

By Peter Crichton

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“Blue Christmas” (Elvis Presley)

Nothing particularly good to report as far as pig prices are concerned. The SPP continues its downward drift losing another .62p to stand at 151.42p, most weekly contribution prices just holding on at last week's levels and the same applies as far as spot bacon is concerned although very few one off loads of pigs were looking for homes and with most going under contract such spot pigs that there were available tended to be in the 140p region.

Although the value of the Euro rose slightly, trading on Friday worth 88.14p compared with 87.6p last week this did nothing to help as far as a recent collapse in sow prices is concerned, with another 4p lopped off the price today (and a Happy Christmas to you to!) with most now traded in the 64-66p region compared with 93p a year ago..... ouch!

However, sow prices provide a valuable barometer of EU mainland pig meat prices and reflect the current German producer price of 1.40 EUR compared with 1.70 EUR in September which is equivalent to a valuation drop of 25p/kg or £21 for an 80kg dead weight pig.

Although falling finishing prices will normally contrive to push down weaner values, the latest AHDB averages actually rose last week, but this may be more of a quirk than a trend with the 30kg average quoted at £56.41/head and 7kg average at £40.50/head but this is turning into something of a buyers' market, with several lots of weaners still looking for homes.

Grain markets met downward pressure as far as global wheat prices are concerned due to higher than expected production estimates from Canada and the USA and oilseed values were also displaying some easier trends.

UK LIFFE feed wheat futures prices saw very little activity with January traded at £137.90/t, May at £141.75/t and for those of you who are still likely to be in business the year after next March 2019 is quoted at £145/t. UK protein prices saw 48% soya meal ex Liverpool valued at £317/t and 34% rape meal ex Kent at £166/t.

And finally hopefully the threat of African swine fever is at last being taken more seriously by the media as this virus creeps ever nearer to us and is only one step away from the massive German pig industry.

Recent exposure on the BBC Countryfile programme will help to spread the word but everyone in the pig industry needs to be aware of the need for greater care on the bio security front at a time when it is likely that compensation levels will be nowhere near the actual losses suffered or the damage to the reputation of UK pig meat.

