers. This is a crisis unfolding in front of our eyes – and we must act collectively now to save the British pig industry.”

### **Notes to editors**

- Pig industry crisis summit convened for 12.45pm, tomorrow (10 February 2022)
- The NPA and NFU requested the pig crisis summit in a letter to Defra Secretary in January. You can read more [here](#)
- The pig backlog is now estimated to be in excess of 200,000 pigs. The NPA is aware of around 35,000 healthy pigs that have been culled on as a result of the backlog, although this is likely to be an under-estimate.
- The NPA is aware of 40 independent producers who have recently left the industry, and 30,000 sows (10%) have been lost from the English herd.

### **More information**

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