

# **Another anti-Brexit myth exposed – pigmeat production up 15.5% since EU Referendum**

*Below we are re-publishing an extract from one of our affiliate organisations, Brexit Facts4EU.Org.*

*The full article, along with additional quotations and observations, is available [here](#).*

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## **UK pig farming crisis has been hijacked by Rejoiners to concoct a false narrative**

The DEFRA Farming Minister Victoria Prentis MP has responded to the worst crisis faced by pig farmers in living memory by hosting a Crisis Summit earlier this month.

This follows on from measures introduced by the Government last year in response to the effect of the Covid crisis on the farming industry.

Claims of tens of thousands of healthy pigs being needlessly culled *solely because of Brexit* do not bear scrutiny. The pig farming crisis is real, with great costs and causing personal distress to farmers – but blaming Brexit alone is a lazy convenience that risks ignoring the many contributory factors and leaving them unresolved.

**In fact, pigmeat production is up 8% year-on-year and up 15.5% since the EU Referendum**

## Pigmeat production since the EU Referendum



The SIPS payment has also been increased from £3 to £10 per pig and will run until 31 March, or before if the limit of 100,000 pigs slaughtered is reached sooner.

There is also a review into the British pork industry supply chain so the various factors that cause bottlenecks and bring uncertainty to farmers can be addressed.

The UK Government has moved to ease the plight of pig farmers. A range of solutions were required to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting markets and causing shortages of materials and labour. This added to the uncertainty caused by the long drawn-out departure from the EU that was especially made difficult by Remainers trying to derail the democratic process – including a parliament that refused to accept the referendum result.

As a result of the summit, further changes have been made to the Government's Slaughter Incentive Payment Scheme (SIPS) to help release more pigs into the commercial slaughtering process from a backlog that had been building up all of last

year. SIPS makes additional payments to abattoirs so they will provide more butchers' shifts, creating more throughput. Most importantly SIPS now covers pork meat destined for domestic consumption (which sells for higher prices) and not just pork for export or storage, which had not generated enough uptake.

What has been missed from much of the reporting and campaigning are the other factors beyond Brexit making differences to workers' recruitment due to the end of freedom of movement.

## **Factors contributing to the pig farming crisis**

Sows have two litters a year making it very difficult for pig farmers to adjust when the market contracts, resulting in an abundance of pigs. Without enough capacity at the abattoirs, space is required to keep them and costs mount for the feeding and care. Eventually pig farmers are faced with having to cull and dispose of the pigs without sale.

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that it resulted in are often not even mentioned by Rejoinder critics of Brexit – yet the wholesale disruption to workforces by absenteeism, self-isolation, genuine illness and the need for overseas workers to be with their families cannot be ignored.

It is also forgotten that the structure of Britain's slaughterhouse industry is a direct consequence of years of EU directives bringing the closure of local abattoirs in preference to fewer larger ones. This has been accompanied with a consequential drop in training of British apprentices and a suppression of wages – a story very similar to that of HGV drivers. The industry will need time to train workers and adjust to the new circumstances – but it presents opportunities that are never mentioned.

A global disruption to CO<sub>2</sub> gas caused by rising energy prices

threatened to halt production at a British producer responsible for 60% of CO<sub>2</sub> gas supply, which is used in the slaughter process, packaging, and chilling stages of meat production. Both of its plants were going to close having become unviable but one has now been kept open taking the pressure off the food industry. Problems of CO<sub>2</sub> shortages were Europe-wide and not just local to the UK.

African Swine Fever has become a significant problem in Germany resulting in bans of the movement of pigs. The loss of Chinese markets to many producers and the impact of Chinese bans on German pork because of African Swine Fever found in some German pigs has meant a greater supply of pork meat staying in Europe, depressing the price and impacting on UK prices – and exports. All at a time when it was needed least.

The **combination** of these various factors is what caused markets to be disrupted and the capacity of processors to slaughter and process pigs become constrained – leading to thousands of pigs backing up on farms.