

News story: £50m boost for British pork as export market opens in Taiwan

Updated: Added ministerial and AHDB quotes

British farmers and food producers are set to benefit from a valuable new market as Taiwan prepares to welcome British pork exports for the first time.

UK pork exports were worth £290 million to our economy last year, reaching over 80 export markets. This new agreement is expected to be worth more than £50 million over the next five years.

The deal also means UK exporters can further tap in to the overseas demand for parts of the pig carcass that are not commonly purchased in the UK, such as offal. This means UK farmers and pork processors will be able to generate income for the whole carcass.

The eagerly awaited deal has been secured by the UK government, working with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP). Exporters can take advantage of the market as soon as the administrative listing process is completed and export certification is made available.

It follows a number of recent successes for UK food and drink exports, which reached a record level of £22 billion in 2017. Last month, [China lifted its two-decade long ban on UK beef exports](#) following the BSE outbreak. The agreement will allow official market access negotiations to begin, estimated to be worth over £250million in the first five years alone.

Food Minister George Eustice said:

Access to this new market in Taiwan is great news for our farmers and producers and gives a welcome boost to the pork production industry – already worth £1.3 billion to the UK economy.

This is a significant development for pork exporters and reinforces our reputation for producing high quality food and drink, guaranteeing quality from farm to fork.

International Trade Minister, George Hollingbery said:

Following years of hard work by UK government, the opening of the Taiwanese market to British pork will bring significant benefits to UK pork exporters. This follows a record level of UK food and drink exports last year.

This only goes to highlight the UK's world-famous reputation for high-quality produce, and we are committed to maintaining those high standards as we leave the EU next spring.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

We estimate the value to the UK to be in excess of £50m based on current UK export capacity but if this were to rise to match the strong demand for pork imports in Taiwan, where last year alone imports rose by 26% to US\$178.3m, the opportunity could be worth more than £100m over the next five years.

This is an exciting development and a great step forward for the UK and Taiwan.

A team of the Government's leading trade experts continue to provide guidance to UK businesses as they enter into overseas markets for the first time or consider expanding their current global customer base – ensuring they are poised to take advantage of the increasing opportunities Brexit presents.

This is complemented by the government's [Food is GREAT campaign](#), which highlights the success of current exporters and showcases the UK's top quality food and drink.

Press release: Prison sentence for waste operator

Mixed commercial and construction/demolition waste was illegally stored at a site in Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, despite advice given by Environment Agency officers.

Cambridge Magistrates' Court heard that the site in Long Drove began as a skip hire site but soon became an unpermitted waste transfer station.

Stop notices were twice placed on the business but Daniel Lee Crockwell, aged 35, of Milton Road, Cambridge, carried on operating.

On 26 July 2018 Mr Gurjit Bdesha, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court:

He ignored advice and guidance given to him on numerous visits by Agency officers.

Crockwell had no previous waste experience but tried to compete with established businesses in the area.

As well as the suspended prison sentence, magistrates ordered Crockwell to pay £5,592 costs.

The site of Cambridge Skip Hire at Half Acre Site was first visited by Environment Agency investigating officers in August 2016. No-one was around so a letter was left asking the business to make contact, but it failed to do so and a stop letter was placed on the business.

In November 2016 officers tracked down Crockwell, the company director, who reluctantly agreed to meet them at the site. Mr Bdesha told magistrates:

He told them he needed a few weeks to clear the site and would meet with them again.

Crockwell agreed to clear the site by 16 February 2017 but failed to do so and eventually the landowners took control of the site and cleared it themselves.

Mr Bdesha said Crockwell had taken a risk in running the business illegally and had only ever held a waste carriers' licence during the year of operating at Long Drove.

He had eventually stopped taking in extra waste in November 2017 and closed down his website and disconnected the phones at the same time.

Mr Bdesha said that before a waste transfer station could be operated at the site there would have had to have been improvements to the infrastructure to protect the environment. Planning and health and safety requirements would also have been needed.

After the hearing, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader Phil Henderson said:

Whilst the Environment Agency seeks to work with operators who co-operate and want to comply with the law, we will take action against those who don't.

Always make sure you are operating legally before embarking on a waste management activity or you are likely to get a visit from our enforcement officers.

More information on [permitting waste activities](#).

Crockwell pleaded guilty to:

Between 31 December 2015 and 31 December 2016 on land known as Half Acre Site, Long Drove, Waterbeach, CB25 9LR, you operated a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the deposit, storage and treatment of waste

without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12 and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Press release: Volunteers pitch in to help Cornwall villagers with recreation ground project

The Highways England team behind a proposed A30 upgrade in Cornwall are not only concentrating their efforts on improving lives with their dualling scheme – they have also been busy helping a local village near Truro with their community project.

Highways England is working hard on the final design details of the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross improvement scheme, but members of the team took time out to help Chacewater villagers transform their recreation ground.

A group of 10 Highways England and project team staff pitched in to join villagers in clearing their neglected recreation area into a tranquil community space.

The combined two-day effort saw dead trees and branches felled, ivy, brambles and nettles cleared away, re-planting and wooden crates repurposed into benches to restore a tranquil haven for the whole community to enjoy.



The Highways England team, including assistant project manager Karl Sullivan fourth left, and Chacewater villagers, with Rob Knill third from right, and the team busy clearing vegetation

Chacewater Parish Council spokesman Rob Knill said:

This is a project we've been dreaming up for the last 10 to 15 years, to refurbish and recover a lot of the recreation ground here – and the work that's been done by the Highways England team has been fantastic.

Josh Hodder, Highways England Project Manager for the A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross scheme, added:

As a company, we undertake a lot of voluntary work and it was good to be involved with a community project within the area of our scheme – it was an amazing team effort and the transformation is going to make a real difference for the village.

The team have also attended a number of community events in the region – the Golowan Festival and Royal Cornwall, Stithians and Camborne shows – and will also be taking part in this week's Falmouth Festival and the Cornish Steam and County Fair (16-19 August).

Highways England will be submitting a Development Consent Order later this

summer to begin the planning process for the scheme.

And Mr Hodder added:

Since consultation earlier this year, we have been progressing with details of the design, working to reduce impact on the environment, and continuing our engagement and discussions with local communities.

We're continuing that engagement over the next two weeks and I'd urge anyone with an interest to come and chat with us to find out more and answer any questions they might have.

Following the opening of Cornwall Council's A30 Temple to Higher Carblake dualling scheme last year, the project proposes to dual eight miles of single carriageway between the Chiverton Cross and Carland Cross roundabouts, unlocking one of the last bottlenecks in Cornwall and improving journey times and safety for residents, businesses and visitors.

The cost of developing the scheme is being partly funded by an £8 million contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, with an additional £12 million for the construction phase. The remainder of the cost of developing and delivering the scheme will be funded by central Government.

Subject to statutory approval, construction is planned to start in spring 2020.

In the meantime, anyone wanting further information can [go to the scheme website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Government response: Smart meters – the smart choice

They are being installed across Great Britain as a part of a national upgrade to our energy system.

Smart meters put people in control of their energy use by showing them how much energy they use in pounds and pence via an easy to understand In-Home Display.

With accurate information at their fingertips, consumers can easily understand how they can make small changes to the way they use energy in order to use less and save money on their bills. This information can help them choose a better tariff or switch supplier, increasing their savings even further.

Smart meters also communicate directly with your energy supplier meaning you will get accurate bills and only pay for what you use without the hassle of providing meter readings yourself or taking time out of your day to let the meter reader in.

Consumers with smart pre-payment meters will be able to top up directly online, through an app or at the local shop. No more keys or cards, making it much more convenient. The prepay in-home display will have an easy-to-understand screen that will show how much credit is left. So no more late-night dashes out to top up your energy balance.

Smart meters are the building blocks of a smarter energy system fit for the 21st century.

Over 11 million meters are already empowering consumers to reap the rewards of a smarter energy system – with 400,000 more meters benefitting homes and businesses every month. 8 out of 10 of those with a smart meter would recommend them to friends and family.

In the future, consumers will be able to choose for their new smart household gadgets and appliances to talk to their smart meter and help reduce their household bills. For example, your smart washing machine can automatically run at the cheapest time of the day, directed by information coming through your smart meter.

The government is committed to every home and small business being offered a smart meter by end 2020 – you can choose whether to have one or not. There are clear standards of conduct, overseen by energy regulator Ofgem, that require suppliers to treat consumers fairly and not mislead them when marketing the benefits of smart meters to their customers.

What are the benefits of smart meters?

- smart meters put consumers in control of their energy use, so they can save money on their bills – those savings will be worth more than £1.2 billion a year by 2030
- they provide easier, accurate billing and will help consumers choose the best deal for them
- no more estimated billing – something we only seem to tolerate in utilities – no more having to crawl under the stairs or to take time out of your day to provide manual readings to your supplier
- smart meters are set to be the cornerstone of the smart energy system of

the future, potentially saving Great Britain up to £40 billion between now and 2050

What do energy consumers who already have smart meters think?

- 82% of people with smart meters say they have a better idea of their energy costs
- 8 out of 10 people with smart meters say they would recommend them to friends or family
- 90% of people with a smart meter say they are satisfied with the installation process
- hundreds of thousands of energy consumers are choosing to have smart meters in their homes every month

Myths

Myth 1: Smart meters stop people from switching and lock them into one supplier

Fact: That is simply untrue. All consumers can switch whenever they want. In fact households with smart meters are more likely to switch than those who don't have one, with 23% of people with smart meters switching in the last year, versus 17% without a smart meter. [\(1\)](#)

Myth 2: Smart meters don't really help you save money

Fact: Not true. More than 80% of people with smart meters have taken steps to reduce their energy use and as a result, cut their bills. [\(2\)](#) It is estimated smart meters will take £300 million off consumer's bills in 2020, rising to more than £1.2 billion per year by 2030 – an average annual saving of £47 per household. [\(3\)](#) 8 in 10 consumers with a smart meter would recommend one to family and friends. [\(4\)](#)

Myth 3: People are being forced to have smart meters installed

Fact: Not true. Those customers who want to benefit from having a smart meter can have one installed at no extra cost, but installing a smart meter is always the customer's choice and people have the right to say no.

Myth 4: Suppliers are bullying consumers into having a smart meter installed

Fact: Ofgem has made it clear suppliers must treat customers fairly and their communications must be complete, accurate and not misleading. Ofgem will take up complaints with energy suppliers for customers who feel they are being bullied or coerced into getting a smart meter.

Myth 5: Smart meters can be hacked and are a safety hazard in the home

Fact: Smart meters are secure, with a security system developed by leading experts in industry and government including GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre.

Smart meter installations are also making British homes safer. In 2017, over a quarter of a million safety issues, unrelated to the smart meter installation, were identified by smart meter installers, as a result of free visual safety checks, helping to protect households across Great Britain.

Myth 6: Suppliers are installing 'dumb' meters that fail when you switch supplier

Fact: All smart meters offer the same smart functions to customers. Some first generation smart meters may lose some smart functionality if consumers switch but 93% of those installed remain unaffected. This issue is only temporary however and all smart meters will retain their full capabilities when they are enrolled into the national wireless smart meter network. This upgrade will begin early in 2019 and will happen automatically without the consumer needing to do anything.

Myth 7: Consumers with poor mobile signal can't get a smart meter

Fact: By the end of the year more than 95% of households will have signal, rising to 99.25% by the end of 2020 – meaning that almost every household who wants one will be able to have a smart meter.

Myth 8: Suppliers aren't making enough progress on the rollout of smart meters

Fact: Over 400,000 smart meters are being installed every month and 11 million are already operating across Great Britain. Ofgem holds suppliers to account to ensure they are meeting their obligations to roll out smart meters and can fine energy companies for missing targets.

Myth 9: Smart meters can turn off your fridge without you knowing

Fact: No they can't. It will always be up to consumers to decide when to use their appliances. In the future smart meters will allow consumers to be rewarded when they use appliances at times when energy is cheaper.

Myth 10: Smart meters mean suppliers can charge higher prices without you knowing

Fact: Energy suppliers can only charge prices customers have agreed to – and that won't change. Customers with smart meters can access tariffs that allow them to get cheaper prices at times when demand is low – but it will always be the customer's choice.

1. Ofgem, '[Consumer engagement survey 2017](#)' (September 2017)
2. Smart Energy GB, '[Smart meters and energy usage: a survey of energy behaviour before and after upgrading to a smart meter](#)' (April 2017)
3. BEIS, '[Smart meter roll-out \(GB\): cost-benefit analysis](#)' (November 2016)
4. BEIS, '[Smart Meter Customer Experience Study 2016 to 2018](#)' (August 2017)

[Return to myths](#)

International treaty: [TS No.9/2018] Minamata Convention on Mercury

Published title:Minamata Convention on Mercury