

Edited by Ciarán Carroll



Welcome to the December edition of our monthly newsletter. 2020 has been an unpredictable year in all regards. While we began the year in a very good position the negative effects of the Covid-

19 pandemic were felt in the pig sector, as with other sectors, and unfortunately the predicted pig prices were not met. Read a detailed review of the pig sector in 2020 and outlook for 2021 in the first article of this newsletter.

While 2020 was an unprecedented year, we saw the development of more digital media resources from the PDD, which was positive. With Covid-19 restrictions the annual Pig Farmers Conference could not go ahead, however Virtual Pig Week took its place and was very well received. We also launched our Let's Talk Pigs webinar series and The Pig Edge Podcast which were both very successful and featured some excellent guests and interesting topics. All podcasts to date and recordings of the Let's Talk Pigs and Virtual Pig

Week webinars are available on our [website](#). We would like to thank you for your engagement with these events throughout the year, and hope that they were of value to you.

We hope that 2021 will be a better year for both the pig industry and all those involved.

Wishing you, your family and staff a safe and relaxing Christmas, from all in the Pig Development Department.

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Review of Pig Sector in 2020 and Outlook for 2021

Michael McKeon

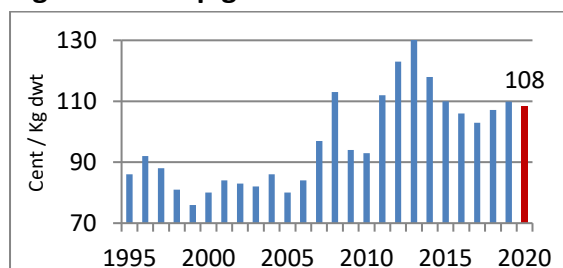
Introduction

The Irish pig industry enjoyed a buoyant period of profitability in the second half of 2019 which was predicted to continue into 2020. While 2020 did remain profitable unfortunately it didn't reach the levels forecast as, with other sectors, Covid19 had a very detrimental impact.

Irish Pig Feed Costs 2020

Annual Irish composite pig feed prices are shown in Figure 1, expressed in terms of the cost per kg deadweight (dwt.). Feed prices were largely stable from January to April 2020 with a composite pig feed price of €301. The expectation of a poor harvest yield from poor EU planting conditions in autumn 2019 and US crops having difficulties, resulted in ingredient prices rising from May 2020 on-wards. Increases in wheat, barley and soya ingredient prices in autumn 2020 should have translated into higher feed prices. However, increased competition between feed mills have moderated the expected feed rise. The current composite feed price is €307 per tonne (November 2020) and the 2020 annualised price is estimated to be €305 per tonne. The 2020 composite feed price of €305 per tonne represents a 2 percent decrease when compared to 2019 (€311) primarily due to the lower prices from Jan.-June 2020.

Figure 1: Irish pig feed cost 1995-2020



Source: Teagasc Pig Development Department

When the composite feed price is examined over a longer time period, the 2020 price of €305 is midway between the 5 year average (2016-2020)

and 10 year average (2011-2020), €300 and €311 respectively. The annualised feed cost of 108 cent per kg dwt. is marginally higher than the five year average of 107 cent per kg. The highest feed cost in recent years was in 2012 at 132 cent per kg and the lowest was in 1999 at 76 cent per kg.

Non-feed costs in Irish Pig Production in 2020

There are currently 80,000 sows on the Teagasc eProfit Monitor (ePM) database from a national herd of an estimated 148,000 (55 percent of total). The non-feed costs quoted are based on the national 2019 ePM data, (2020 data not yet available). Changes from year-to-year are generally minimal. Non-feed costs (excluding building depreciation and financial costs) are itemised in Table 1.

Table 1: Non-Feed Costs in ePM Recorded Herds

Cost Item	2019	2015-2019
cent per kg dwt.		
Healthcare	6.2	6.2
Heat, Power Light	3.8	4.1
Transport	1.9	1.4
AI	1.9	1.9
Manure	1.8	1.7
Labour/Management	15.1	14.1
Repairs	2.7	2.6
Administration	1.2	1.0
Environment	0.5	0.5
Insurance	1.3	1.1
House rental	1.7	1.8
Contract Costs	2.3	2.1
Water	0.5	0.5
Dead Pigs Disposal	0.7	0.8
Stock Depreciation	2.1	1.9
Miscellaneous	1.2	1.2
Total	44.9	42.7

Source: Teagasc ePM Report 2019

The financial costs are itemised in Table 2. We estimate that the cost of building depreciation and interest is significantly lower than the true level required for a healthy pig industry. This reflects the sector's reduced capital investment in recent years due to the low profitability of the sector.

Table 2: Financial Costs in ePM recorded herds

Cost Item	2019	2015-2019
	cent per kg dwt.	
Interest & Depreciation	5.7	5.9

Source: Teagasc Pigsys Report 2019

The estimated annualised total cost of production in 2020 (based on 2019 non-feed costs and 2020 feed costs) was 158.6 cent per kg dwt. (2019; 159.1) for pigs delivered to the slaughter plant.

Irish Pig Prices in 2020

The estimated average pig price in 2020 was 173 cent per kg dwt., which was 5 cent per kg dwt. higher than in 2019 (168 cent per kg dwt) and 23% higher than 2018 (141 cent per kg dwt) which was significantly higher than the five year average (2016-2020) of 159 cent and 10 year average (2011-2020) of 157 per kg dwt. respectively.

The monthly pig price in January began the year at a very high level of 195 cent per kg dwt. but then began to slide from February as the scale of the Covid19 outbreak in China began to emerge. The Chinese lockdown in February and March was followed by refrigerated container logistical difficulties and then by European Covid19 lockdowns. The pig price decreased from February (197c/kg dwt.) to reach 163 c/kg dwt. by August and plateaued at this price before falling sharply in November.

The EU pig price in 2020, as per the Irish price, decreased primarily due to the effect of Covid19 on demand and logistical supply difficulties in slaughter plants.

The EU market was further disrupted by the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in wild boar

in Germany. The outbreak of this pig disease prohibited any German pigmeat exports to China which resulted in a collapse of their pig price to 119 cent per kg dwt.

Some EU slaughter plants also lost their Chinese export licenses due to Covid19 outbreaks, resulting in large backlogs of pigs to be slaughtered and increased pigmeat volumes being marketed on the inter-EU market, thereby exerting further downward pressure on pig prices.

Irish Pig Production Profitability 2020

The margin over feed cost (MOF) is estimated at 65 cent per kg dwt. in 2020. This is moderately above the 58 cent per kg achieved in 2019 and substantially above (+25%) the 5 year average of 52c/kg.

The highest MOF achieved in the recent past was 72 cent per kg dwt., which was achieved in 1996. While the 20 year high of 65 cent MOF was very welcome by the industry after a few difficult years, the earning potential/expectation at the beginning of 2020 was much higher. The relatively steady feed price, high pig price in January allied to massive Chinese pigmeat demand, indicated that 2020 profitability could have exceeded even the 1996 record margin. However, due to the logistical difficulties of Covid19 this potential was not fully realised.

It is estimated that a MOF of 50c per kg is required to meet all production costs, including financial repayments. Therefore the 65 cent per kg MOF achieved in 2020 significantly exceeded this target. However the very low MOF in 2018 (33 cent per kg) and the continued low MOF level in Q1 2019 has resulted in a subsequent slow financial recovery, as a significant amount of 'lost ground' had to be recovered.

Table 3: Margin Over Feed in 2020 compared to the 5, 10, 15, and 20 year average

	Margin Over Feed	% Diff.
	cent per kg per dwt.	
2020*	65	-
5 Yr average	52	+27
10 Yr average	44	+50
15 Yr average	45	+47
20 Yr average	49	+35

Source: Teagasc Pig Development Department

*Estimate

Irish Pig and Sow numbers in 2020

The Irish commercial sow herd census in 2020 is estimated at 148,000 and this has remained unchanged in the last 5 years despite considerable financial fluctuations in the sector within this time. The estimated number of pig slaughtering's in 2020 are illustrated in Table 6. The 2020 disposals are estimated to be 3.80 million pigs which is marginally higher (2 percent) than in 2019.

Table 4: Irish born pigs slaughtered: 2017-2020

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020*
	million head			
Slaughter Pigs	3.68	3.84	3.70	3.80

Source: Teagasc Pig Department *estimate

The combination of high sow prolificacy and higher sale weight has combined to significantly increase the annual volume of Irish pigmeat being produced year-on-year, 10% higher output over the last 5 years without any increase in the national sow herd size.

The level of pig disposals in some of the principal pig exporting countries are shown in Table 9. The sow herd declines in Germany and the Netherlands have reduced slaughter numbers by 2.4 million and 0.2 million pigs respectively. The Netherlands have a sow herd

The 'stand-out' data point in Table 5 is the continuous increase in the Spanish slaughter numbers. To illustrate this continuous increase, Spain slaughter number (44 weeks) increased from 31.8 million pigs (2016) to 36.6 million pigs

(2020) an increase of 4.8 million pigs (15%) over a five year period. This rate of expansion is the reason why Spain has now taken over from Germany, Netherlands and Denmark, as the 'powerhouse' of European pig production.

Table 5: Selected European & North American Pig Disposals

	2019*	2020*	Change
Country	Million head		%
Germany	40.2	37.8	-5.5
Spain	35.0	36.6	+4.6
France	16.2	16.1	-0.7
Denmark	13.7	14.2	+3.8
Netherlands	12.9	12.7	-1.3
Total	118.0	117.4	-0.5
U.S.	107.8	109.1	+1.2
Canada	17.1	17.7	+3.4

*Based on 44 weeks of production

Source: MPB 2020

EU Pigmeat Exports in 2020

In 2018 the outbreak of ASF in China led to a reduction in the China's sow herd of 40 percent and a reduction in the total pig herd of 220 million pigs. As pork constitutes 60 percent of the total volume of meat consumed in China, this is a significant deficit by global standards.

The Chinese sow herd is in a rebuilding phase but it will be another 12 months before it approaches pre-ASF 2018 levels. It is estimated that in the last 2 years they have invested €25bn building new pig units. The data in Table 6 reports a moderate increase in EU pigmeat exports to China from January-August 2020 (+13 percent) but the US increase is more significant (+17%) as this does not include the effect of Germany being excluded from the Chinese market from September onwards.

The annualised US pigmeat export volume to China is expected to show a year-on-year increase in excess of 20%. The EU loss of market share may

be difficult to reclaim in the coming years as the Chinese import requirement decreases.

Table 6: Pigmeat exports from selected countries

Country	2019*	2020*	change
	million tonnes		%
EU	3.53	3.98	+13
USA	1.70	1.99	+17
Canada	0.83	0.98	+17
Brazil	0.47	0.68	+43
Total	6.53	7.63	+17

Source: MDP * Jan-Aug

Outlook for the Irish Pig Market in 2021

The outlook for the pig market is a reflection of global pig feed and pig price market trends.

Irish Pig Feed Price Outlook in 2021

The forecast for the 2021 Irish cereal harvest is for cereal prices to decrease marginally in Q3 and Q4 2021. This is based on a range of factors. Firstly the Australian harvest is forecast to be the biggest in recent years due to good rainfall in the eastern states. The estimated 29MT harvest would be 14 MT higher than the previous drought stricken harvest and would allow approximately 20-21MT for export.

Nearer home the E.U. winter planting for wheat and barley has gone well and the harvest is expected to at a minimum to reach five year average output.

The South American soyabean planting has being more problematic. Drought conditions in September and October delayed planting by nearly a month in many parts of Brazil. Although the crop has now being planted and received some rain, the moisture deficit in Mato-Grosso, Brazil's largest soya state, is still very high.

The industry had forecast a Brazilian harvest of 133MT but this is now unlikely due to the late planting and continued poor growing conditions. The current high soyabean price of €420 (Nov.

2020) looks set to continue for much of 2021 until easing with the arrival of the 2021 U.S. harvest.

Overall the outlook for the composite pig feed price is an increase during the spring by €10/tonne and then reduce by €20/tonne as the northern hemisphere cereal and soybean harvest arrives. The average pig feed price is forecast to be 109c/kg dwt.

Pig Price in 2021

The outlook for the Irish pig price is going to be driven by three main factors; Chinese demand, detrimental effects of Covid19 and a no-agreement Brexit.

The Chinese sow herd recovery has been reported to be within 10-12% of pre-ASF levels but this appears to be very optimistic. This sceptical view is underlined by the fact that Chinese pig slaughter numbers in September 2020 were still 33% below pre-ASF levels and during the six month period (Mar 2020-Sept 2020) the deficit had only reduced by 4% (37% to 33%). A current sow herd recovery to 20% of pre-ASF levels seems more realistic/probable. If this assumption is correct then the Chinese pigmeat production deficit will reduce as 2021 progresses thereby cooling their domestic pig price and import demand. However Irish export volumes to China in 2021, even at a lower volume, will still play an important role in supporting our pig price.

Covid19 is currently (Nov. 2020) causing significant logistical problems. Germany and Denmark have estimated pig slaughter backlogs of 700,000 and 100,000 respectively due to Covid19 working restrictions in slaughter plants. Furthermore Covid19 cases within factories are resulting in the loss of individual factory export licenses to China. This pig meat is then placed on the European market, depressing prices. The imminent arrival of human Covid19 vaccines will hopefully help to gradually reduce cases globally. If food-chain

personnel/slaughter plant workers are considered 'priority essential workers', and receive priority vaccination, then the reduction in Covid19 incidences in personnel working in the pig sector may be accelerated.

Brexit negotiations between the EU and the UK are still on-going (Nov. 2020). However, in the case of no-agreement the WTO rules will commence in March 2021. The UK market is a very important market for Ireland as it is an export destination for 45-50% of our pigmeat exports (€500M) and also 12% of our ROI born pigs are slaughtered in Northern Ireland. The UK itself has been estimated to be only 55% self-sufficient for pigmeat therefore it will still require large pigmeat import volumes irrespective of an agreement or not. Teagasc economists have estimated that pigmeat prices would reduce by 4-5% in the case of a no-agreement Brexit.

These combined factors make it difficult to predict a pig price for 2021. However, we estimate it will be in the region of 155-160c/kg if a Brexit

agreement is reached and 147-152 c/kg if no-agreement.

Profitability in 2020

Overall it is estimated that the MOF in 2021 will be 49 c/kg which will be a decrease of 25% on the 2020 average.

Table 7: Pig & Feed Price Forecast 2021

Year	Pig Price (Net)	Feed Cost	Margin over Feed
cent per kg dwt.			
2020*	173	108	65
2021^	158	109	49

Source: Teagasc Pig Development Department

*Estimate ^ Forecast

Conclusion

The Irish pig sector enjoyed high profitability in 2019 and 2020 but the outlook for 2021 is for much tighter margins due to a cooling Chinese market resulting in a much lower pig price.

What do EU citizens think about Agriculture and the CAP?

Keelin O'Driscoll

In recent years there has been growing concern expressed by agricultural stakeholders about the impression that non-farming people have of their livelihood, particularly when it comes to the environment and animal welfare. Stories in the news about individual animal welfare breakdowns, along with larger issues such as new legislative requirements can give the impression that there is a lack of support for farmers in the general population. However, a recent survey carried out in the EU may help to put your minds at ease somewhat.

Eurobarometer surveys are public opinion surveys which were established in 1973, and are carried

out to compare and gauge trends and opinions across EU member states. Standard surveys (in general about attitudes towards the EU) are carried out twice every year, but more targeted ones dealing with special topics – such as agriculture – are often regularly repeated as well. In October this year, Special Eurobarometer no.504, called Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP was published, updating a previous one from 2017. It makes interesting reading and we get an overview of citizen opinions on agriculture across Europe. The good news is that people seem to think highly of farmers in general, and support appears to be growing strongly over time, when

compared with previous Eurobarometers on agriculture.

The CAP constitutes around [35% of the total EU annual budget](#). Its aim is to ensure a decent standard of living for farmers through income support and market measures, and to ensure sustainable rural development according to the needs of each European state. As such, it is highly important to ensure that there is general support of the CAP, and the way that it is managed, across the EU. This survey was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development to explore public opinion about agriculture, rural areas, and the CAP, between 3 August and 15 September 2020. 27,237 EU citizens across 27 member states, and from different social and demographic categories were interviewed face to face at home (Covid allowing), in their mother-tongue. The questions matched as much as possible previous surveys (2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017) so that changes in opinions over time can be tracked.

Perceived importance of Agriculture in the EU

Over 95% of respondents (+ 3% since 2017) think that agriculture and rural areas are important ‘for our future’, including 56% who consider it ‘very important’. Looking at the longer trend, this has increased by 5% since 2009.

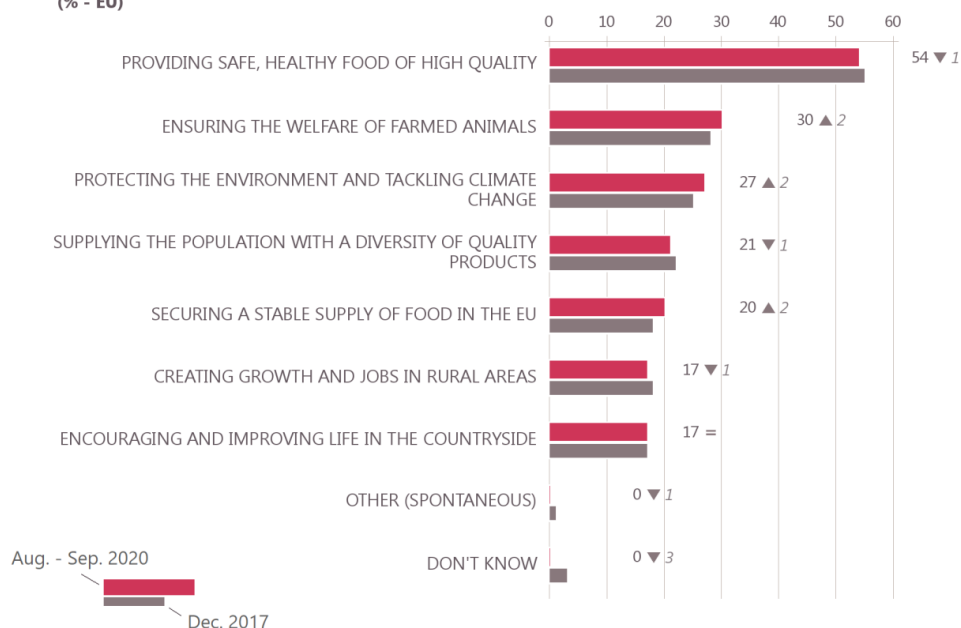
Agriculture and Climate change

Around 70% of respondents think that EU farmers need to change the way they work to combat climate change, even if that means that EU agriculture will be less competitive. However, a similar proportion indicated that they are willing to pay up to 10% more for agricultural products that are produced in a way that limits their carbon footprint. Moreover, 55% agreed with the statement that ‘agriculture has already made a major contribution in fighting climate change’.

The responsibilities of farmers in our society

Respondents were given the same options for this question as in 2017, to see if the answers changed over time. The results can be seen below: Providing safe, healthy food, and ensuring the welfare of animals were perceived as the top two responsibilities, and this has not changed since 2017

QA6 What do you think should be the two main responsibilities of farmers in our society? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



Objectives of the EU in terms of agriculture and rural development policy

In tandem to the perceived responsibilities of farmers, 62% of respondents also thought that providing safe healthy food of high quality should be an objective of the EU. Over half (51%) thought that ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers should be an objective, similar to the number (52%) which thought that protecting the environment and tackling climate change should be an objective.

Priorities of the CAP

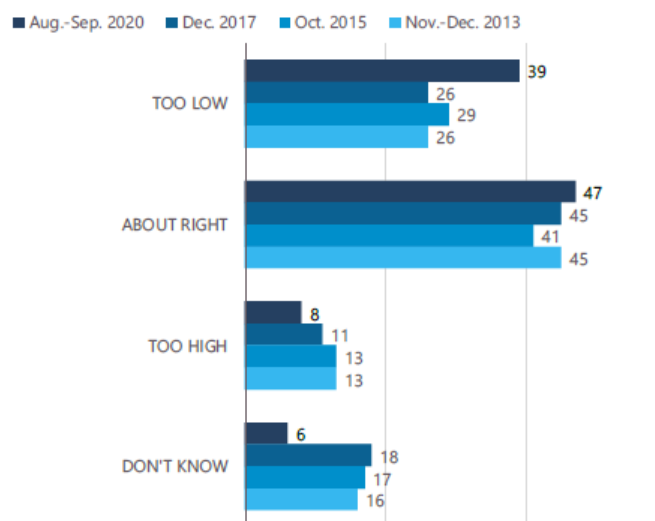
Over 90% of respondents believe that securing a stable supply of food in the EU (92%), ensuring sustainable management of natural resources (91%), and strengthening the farmers' role in the food chain (90%) are important priorities of the CAP. However, when it came to the actual

contribution of the CAP in each of these areas (i.e. does the CAP achieve these objectives), the % agreeing was lower: 83%, 70% and 70% respectively. This indicates that there is a slight disconnect between what EU citizens think the CAP should achieve, and what it actually does. However, 76% of citizens agreed with the statement that the CAP benefits everyone, not only farmers. This is a much higher level than in 2015 (62%) or 2017 (61%).

Financial aid for farmers and the CAP budget

About half of respondents (47%) agreed that financial aid to farmers was about right. However, the proportion of respondents who think that the amount provided is too low has grown significantly over the past 4 surveys, and the amount thinking it is too high dropping (figure 2).

QA9 The EU gives financial support to farmers to help stabilise their incomes. This aid represents around 1% of the combined public expenditure of the 27 Member States of the EU and almost 35% of the total EU budget. Do you think that this support is too low, about right or too high?
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n. = 27,237)

Justification of the CAPs share of the EU budget

Respondents were provided with 6 options as to why the CAP takes up so much of the budget, and the responses can be seen below. It is evident from the responses that there is a growing opinion amongst citizens that the CAP is important to

firstly guarantee the food supply of Europeans, but by virtually the same proportion of respondents, that the support makes it possible to ensure sustainable farming, and that it is needed because production of food products is more expensive in the EU than elsewhere because of stricter

standards. Moreover, 56% of respondents would like to see an increase in EU financial support to farmers over the next 10 years, which is an increase of 12% since 2017, reflecting a long term trend (increase of 27% since 2007). When it comes to the type of support, 92% of respondents are in favour of the EU continuing to provide subsidy support to farmers for carrying out practices which are beneficial to the climate and the environment.

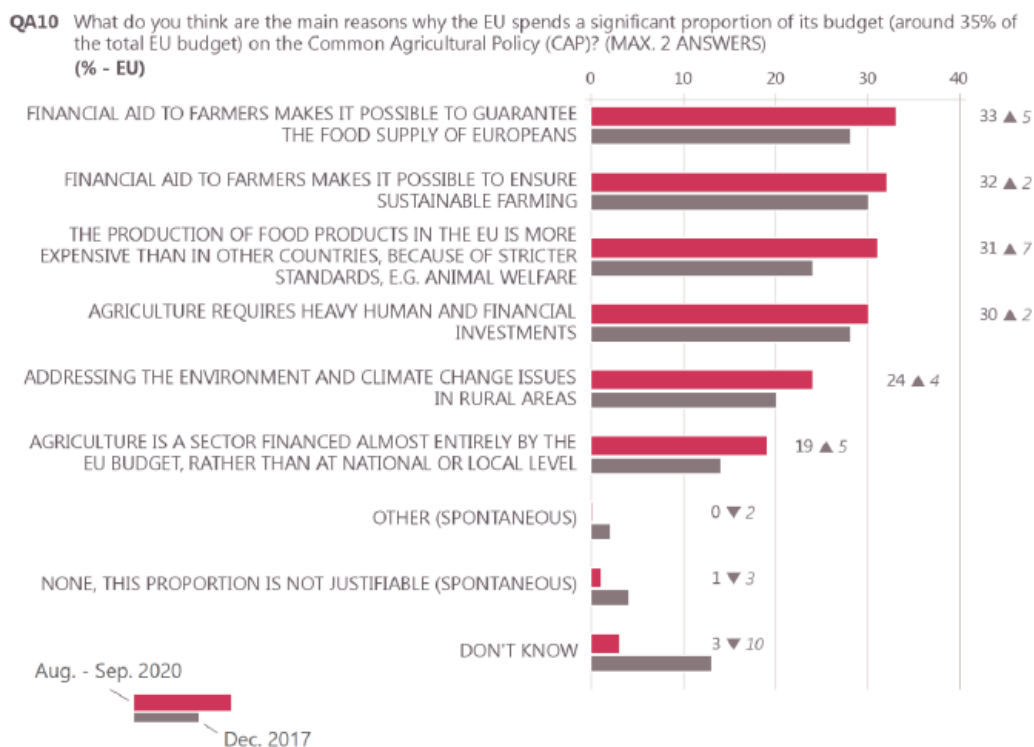
Attitudes towards international trade

88% of Europeans agreed with the statement that 'agricultural imports from any origin should only enter the EU if their products complies with the EUs environmental and animal welfare standards'. Moreover, 57% thought that the EU should have

trade barriers to imports of agricultural products with the exception of developing countries.

What can we take away from all this?

In general, it appears that EU citizens appreciate the financial stressors which farmers face, in part because of the constraints under which they operate legally, relative to other countries. Thus consumers are in favour of both support from the EU, but also state that they are willing to pay more for food from the EU, if it complies with certain standards. Further breakdowns of data from individual countries will be made available later in the year. The full summary report, and many other Eurobarometers, can be seen [here](#).



Base: all respondents (n = 27,237)

The Cost of Respiratory Disease

Edgar Garcia Manzanilla & Julia Adriana Calderón Díaz

Respiratory disease is one of the main causes of economic losses in pig farms and one of the main reasons for antibiotic use. Thus, it is one of the main things that you must keep under control on your farm. Respiratory disease is normally not associated with one single pathogen, but it is a combination of different pathogens and environmental problems. This combination is known as the Porcine Respiratory Disease Complex (PRDC) and involves pathogens like PRRS virus (causing blue ear), M hyopneumoniae (main cause of pneumonia), Influenza virus (causing flu), A Pleuropneumoniae (main cause of pleurisy) among others.

Teagasc carried out studies in a group of 56 farms in Ireland in 2017 and we have recently published the results of the economic cost of respiratory disease for Irish pig farmers. Although the data is from 2017, these levels are similar in 2020 and the economic cost is also similar. This data should be taken into consideration when making decisions to control disease on farm.

Respiratory disease, pathogens, and vaccination

The 56 farms were inspected for pluck lesions at slaughter and blood was taken from 30 pigs from each farm. The average prevalence of pleurisy found in Irish pig farms was 13% with values between 0 and 53% among farms. Out of these

lesions, 73% were moderate and severe lesions. The average prevalence of pneumonia on farm was 11% with values ranging from 0 to 37%. When pneumonia occurs in the early finisher stage it can leave scarring on the lungs which can be detected at slaughter. The average prevalence of scarred lungs was 13% ranging between 0 and 39%. Pericarditis was 1.2% on average but ranged between 0 and 20% depending on the farm.

Table 1 shows the percentage of farms positive to each one of the pathogens studied, and those vaccinating. All farms were positive to APP. Only 12% of farms were negative to PRRS, Influenza and Mhyo, 18% of the farms had only 1 of these pathogens, and 43% had all three. It is interesting to note that all farms positive to Mhyo were vaccinating, however not all those positive to influenza or PRRS were vaccinating. This will have implications for the economic analysis.

Being positive for one of these pathogens does not necessarily mean that the clinical disease will be present on the farm. For example, all farms were positive to APP but not all farms had high pleurisy problems. However, it is important to consider that if your farm is positive there is a higher chance that at some point you will suffer clinical problems and prevention should be in place.

Table 1. Main pathogens studied in the survey carried out by Teagasc, number of farms positive (serology), number of farms vaccinating, and main lesions statistically related to each pathogen.

Pathogen	Number of farms positive	Number of farms vaccinating	Main lesions
PRRS virus (blue ear)	50%	43%	
Influenza virus (flu)	78%	39%	Pneumonia, pleurisy
M hyopneumoniae (Mhyo)	71%	73%	Pneumonia, pericarditis
A. pleuropneumoniae (APP)	100%	9%	Pleurisy, pericarditis

When studying the main pathogens implicated in each one of the lesions. The main lesions associated with the pathogens were, as expected, pleurisy associated to APP and pneumonia associated to Mhyo. PRRS was not directly associated to any of the lesions although it is known to increase their severity. Influenza was related to both pneumonia and pleurisy which would indicate the importance of controlling this influenza to reduce these lesions.

Cost of positive status and vaccination

The performance figures of farms positive to each one of the diseases was analysed with the Teagasc Economic Pig Production Model (see table 2). Vaccination was also considered in the analysis. A complete economic analysis can be found [here](#). Mhyo was the disease affecting productive performance the most with an average cost of €7.20 per pig. The difference between vaccinated and non-vaccinated farms positive for Mhyo could not be studied because all positive farms vaccinate for Mhyo.

Table 2. Cost per pig on positive farms (vaccinating or not) for PRRS virus, influenza virus and M hyopneumoniae.

Type of farm	Reduction on profit compared to negative
PRRS positive	-3.7€ per pig
PRRS positive vaccinating	-5.7€ per pig
Influenza positive	-2.8€ per pig
Influenza positive vaccinating	-7.2€ per pig
Mhyo positive (all vaccinating)	-7.2€ per pig

In the case of PRRS and Influenza, a contradictory but interesting result was found. Those farms positive to the disease and vaccinating had a worse economic performance than those not vaccinating. Does this mean that vaccines are related to economic losses and should not be used? This is likely a misinterpretation of the results. Our interpretation, after discussion with some of the farmers involved, would be that the vaccines for PRRS and Influenza are not used properly or not enough. In general, these vaccines are brought into farms once productive performance is severely affected, and this may well be too late. Thus, the results do not demonstrate a negative effect of the vaccine but the type of farms that are vaccinating for PRRS and influenza, mainly those with severe clinical problems.

Cost of high lesion levels

When studying the economic cost of lung lesions, the same economic cost cannot be given for all levels of disease. The same change in the prevalence of lesions would result in different costs depending on the basal level of disease. For example, a 1% increase when your prevalence is 1% has a bigger effect on production than a 1% increase when the level is already 25%. In this case we present the results for the main scenarios to consider. We studied the main lesions affecting productive performance and then calculated the cut-off value where the effects of the lesions on growth performance were higher. In other words, if you are above these cut-off values it is time for you to take action.

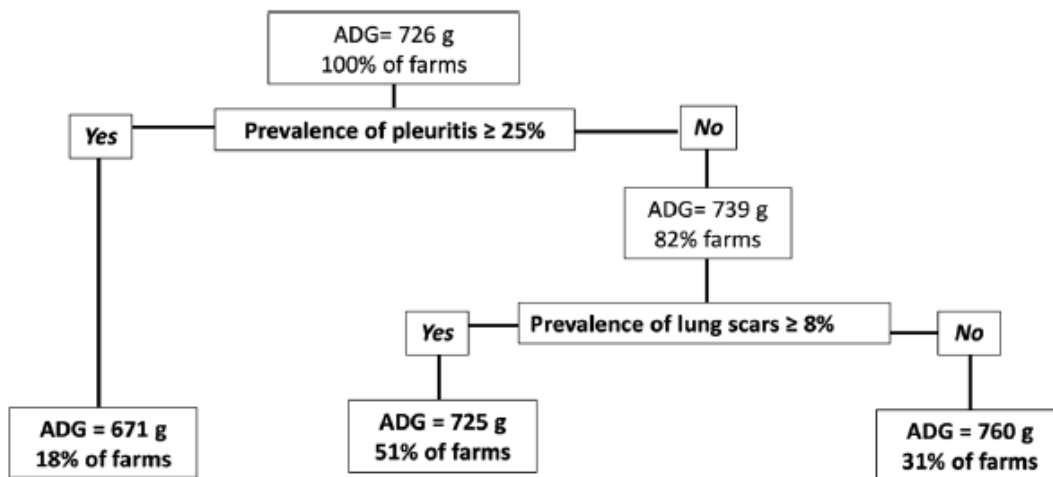


Figure 1. Main lesions (pleurisy and scars) and cut-off values affecting average daily gain (ADG) in 56 pig farms.

The main lesions affecting performance were pleurisy and scars (figure 1). Scars are probably more important than pneumonia because they represent the same clinical problem (pneumonia), but scars mean that the problem happened earlier in the cycle and produced higher mortality and reduction in growth. The cut-off values were 25% for pleurisy and 8% for scars. These cut-off values may seem high but 20% and 50% of the studied farms were over these levels for pleurisy and scars respectively. A complete economic analysis can be found [here](#).

Table 3. Cost per pig of high levels of pleurisy (>25%) and high levels of scars (>8%).

Type of farm	Reduction on profit compared to reference
Low pleurisy Low Scars	Reference
Low pleurisy High Scars	-4.8€ per pig
High pleurisy	-6.6€ per pig

Summary

-Keep an eye on the pluck lesions on your farm, at least every quarter. Soon this will be possible in real time when DAFM and AHJ begin antemortem/postmortem electronic monitoring.

-Be proactive in preventing respiratory disease with vaccination and other measures like ventilation and biosecurity. It is cheaper to prevent it than treat respiratory disease.

The Pig Edge Podcast included in Top 15 Swine Industry Podcasts

Teagasc Pig Development Department's monthly podcast was included this December at number 6 in the 'Top 15 Swine Industry Podcasts You Must Follow in 2020'. Read about it [here](#) and check out some of the other podcasts included.



New national study: Risk factors for Salmonella

The case-control study for Salmonella is a collaborative project between Animal Health Ireland, Teagasc, UCD and DAFM that will include sampling of pig pens and a questionnaire in management practices on farm. Data gathered will be compared between farms with high and low prevalence for Salmonella to understand practices that can be used to better control for Salmonella in all Irish pig farms.

If you receive a letter inviting you to participate in the study and you want to collaborate, please sign the form, and send it back to DAFM. If you want to discuss the details please contact Carla Gomes cgomes@animalhealthireland.ie or Edgar Garcia Manzanilla

Edgar.GarciaManzanilla@teagasc.ie

Publication of Teagasc Sectoral Roadmaps 2027

A new series of Teagasc Sectoral Roadmaps 2027 was published on Tuesday, 8 December. The roadmap for the pig sector covers; market and policy issues, shape and size of the sector in 2027, targets proposed for the pig production sector, environmental implications, research and knowledge transfer actions, and current performance and targets for 2027. Read it [here](#).



*Wishing you &
yours a Happy
Christmas!*



**For more information visit our website
www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs**

This newsletter was edited by Ciarán Carroll
Teagasc, Moorepark, Fermoy, Co. Cork.

For more information on any of the content
contact Ciarán at ciaran.carroll@teagasc.ie