

Edited by Amy Quinn

Welcome to the December edition of our monthly newsletter. As we approach the end of 2021, the industry is currently in a difficult period due to increasing feed prices and pig price decline over the past number of months, certainly not a place we had anticipated we would be in when planning out this year.

Later in this newsletter Michael McKeon provides a detailed review of the pig sector in 2021, forecasts 2022 and when he sees improvements in pig and feed prices coming. Michael also took the time to discuss this topic further with me on the latest episode of The Pig Edge podcast series, which is well worth a listen.

Similar to much of last year, our events were mostly held online to ensure the safety of all and prevent disruption to farm businesses. We also invested a lot of resources into the further development of our digital media and in many instances tailoring this content to the needs and requests of our stakeholders. The feedback from these materials has been extremely positive and

we are already planning out 2022 and look forward to your input.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and hopefully relaxing Christmas from all of us in the Pig Development Department. Additionally we thank you all for your continued engagement and support throughout the year, be it events, podcasts, digital media, research projects or education courses. Your contributions, engagement and support is very much appreciated and we look forward to bringing you even more in the New Year.

In this issue:

- Optimising number of feed splits & sensor height in short trough liquid feeding
- Review of Pig Sector in 2021 and Outlook for 2022

Optimising number of feed splits and sensor height in short trough liquid feeding

Peadar Lawlor & Florence Viard

We know from earlier work comparing liquid and dry feeding in Moorepark that liquid feeding finisher pigs can be up to 0.2 of an FCE unit less efficient than dry feeding. This is equivalent to 18kg more feed being consumed by each pig between 30 and 120kg LW. When we look at this in financial terms this is equivalent to €5.85 per pig increased feed cost per pig with liquid feeding with finisher feed costing €325/tonne. Despite the higher growth rates normally found with liquid feeding this is a huge cost. In our project (WETFEED-2) we are currently focusing on system management and feed hygiene to try to minimise physical feed loss and spontaneous fermentation and ultimately improve feed efficiency and reduce feed cost in liquid fed pigs.

In a recent experiment we looked at optimising the number of feed splits and sensor height in a short trough liquid feeding system. We were of the opinion that feeding smaller feed splits more frequently each day would help to improve feed efficiency. This we reasoned would allow less dwell time of feed in troughs and thereby minimise the time available for feed wastage and spoilage to occur.

The Treatments were:

1. 4 feed splits per day with sensor position at 50 mm above floor of trough
2. 4 feed splits per day with sensor position at 15 mm above floor of trough

3. 8 feed splits per day with sensor position at 50 mm above floor of trough
4. 8 feed splits per day with sensor position at 15 mm above floor of trough

The barley-wheat-soybean based diet fed during the experiment was formulated to contain 9.8 MJ NE / kg and 10g SID Lysine /kg. Pen groups (9 pens per treatment) of pigs were on trial for 77 days. Pigs started on trial at ~27 kg and weighed ~112kg at the end of the trial when they were slaughtered. For each treatment the diet was liquid fed using an *ad-libitum*, short-trough, sensor controlled feeding system.

The health of pigs and their growth performance was excellent during the trial. Carcass weight was highest when sensor position was at 50mm and this was not affected by providing either 4 or 8 feed splits per day. Likewise carcass average daily gain was maximised at a sensor height position of 50mm and this was not affected by providing either 4 or 8 feed splits per day. Carcass feed conversion efficiency was similar for pigs fed 4 splits per day for sensor heights at either 50 or 15mm but when pigs were provided with 8 feed splits per day the best feed efficiency was found at a sensor height of 15mm. Lean meat percentage was increased when sensor height was dropped from 50 to 15mm where 4 splits of feed were provided per day but not when 8 feed splits were provided per day, however feeding 8 feed splits per day, at either sensor height, increased lean

meat percentage compared to feeding 4 feed splits per day at a sensor height of 50mm.

In summary reducing sensor height from 50 to 15 mm reduced carcass weight by 3.5Kg and carcass ADG by 45g/day while it improved FCE by 0.08 of an FCE unit. However, feeding either 4 or 8 feed splits per day had no effect on these parameters. Lean meat yield was increased from 57.4% to 58.3% when sensor height was reduced from 50 to 15 mm while again feeding either 4 or 8 feed splits per day had no effect on lean meat percentage.

In conclusion we can improve feed efficiency and increase lean meat yield in sensor controlled liquid

fed pigs by reducing sensor height from 50 to 15mm however this change will also result in a reduction in carcass average daily gain and carcass weight. Increasing the number of feed splits provided per day from 4 to 8 has no effect on these parameters. If there is sufficient accommodation on a unit and the producer is not reliant on maximising growth rate to achieve a target slaughter weight then feeding sensor height should be 15mm. However if maximising growth is necessary to achieve a target slaughter weight it may be more profitable to operate at a sensor height of 50mm while controlling feed wastage with daily manual adjustments to the feeding curve as was done in this study.

Review of Pig Sector in 2021 and Outlook for 2022

Michael McKeon

The Irish pig industry enjoyed a buoyant period of profitability in 2019 and 2020. Unfortunately higher feed ingredient prices and a lower international pigmeat demand reduced the sector's profitability in 2021.

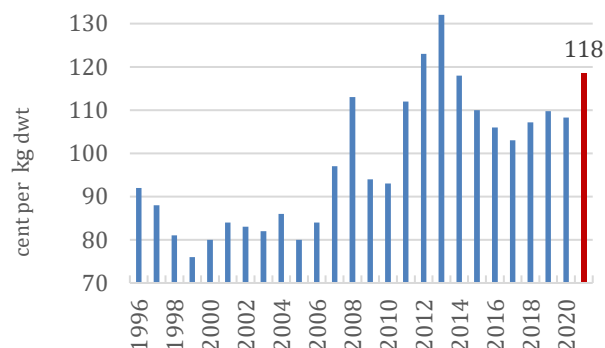
Review of Irish Pig Sector in 2021

Irish Pig Feed Costs 2021

Annual Irish composite pig feed prices are shown in Figure 1, expressed in terms of the cost per kg deadweight (dwt.). Feed prices started the year at a moderate level of 112c/kg but continued to rise as the year progressed to reach an estimated peak in December of 127c/kg. At the start of the year it was expected that a good harvest in the northern hemisphere would reduce pig feed prices in Q3 & Q4. However drought conditions in the US and wet

harvesting conditions across much of Europe resulted in a poor harvest. The composite feed price rose from €316 per tonne in January to €363 per tonne in December (+€47) to generate an estimated annualised price of €337 per tonne. The 2021 composite feed price represents a 10.5 percent increase when compared to 2020 (€305).

Figure 1: Irish pig feed cost 1996-2021



When the composite feed price is examined over a longer time period, the 2021 price of €337 is significantly higher than the 5 year average (2017-2021) and 10 year average (2012-2021), €309 and €314 respectively. The annualised feed cost of 118 cent per kg dwt. is higher than the 10 year average of 114 cent per kg.

Non-feed costs in Irish Pig Production

There are currently 80,000 sows on the Teagasc Profit Monitor (PM) database from a national herd of an estimated 146,000 (55 percent of total). The non-feed costs quoted are based on the national 2020 PM data, (2021 full-year data is not yet available). Changes from year-to year are generally moderate. Non-feed costs (excluding building depreciation and financial costs) are itemised in Table 1.

Table 1: Non-Feed Costs in PM Recorded Herds

Cost Item	2020	2018-2020
	cent per kg dwt.	
Healthcare	6.6	6.2
Heat, Power Light	4.3	4.1
Transport	1.6	1.7
AI	1.9	1.9
Manure	1.8	1.8
Labour/Management	15.9	15.0
Repairs	3.2	2.8
Administration	1.4	1.3
Environment	0.4	0.4
Insurance	1.5	1.3
House rental	1.7	1.8
Contract Costs	2.5	2.4
Water	0.5	0.5
Dead Pigs Disposal	0.8	0.7
Stock Depreciation	2.3	2.2
Miscellaneous	1.3	1.3
Total	43.5	43.9

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 over a period of time due to the low profitability of the sector.

Table 2: Financial Costs in PM recorded herds

Cost Item	2020	2016-2020
	cent per kg dwt.	
Interest	4.7	4.2
Building Depreciation	1.6	1.5
Total	6.3	5.7

The estimated annualised cost of production in 2021 (based on 2020 non-feed costs and 2021 feed costs) was 167.5 cent per kg dwt. (2020; 158.6) for pigs delivered to the slaughter plant.

Irish Pig Prices in 2021

The estimated average pig price in 2021 was 159 cent per kg dwt., which was 14 cent per kg dwt. lower than in 2020 (173 cent per kg dwt) and 6 percent higher than 2019 (169 cent per kg dwt) and similar to the five year (2017-2021) and 10 year average (2011-2020) of 161 per kg dwt.

The monthly pig price in January 2021 was at a very moderate level of 158 cent per kg dwt. which was significantly lower than the 198 cent per kg dwt achieved in January 2020. The backlog of pigs for slaughter in Q4 2020 in Germany, Denmark and Netherlands put downward pressure on the EU pig price. After this backlog cleared in Q1 the EU pig price market gradually increased to reach 172 cent per kg dwt. by mid-year. Unfortunately this upward trend was not to continue as the recovery in the Chinese domestic pig market supply, led to

a decrease in EU pigmeat exports during the second half of 2021, with resultant downward pressure on EU pig prices. The Irish pig price slipped from its high in June to reach 146 cent per kg dwt. in November and December 2021.

Irish pig slaughter capacity was an issue during 2021. Traditionally a significant percentage of pigs (10-12% of annual output) produced in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) have been slaughtered in Northern Ireland. Unfortunately due to logistical /labour issues, the main pig slaughter plant in Northern Ireland couldn't process its normal volume of ROI born pigs in Q3 2021. This led to a temporary backlog of pigs on-farm, with resultant higher average sale weights. This situation slowly improved during Q4 but continued to be an issue at year-end.

Irish Pig Production Profitability 2021

The margin over feed cost (MOF) is estimated at 41 cent per kg dwt. in 2021. This is significantly lower than the unusually high 65 cent per kg achieved in 2020 and lower than the 5 year (2017-2021) and 10 year (2012-2021) average of 51 and 47 cent per kg dwt respectively. The highest MOF achieved in the recent past was 72 cent per kg dwt., which was achieved in 1996.

While the 41 cent MOF was a low margin the sector entered into 2021 in financial good health. The high profitability of 2019 & 2020 was broadly used by pig producers to reduce their debt burden. It is estimated that the average level of feed credit terms reduced by 4 weeks (18 weeks to 14 weeks) over the 2018-2021 period. This financial prudence has resulted in the sector being better able to withstand the current low level of profitability

The 2021 MOF is significantly lower the norm when compared to the longer term trend as per Table 4. The higher five year average of 51 cent is a reflection of the high pig price in 2019 and 2020.

Table 4: Margin Over Feed in 2021 compared to the 5, 10, 15, and 20 year average

	Margin Over Feed	% Diff.
	cent per kg per dwt.	
2021*	41	-
5 Yr average	51	-20
10 Yr average	47	-13
15 Yr average	46	-11
20 Yr average	48	-15

*Estimate

Irish Pig and Sow Numbers in 2021

The Irish commercial sow herd population in 2021 is estimated at 146,000 and this has remained very consistent over the last 5 years despite considerable financial fluctuations in the sector during this time.

The estimated number of pig slaughtering's in 2021 are illustrated in Table 5. The 2021 disposals are estimated to be 3.93 million pigs which is higher (2.6 percent) than in 2020, reflecting the continuing improvements in sow prolificacy.

Table 5: Irish born pigs slaughtered: 2018-2021

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021*
	million head			
Slaughter Pigs	3.84	3.70	3.83	3.93

*estimate

The 10 year trend (Table 6) illustrates a 12 percent increase in slaughtering's over this period which reflects the increased efficiencies and output of the sector.

The decrease in Northern Ireland (N.Ire.) pig exports in 2021 when compared to 2020 (430,000 vs 456,000) may reflect the backlog of pigs that are currently on farms in the ROI and also the difficulty in trading with N.Ire. Slaughter plants during this period. The downward trend in N.Ire. exports had stabilised in recent years but the volume is considerably down from the peak in 2012 when 612,000 pigs were exported.

Table 6: Slaughter and Live Export to N. Ireland of Irish Born Pigs from 2012-2021

Year	Licensed Export Plants in Ireland	Exports to Northern Ireland	Exports as % of Total
	million head		%
2012	2.907	0.612	17
2013	2.829	0.570	20
2014	2.940	0.519	18
2015	3.132	0.514	16
2016	3.221	0.414	13
2017	3.295	0.433	13
2018	3.337	0.463	14
2019	3.273	0.425	12
2020	3.343	0.456	13
2021	3.350	0.430	11

Source: DAFM & DARDNI *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. Table 7 illustrates a 12 percent output increase over the last 5 years while the national sow herd size has remained stable/marginally lower.

Table 7: Irish annual pigmeat output 2017-2021

Year	Total Pigs Slaughtered	Ave Dead wt #	Total Pigmeat Produced
	Million Head	Kg	Tonnes
2017	3.68	84.6	311,328
2018	3.84	86.2	331,008
2019	3.70	86.7	320,790
2020	3.83	87.7	332,383
2021*	3.93	88.7	348,591

Source: DAFM & DARDNI * Estimated ^Irish born # PM

The continued upward trend in pig output urgently requires further expansion in slaughter and chill capacity to prevent this becoming a limiting factor on Irish pig production in the coming years. At the current trend, capacity to kill an extra 120,000 pigs per annum will be required to keep pace with increases in productivity output.

The level of pig disposals in some of the principal pig exporting countries are shown in Table 9. The sow herd decline in Germany and the reduction of weaner pigs being imported for finishing from Denmark and the Netherlands has resulted in a significant decrease (1.6 million pigs) in the German slaughter number. Consequently the Dutch and the Danish slaughter numbers have increased for the same reason. When these three countries are taken as a group there is a total decrease in slaughter numbers of 0.6%. When the main five exporting countries are viewed together there is an increase of 1.1% (1.1 million pigs).

The 'stand-out' data point in Table 8 is the continual increase in the Spanish slaughter numbers. To illustrate this continual increase, the Spanish slaughter volume (44 weeks) increased from 31.8 million pigs (2016) to 37.9 million pigs (2021), an extra 6.1 million pigs (19 percent) increase over a six year period.

Table 8: Selected European & North American Pig Disposals

	2020*	2021*	Change
Country	Million head		%
Germany	37.1	35.5	-4.3%
Spain	36.5	37.9	3.9%
France	15.8	16.0	1.2%
Denmark	14.3	15.2	5.9%
Netherlands	12.8	13.1	2.9%
Total	116.4	117.7	1.1%
U.S.	106.1	106.0	-0.9%
Canada	17.7	17.3	-2.2%

*Based on 44 weeks of production, Source: MPB 2021

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. Their integrated system and collective price bargaining system generates a lot of efficiencies for their industry.

EU Pig and Sow Numbers in 2021

While the Spanish sow herd grew in 2021 at 4.2% (Table 9), other EU herds declined. The low pig prices in Germany, Poland and France and a combination of low prices and a government cessation scheme in Netherlands, has resulted in a substantial reduction in these national sow herds. Overall the total sow population from the largest EU sow herds illustrates a decrease of 1.8% (149,000 sows). However this survey was undertaken in May-June 2021 before the high pig feed cost emerged. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the EU sow herd reduction has intensified and may result in a decline of 300,000 sows by December 2021.

Table 9: Changes in selected European sow herds

	2020*	2021*	Change
Country	Million head		%
Germany	1.776	1.630	-7.4
Spain	2.583	2.692	4.2
France	0.955	0.938	-1.8
Denmark	1.261	1.285	1.9
Netherlands	1.008	0.951	-5.7
Poland	0.810	0.748	-7.7
Total	8.393	8.244	-1.8%

Source: Eurostat

EU Pigmeat Exports in 2021

The trend of EU pigmeat exports over the last 3 years has been largely influenced by the reduction and restoration of the Chinese sow herd as it emerged from African Swine Fever (ASF). As the largest consumer of pigmeat in the world, the deficit in Chinese domestic pigmeat supply led to substantial EU pigmeat export volumes during 2019 (2.32 MT) and 2020 (3.34 MT). This high level of export volume continued through Q1 and Q2 of 2021. However from June 2021 onwards the volume decreased substantially. The restoration of the Chinese pig herd in 2021 resulted in a reduction of pigmeat imports from the mid-year point onwards. This is demonstrated by a 41% year-on-year reduction in EU exports to China during August 2021. This lower trend continued through Q3 and Q4 of 2021. Overall the total EU pigmeat export volume (Table 10) showed a modest increase during the first 8 months of 2021 (latest available data).

Table 10: Pigmeat exports from selected countries

Country	2020*	2021*	change
	million tonnes		%
EU	3.416	3.714	8.7
USA	1.99	2.02	1.5
Canada	0.976	0.969	-0.8
Total	14.8	15.1	2.2

Source: MDP

* Jan-Aug

Outlook for Irish Pig Sector in 2022

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

Irish Pig Feed Price Outlook in 2022

The estimated composite compound pig feed price in December 2021 was €363 per tonne. The rapid increase in harvest cereal ingredient prices occurred as a result of US summer drought and poor harvesting conditions in some European countries. Unusually a further spike in ingredient prices occurred during October and November due to concerns over US winter crop ratings, Russian export taxes and concern about the Australian wheat harvest. This spike in ingredient prices was not fully reflected in compound feed prices during the last months of 2021. This will likely result in an increase in compound feed prices during January / February 2022, which would increase the feed cost per kg dwt. to an estimated 133c/kg dwt.

The high wheat price in Q4 2021 has resulted in less demand/usage than earlier forecast thereby improving the stock-to-use ratio (30.9%) close to the 5 year average of 31.8%. Therefore due to greater end-stock reserves it is forecast that wheat prices will gradually ease as the year progresses provided northern hemisphere crops perform as per five year averages.

The soyabean planting has now concluded in Brazil, the world's largest producer. The soil moisture level and planting conditions were good, which led to a rapid planting pace and good seed germination conditions. The Brazilians forecast a record harvest of +140MT. This will be required if the Chinese estimation of their import requirements for 2022 (100 Mt) is correct. If the

South American harvest returns an average five year yield then the outlook is for the price to drop during 2022 from the current level of €390 per tonne.

Overall the outlook for the composite pig feed price is an increase during January by €20-30/tonne and then reduce as the northern hemisphere cereal and soybean harvest arrives. However the high feed price entering 2022 and the slow reduction in feed price as the year progresses indicates that the average pig feed price is forecast to be 125 cent per kg dwt. in 2022, an increase of seven cent per kg dwt. on 2021.

Pig Prices in 2022

The outlook for the Irish pig price is going to be driven by two main factors; Chinese pigmeat demand and EU pigmeat supply.

The amazingly rapid restoration of the Chinese sow herd (12 million sows replaced in two years) has led the Chinese pig sector from a 'boom to a bust' scenario. The profitability/margin per pig rose to €140 during 2020 but then, due to oversupply of pigmeat, crashed to a loss of €140 per pig during 2021. This led to some of their largest pig companies suffering massive losses in 2021. The Muyuan pig company (2.3 million sows) is forecast to have suffered a monthly loss of €280 million in October alone. This has led to a liquidation of some of the more expensive / inefficient pig farms during Q2 and Q3 2021. At the end of 2021 the Chinese domestic price had risen from 11 Yuan to 19 yuan (breakeven) as the effect of liquidation / lower pigmeat supply started to be felt on the domestic market. At this price point it becomes attractive/profitable for Chinese wholesalers to import pigmeat again. It is forecast

that if the Chinese domestic price increases and remains above 20 yuan/kg then the level of EU and Irish pigmeat exports to China will increase again. The export volume will not reach the bumper levels of 2020, but will be more in-line with the volumes during the first half of 2021.

The other major influence on the Irish pig price is the EU pig production levels. While the Spanish sow herd will continue to expand in 2022, indications are that it will not be at the same rate as in previous years. In conjunction with this the sow herd decrease in the other main EU pig producers (Germany, Netherlands, France, Poland) will result in a lower supply of pigmeat onto the EU market. This lower supply, allied to the increased demand from China, will help to increase pig prices during 2022.

It is expected that the effect of reduced EU supply and increased Chinese demand will be felt in the market from April onwards. Therefore the EU & Irish pig price should see a steady rise in Q2 2022 to reach a plateau by mid-summer with a further moderate increase in Q3-Q4.

These combined factors make it difficult to predict a pig price for 2022. However, we estimate it will be in the region of 163c/kg which is marginally higher than 2021 (159c/kg)

Pig Sector Profitability in 2022

The pig price is not forecast to sustainably increase until Q2 which indicates that the margin-over-feed (MOF) for Q1 will be extremely tight and

estimated to be one of the lowest in the last 20 years, at 13-15c/kg

As the pig price increases in Q2 it will improve the MOF. The easing of high feed ingredient prices is expected to be realised during Q2 as well which will produce a breakeven situation by the mid-year point. The continued downward trend in feed ingredient prices and relatively high pig price in Q3 & Q4 will lead to profitability returning to the sector. However the substantial losses of the first half of the year will not be fully recovered by the modest profit margin in the second half

The calculated margin-over-feed of 38 c/kg dwt. indicates that margins will be very tight in 2022 (Table 11). While the pig price is forecast to increase, the level of increase is forecast to be outweighed by the high composite feed prices during 2022.

Table 11: Pig & Feed Price Forecast 2022

Year	Pig Price (Net)	Feed Cost	Margin over Feed
	cent per kg dwt.		
2021*	159	118	41
2022^	163	125	38

*Estimate ^ Forecast

Conclusion

The Irish pig sector enjoyed high profitability in 2019 & 2020 and a breakeven/marginal loss situation in 2021. Unfortunately the outlook for 2022 is for a much tighter margin, due to significantly higher feed prices outweighing the modest increase in pig prices.

PigNoDock survey now available to complete

Roberta D'Alessio

The PigNoDock project aims to develop a tool to assess risk factors for tail biting, which is suitable for typical Irish production systems. The tool will be based on a German Protocol (SchwIP), which combines the advisory concept of animal health and welfare planning with a knowledge-based software model for farm-individual analysis and feedback of risks for tail biting in pigs. It will involve carrying out a detailed questionnaire to obtain information regarding infrastructure and management practices, and animal-based measurements such as tail lesion prevalence and observations of harmful behaviours.

Due to the differences between German and Irish pig production systems, we need to adapt the questionnaire so it is suitable for use in Ireland. We have identified 224 factors that could affect the chances of tail-biting occurring, grouped into 12 main categories regarding infrastructure, management and animal behaviour.

Our next step involves consultation with pig experts, such as PVPs, farm advisors, farmers, and stockmen, to assign 'weighting' values to these risk factors. To do this, we have developed a web-based survey (using SurveyMonkey®), where you can assign a score to each factor indicating that it either increases the risk of tail biting (scored from 0 (no risk) to 100 (very risky)) or has a protective effect against tail biting (a score from 0 to -100 (very protective)).

The survey has 12 pages of questions, one for each

of the main categories, and should take about 45 minutes to complete. However, it can be done in stages; if you close the web page before ending the survey, you can click on the link again later to re-enter it and resume from where you stopped.

The survey is anonymous, but there is a section at the end where you can provide your name and email address if you would like to be considered for further inclusion in the project.

If you are interested, but would prefer to carry out the survey via a paper form, we can send that out to you, just contact your Teagasc advisor, or the PhD student running the project, Roberta D'Alessio (RobertaMaria.DAlessio@teagasc.ie). The online version of the survey can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/85CF3ZZ>

Once the survey is complete and the risk assessment updated, Roberta will trial it on commercial units to see how effective it is. This will involve applying the risk assessment, observing the pigs, and then scoring tails in the factory on two occasions, several months apart. If you would like to know more, or to volunteer to take part, then you can either get in touch with Roberta or Keelin, or ask your Teagasc advisor about it.

If you have any questions about this, or other aspect of the project, please get in touch and we can provide you with more information.

Zinc Oxide webinar January 25th

The Pig Development Department (PDD) will hold a webinar January 25th at 1pm on the topic of; Practical considerations for the removal of Zinc Oxide. A full agenda will be circulated in early January.

Form 3

All farmers who supply organic manure/fertiliser produced on their farms to other farms are required to submit records to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) before December 31st 2021. This is a requirement of the “nitrates” regulations (EC Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters Regulation of 2017 - SI 605 of 2017). It was recently announced that DAFM have agreed to accept the hard (paper) copies (by registered post) or email copies of the Record 3 Forms (i.e. 2021 Record of Movement of Livestock Manures) as record of slurry movements for 2021.

Stakeholder meeting

The Teagasc Pig Stakeholder Group held a meeting on November 30th and discussed several industry issues; current pig and feed prices, Zinc Oxide ban, new veterinary medicine regulations coming into effect next year and the pressures felt in relation to potential future animal welfare and emissions regulations. The group agreed that there is a need for all stakeholders to work in a coordinated manner and to use science based approaches to legislation. The PDD also outlined the recent knowledge transfer and education resources and events and outlined the current plan for 2022. The Group are scheduled to meet again in February to further develop and review actions relating to these areas and discuss other topics of interest.

Newly funded projects

Two new projects have received funding and will be commencing in the New Year; the FARM-CARE and OneWelPig projects.

The FARM-CARE project will investigate new interventions to reduce antimicrobial usage (AMU) and to improve productive results on pig farms after the ban on Zinc Oxide (ZnO) is introduced. It will assess the effects of these interventions on antimicrobial resistance spread within the farms, to the environment and to the farm staff, farmers and households. The strategies studied to reduce in-feed AMU and ZnO are new approaches to manage batches of pigs, improved biosecurity measures for farm staff and use of PLF technologies for early detection of problems in sows and pigs. This project is a collaboration between institutions in Germany, Denmark, UK, Ireland and Colombia.

The OneWelPig project will investigate a range of pig production systems to identify practices associated with better welfare for pigs, humans and the environment. We will evaluate new materials (e.g. hemp) and building designs to improve pig welfare indoors, and liaise with outdoor producers to evaluate the effect of pigs on the soil, flora and fauna in their environment, and develop a novel biosecurity assessment tool for this sector. We will also determine the overall economic and social effects of the various systems, including evaluating the implications of changing land use to outdoor systems of production. The project will provide individual producers with the knowledge to improve pig welfare, and evaluate the potential for a portion of the industry to transition to ‘higher welfare’ systems.



For more information:

Please visit our webpage at:
<https://www.teagasc.ie/animals/pigs/>

For any further information on newsletter content please contact the editor, Amy Quinn at: amy.quinn@teagasc.ie or +353 87 3779015