

By Peter Crichton

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“It’s Getting Better” – Mama Cass Elliott

Although the SPP has only moved a fraction adding .05p to 145.71p, some industry sources are indicating they feel that UK pig prices might be getting better as supplies tighten.

As a result most spot bacon quotes have been at 140p or over, and weekly contribution prices have mainly been in the 138p -140p region although German prices have unfortunately slipped back by another 4 cents to 1.45 Eur.

Cull sow prices have also eased reflecting the German pig price drop with UK export abattoirs trimming their bids by around 2p, with most now trading in the 72p-75p range according to spec.

The value of the Euro has also slipped, trading on Friday worth 88.24p compared with 88.95p a week ago.

Weaner prices have generally held at similar levels with the latest AHDB 30kg average of £50.30/head and £37.44/head for 7kg piglets, but in both cases Freedom Food standard pigs are continuing to command a significant premium.

Those farmers who have made time to buy feed on a forward basis may find this to be more rewarding than backing English horses at the Cheltenham Festival (you know who you are) with slightly bullish trends emerging in the feed markets with UK spot ex farm wheat firmer at £142.20/t and the same patterns are being reflected in the futures market with May and November feed wheat traded at £145/t and March 2019 at £149.50/t.

As far as UK proteins are concerned, now might be the time to make some decisions with HiPro soya trading at £361/t and rapeseed at £196/t.

And finally, major signals are emerging from a recent report of the effects that Brexit is having on the agricultural employment market, with 65% of UK farmers reporting it is hard to resource additional migrant staff, and unless we see a reversal of this trend, the UK pig industry could bear the brunt of this with skill shortages on the labour front, especially as far as pig unit workers and livestock lorry drivers are concerned.

