Pig Road Map 2030

Pig sector profile

The pig sector is currently the third most important Irish agricultural sector after milk and beef, accounting for 7% of Goods Output at Producer Prices. It employs over 8,000 people, with more than 1,200 of these on the 260 sow integrated farms in Ireland (PWC Pig Industry Report 2022). The national sow herd stands at 138,000 sows (average 2024) with an average herd size of 530 sows. The industry exports over 60% of its production and currently faces a challenge to attract quality new skilled entrants to the sector while reducing its impact on the environment.

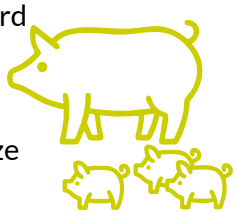
Pig sector statistics

7%

The pig sector accounts for **7% of Gross Agricultural Output**

National sow herd
138,000 sows

Average herd size
530 sows



Pig LU (2024)
Pigs account for **7%** of Total Livestock Units

Pigs processed (millions)

2022	**3.84**
2023	**3.48**
2024	**3.35**

Total sow numbers

2022	**140,000**
2023	**134,000**
2024	**138,000**

Number of pigs per sow per year

2022	**27.4**
2023	**27.9**
2024	**27.8**

Current pig farm metrics and future targets

	Key performance indicator	Average (2022-2024)	2030	Top 10%
Farm System and Sustainability	Number of pigs per sow per year	27.7	30	32
	Feed conversion (weaning to sale)	2.41	2.35	2.30
	Pig meat per sow per year (tonne)	2.50	2.70	2.88
	Feed per sow per year (tonne)	8.8	9.5	9.8
	Herd feed conversion efficiency (FCE)	3.52	3.52	3.41
	Slurry applied by LESS (%)	100	100	100

Pig sector challenges and responses supported by Teagasc

Economic

Price volatility
There has been greater volatility and increased prices in recent years in the pig sector. Teagasc supports the sector through the Feed Cost Competitiveness Initiative, the Teagasc Profit Monitor, Monthly Feed & Pig Price Monitor and International Benchmarking via InterPig. We are also working with a number of groups to explore income volatility tools and measures.

Added value
Teagasc research will develop new value-added products in collaboration with the food programme and stakeholders (Valuepig, OneWelPig, Tailwards projects).

Policy
Policy initiatives can have significant impacts on pig farming. Teagasc will contribute in all relevant forums to provide scientific advice, e.g DAFM Roundtable, TAMS, Bord Bia Technical Advisory Group.

Social

People
The shortage of skilled labour is a serious issue. Teagasc supports the sector via its education and training programmes, e.g. farm apprenticeship courses & bespoke workshops.

Health & safety
Pig farming has some health and safety challenges. Teagasc supports the sector via the provision of Health & Safety Courses.

Technology
Pig farmers need to upskill and adapt new technologies. Teagasc supports the sector via the use of digital technologies & digital media (Skills videos, Pig Edge Podcast, e-newsletter, infographics). Teagasc plans to pilot new on-farm digital technologies.

Pig sector challenges and responses supported by Teagasc continued...

Environment

Emissions
The pig sector is committed to becoming more carbon-efficient and has a particular focus on ammonia as well as reduced total emissions. Teagasc supports the sector through the development of a Carbon Calculator (AgNav), the promotion of good and best practices (Signpost farms, LESS, Tailwards, NUTRITIVE, LE-FARM projects, collaboration with Tillage programme) and research for new circular ingredients (CIRCALGAE, ValuePig).

Water, Biodiversity and Enterprise Integration
Pig farmers co-operate with other crop and livestock farmers in the sourcing of feed and provision of nutrients for crop and forage growth. Teagasc supports the optimised use of these nutrients through detailed nutrient management planning supported by the Signpost Programme, the Better Farming for Water: 8 - Actions for Change campaign and other water quality and biodiversity initiatives.

Health & Welfare

Animal health
Animal health and its potential to impact on human health (e.g. AMR) is an increasing concern. Teagasc supports the sector through various projects with a focus on biosecurity improvement (Biosecure, BETTER and BiosecurIE), reduce antimicrobial resistance (EU-JAMRAI) and Salmonella (TICSalmPig), and improving the control of infectious agents like PRRS (Tailwards) or influenza (ESFLU).

Animal welfare
The pig sector is committed to constantly improving animal welfare. Teagasc supports the sector with research on new facility designs (IDEAS-AMED, FittoFarrowFree, LE-FARM) and creating farmer-based EU networks to address welfare issues with a bottom-up approach (WELFARMERS). Teagasc also provides training via its pig welfare workshops and is developing a new pig welfare risk assessment protocol (PigNoDock) in collaboration with AHI.

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The road map for pigs is available on **www.teagasc.ie**