

By Peter Crichton

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“Down Down” - Status Quo

Another difficult day for sellers with very little to smile about including the miserable January weather and although the SPP only slipped by .13 this week to stand at 149.65, higher slaughter weights are flagging up the number of pigs currently being “rolled”.

Unfortunately a pig can put on a kg a day so rolling pigs for a week can add a lot of weight at a time when farmers are trying to make some space throughout the system.

Weekly contribution prices eased back by a copper in places, taking their cue from the German producer price which dropped 3 Euro cents and now stands at 1.34 EUR equivalent to 119.26p in our currency.

Very few takers of spot bacon pigs and where there were, prices were reported to be in the 134-136p range although regular spot sellers should have been able to agree prices closer to 140p.

On the currency markets, the Euro ended the week at much the same level as at the start, trading on Friday worth 88.99p.

Unfortunately however, even a relatively firm Euro did little to stimulate cull sow prices which slipped another 2p and are now trading in the 62-65p range according to load size, compared with 92p this time a year ago (Those Were The Days – Mary Hopkin).

Although the AHDB did not publish a 30kg weaner price this week, the 7kg average of £38.13 was down just over £2/head on the previous week, and if they had managed to find a calculator to work out the 30kg average, this would also have been on a downward slope.

The gulf between contract and spot weaner prices continues to widen with very few takers for Red Tractor 7kg pigs other than on contract.

The first week of the year saw global grain prices described as “flat” with very little movement, although Chicago wheat futures are at a four week high, but at relatively modest levels, and oilseeds also saw some improvements on the week.

Spot UK ex farm feed wheat prices averaged £136.20/t with March UK LIFFE wheat futures slightly firmer at £141/t and November £143.10/t.

And finally some good news which was that, based on the results on the latest AHDB Porkwatch, reporting that the ten top supermarkets have increased the volume of British pig meat in most sectors with 2% more pork, 3% more ham, and sausage turnover up 4%, but unfortunately bacon was down by 2% of the total throughput, with retailers stocking much more imported bacon towards the end of the year.

This is hardly surprising bearing in mind the wide gap between UK and EU pig meat prices which are now around 30p adrift, so in school report terms “could do better”.

