

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several pink pigs standing on a green mat in a farm or processing facility. The pigs are the central focus, with some looking directly at the camera. They have yellow identification tags in their ears. The setting appears to be an indoor or semi-enclosed area with metal structures and a wooden wall in the background.

# Delivering the future of farming

Your levy in action

**Pork sector plan**  
2022–2027

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“ True grit, hope and determination ”

Mike Sheldon

# A word from the Pork Council chair

It's been a brutal time for the pork sector, with the combination of Brexit and Covid creating a perfect storm, followed by hugely inflated costs of production resulting from the war in Ukraine. Supporting levy payers through these unprecedented times is more crucial than ever.

Despite these daunting challenges, we can take great pride in England's pork industry. With producers and processors operating to exceptional standards, British pork is preferred by most UK retailers, and there is demand from almost 100 other countries too.

With such strong demand comes strong competition to supply. It's never been more important to act together – and that is where your levy comes in.

It is vital for the levy to deliver the very best value. In May 2022, producers and processors representing over half of all pigs farmed and three-quarters of those processed, told us how they wanted their levy spent via AHDB's Shape the Future vote. This turnout was an absolute credit to an industry that was under enormous strain at the time. It is symptomatic of the true grit, hope and determination that we need for the future.

In the Shape the Future vote, you gave clear messages that your sector council has taken on board to direct the work of AHDB over the next five years.

This resulted in the three key themes of work below, which are detailed later in this document:

- Marketing
- Exports
- Reputation

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Shape the Future vote. This plan for the next five years is not the end of the conversation – rather the beginning.

As we all know, we will need to show agility during these turbulent times. The Pork Sector Council is your ever-present voice within AHDB, and we want to hear your views. All the ways of contacting us are at the end of this document. We look forward to hearing from you.

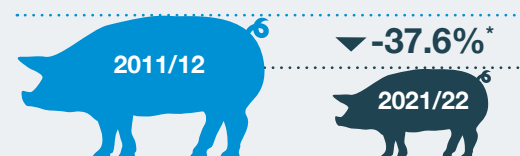
**Mike Sheldon,**  
Pork Sector Council Chair

## Purpose of the levy

The Pork levy empowers all levy payers to act together to tackle challenges and opportunities that cannot, or will not, be addressed by individuals or commercial organisations alone.

The levy rate has stayed the same for over a decade. And given the anticipated reduction in pig numbers next year, the total levy income will reduce. In addition, inflation and changes in AHDB's VAT status (meaning that we can no longer reclaim it) have all combined to reduce the available funds (from £9.7m this financial year to a projected £7.9m in 2023–24) for the sector council to invest on your behalf. There is no current plan to increase levy rates while the industry remains under such strain, but the sector council will seek your views about where levy rates should head in the longer term.

## Effect of inflation on the spending power of your levy



\*RPI inflation change over 10 years

# Results of Shape the Future voting

In May 2022, every levy payer was invited to have their say on how the levy was spent. This was the first step in delivering our promise to put levy payers at the heart of everything we do.

Levy payers were asked to score on a 1 to 5 scale which areas of work were the most important to them. They also had the opportunity to post individual comments – all of which were considered by the sector council.

Unweighted results		Highest	Weighted results	
Reputation	4.2	↑ IMPORTANCE ↓	4.6	Exports
Education	4.1		4.2	Education
Pork consumer marketing	4.1		4.1	Pork consumer marketing
We Eat Balanced campaign	4.0		4.0	Reputation
Exports	3.9		3.8	We Eat Balanced campaign
Market intelligence	3.9		3.5	Environment
Animal health and welfare	3.8		3.1	Animal health and welfare
Environment	3.7		3.1	Market intelligence
People working in agriculture	3.5		2.3	People working in agriculture
			Lowest	

Scale: 5 high (important) – 1 low (less important)

**Unweighted** = results expressed based on the number of businesses

**Weighted** = results expressed considering the number of pigs those businesses had

The sector council considered all the comments that were submitted via the free text boxes in the Shape the Future vote. The most commonly expressed views supported the prioritisation of post-farmgate work by AHDB, particularly around marketing and the need to support pig prices. In addition, others noted the importance of animal health and welfare and how this links to the reputation of pig meat and the industry as a whole.

# Your sector council's comments on the results

There are significant differences between how smaller businesses and larger ones scored AHDB's work (as indicated by the marked differences between the weighted and unweighted votes). One challenge for the sector council has been how to reconcile these differences in its decision-making.

However, levy payers from businesses of all sizes, were united in wanting AHDB to prioritise post-farmgate work comprising exports, marketing, and reputational support including education. There were also above-average scores for almost all pre-farmgate work – such as that relating to animal health and welfare and environmental work – so there were no signals to completely discontinue work in these areas.

Post-farmgate work such as defending the sector's reputation relies in many ways on pre-farmgate work. For example, collecting data on antibiotic usage via the electronic Medicine Book (eMB) is vital in defending the sector against unfair criticism. Also, environmental data collected via AHDB's Pork Road Map provides proof of the relatively low impact of pork production on the environment.

To give prominence to work that levy payers said they valued most, the sector council scrutinised all work to ensure it gave the best value and did not duplicate the work of others, especially given the changes in the industry and reduction of income.

AHDB's market intelligence work helps inform government and consumers of the facts about pork and its production. It also boosts the impact of export and marketing activities. For example, by maintaining a deep understanding of global trade AHDB can target the most lucrative markets to open and give focus to export work. Likewise using data on emerging consumer trends can boost the impact of marketing spend to ensure campaigns are inspiring consumers to choose pork more often.

In conclusion, the sector council asked the AHDB team to:

- Prioritise export, marketing, and reputation work. Reputation includes essential animal health and welfare, environmental work, and educational activities to protect and promote the reputation of pig meat with consumers and government
- Scrutinise all other work, eliminate duplication with others, and optimise opportunities to collaborate with others to the benefit of levy payers
- Ensure that all work, directly or indirectly, supports optimising the value from each pig





# The five-year plan

The next five years will see a greater focus on what levy payers told us was most important. All work will align with those priorities. Where it doesn't, it will be stopped.

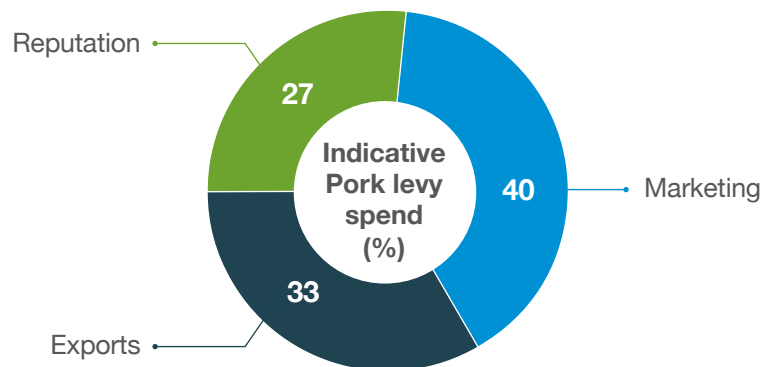
Considering the voting results, available funds, and industry challenges (now and anticipated), your sector council has directed AHDB to focus on three themes:

- Marketing
- Exports
- Reputation

These three themes support one another, and all work will improve one or more of these.

Given the reduction in levy income, overall spend will change from £9.7m to £7.9m. All spend will now be distributed across the three themes.

Future levy distribution:



## Marketing

British pork is one of the most popular proteins, has a great reputation in the market and offers exceptional value for money.

However, we cannot be complacent. Consumer attitudes toward eating meat are ever-changing. Regularly inspiring shoppers to choose pork, for home cooking or when eating out, is an essential component for long-term profitability.

The aim of this work is to support the long-term demand for pig meat by championing pork as a healthy and versatile choice for consumers.

We will measure impact by gathering and sharing with you data on consumer attitudes towards pork before and after each campaign.

AHDB will:

- Continue to deliver its award-winning consumer marketing campaigns that drive positive attitudes to pork consumption in and out of the home
- Inspire younger consumers to cook and eat pork via 'always-on' social media activity
- Shift resource when required to stimulate additional demand for particular cuts, as was done for pork shoulder during Covid lockdowns
- Work with retailers to improve the meat aisle, to make it a more enticing place to shop and buy pork

## Exports

The more opportunities there are for sales of British pork around the world, the greater the chance there is to sell every part of the pig for the best financial return and so support farmgate prices.

The aim of this work is to increase market access and drive export value and volume to underpin pig prices.

We will measure impact by sharing updates on the number of markets open, the value and volume of trade, and the value per pig.

In 2021, British pig meat was exported to 98 markets. Export volume was almost 350,000 tonnes with a value of £567 million. The value per pig was £49.

AHDB will:

- Strive to win market access: identify lucrative markets, then work with governments and industry to achieve trading and veterinary requirements in new markets such as Vietnam
- Optimise access for all cuts: once a market is open, host potential importers and governments to grow trade and gain access for more categories of cuts. For example, while whole muscle can be exported to Mexico, extending that to include offal would give even greater benefit
- Champion British pork at international shows: showcase it around the world, particularly in Europe, Asia and the United States, sharing the costs with other sectors to get the best value for money

# Reputation

AHDB is an independent, evidence-led body. It is in a unique position to provide unbiased data and evidence to show the truth about British pig farming, challenge misrepresentations and champion the best aspects of the industry. This is all vital to protect and promote the reputation of the sector.

But what do we mean by ‘reputation’? For consumers, this means matters relating to their own health, animal health and welfare, and the environment.

The aim of this work is to protect and promote the reputation of the industry to consumers and optimise sales opportunities.

We will measure impact by gathering and sharing with you measures of how consumers regard pork and its production. AHDB will work in the following areas:

## Reputational defence and education

- Challenge misinformation in the public domain, using data and evidence
- Educate consumers of the future by working in collaboration with the British Nutrition Foundation, providing material for schools and healthy eating week, and funding Ladies in Pigs
- Promote the positive work of the industry by providing expert spokespeople, case studies and facts for the press and media, to present the sector in the best light
- Respond to government consultations and provide evidence to Select Committees
- Use randomised isotope testing to deter attempts to mislabel imported pig meats as British
- Regularly convene industry events around reputational issues, to share messaging and actions that collectively protect and promote the industry
- Remain alert to emerging reputational issues and changing policy direction

## Animal health and welfare

- Use data and evidence (AHDB’s own or that of others) to uphold pig meat’s reputation and the sector’s integrity. For example, the collection of antibiotic usage data via the electronic Medicine Book (eMB) system to defend the industry from unfair criticism
- Conduct disease surveillance and work with government and others to minimise the chance of diseases like African Swine Fever entering the country
- Work with industry and government to limit the impact of endemic disease by making it easy for farmers to arrange pig movements via AHDB’s Pig Hub, which provides vital data in the event of disease outbreaks
- Work with Defra on developing the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway

## Environment

- Conduct work that shows the low and decreasing impact of pig production on the environment. In addition to AHDB’s Pork Roadmap, harness further data that can protect and promote the reputation of the industry

## Market intelligence

Levy payers can only deliver improvements to underpin the sector’s reputation if they are profitable. AHDB’s market intelligence work gives farmers and processors information that is essential to make informed decisions for their business, such as:

- Pig prices, nationally and internationally, plus an understanding of the likely near-term developments
- Cost of production and farm margins analysis, including international comparisons
- Production levels, here and overseas, to understand whether there will be an over or undersupply of pig meat
- Consumption trends that could impact demand levels and standards of production
- The latest domestic policy changes and global factors, such as trade deals, which need to be considered when planning
- Monitoring longer-term market signals that will impact producers’ ability to compete at home or overseas

This data and evidence will also be used to inform government as public policies are developed.





“ AHDB is in a unique position to provide unbiased data and evidence to show the truth about British pig farming ”

# Work reducing or stopping following the vote

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The sector council has acted on clear messages from levy payers to amplify work on marketing, exports and reputation (including educating younger consumers). This will be underpinned by a foundation of aligned pre-farmgate work.

Prioritising this work, combined with a reduction in total income, means that some work must be reduced or stopped.

Given the relatively low score for environmental work – and knowing that others in the industry are involved in this area – we have decided not to increase funding for this work for now. However, we know this subject is of high importance to consumers. So, we are committed to maintaining a conversation with you, to ensure that the environment stays on the agenda and the sector stays on the front foot.

Work to improve animal health and welfare is important – not only for animals but for the profitability of the industry and to assure consumers of high welfare standards. Vets and others carry out valuable work in this area, so we have asked AHDB to review its existing

work to avoid duplication. While much was retained following this review, we have directed AHDB to discontinue the Pig Health Scheme and Real Welfare programmes unless alternative funding can be rapidly established.

The work around people in agriculture received the lowest scores in the vote. We take that to mean that, while an important subject, using levy money to invest in this area is not desirable. We have directed AHDB to carry out work around labour supply only if it relates to training that can uniquely be facilitated by the levy (for example, welfare training that forms part of the Red Tractor standards).

While PigPro has been a valuable asset there are now alternatives and so, after a period of transition, this work will be stopped.

## Your council – next steps and contacting us

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The sector council has firm measures in place for each area of work that AHDB delivers on your behalf.

To receive regular updates, online and at events, register now to stay in touch, at [ahdb.org.uk/keeping-in-touch](https://ahdb.org.uk/keeping-in-touch)

### Keep talking

Contact the Engagement team via [ahdb.org.uk/pork-engagement-team](https://ahdb.org.uk/pork-engagement-team)

Contact a sector council member at [ahdb.org.uk/pork-council](https://ahdb.org.uk/pork-council)

For all other enquiries, email us at [info@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:info@ahdb.org.uk)

# Who's who in your sector council 2022



**Mike Sheldon**

Pork Sector Council Chair,  
Seafish Chair



**Chris Aldersley**

Chief Operating Officer,  
Cranswick plc.



**Rupinder  
Ashworth**

Strategy and marketing  
consultant, non-executive  
director



**Robert Beckett**

Indoor producer,  
Yorkshire



**Jodie Bolland**

Head of Livestock and  
External Sales, Morrisons  
and Woodheads



**Tim Bradshaw**

Indoor producer,  
Yorkshire



**Hugh Crabtree**

Owner, Farmex Ltd., Director,  
Dicam Technology Ltd.



**William  
De Klein**

Director of Pig Procurement,  
KARRO Food Group



**Mark Haighton**

Supply Chain Director,  
Pilgrims Pride Ltd., Red  
Tractor pork board member



**Robert  
Mutimer**

NPA Chair, outdoor  
producer, Norfolk



**Robin  
Thompson**

Vice Chair, Thames Valley  
Cambac Ltd., pig breeder,  
Northamptonshire

Produced for you, on behalf of  
the Pork Sector Council, by:

**AHDB**

Stoneleigh Park  
Kenilworth  
Warwickshire  
CV8 2TL

**T** 024 7669 2051

**E** [comms@ahdb.org.uk](mailto:comms@ahdb.org.uk)

**W** [ahdb.org.uk](http://ahdb.org.uk)

 [facebook.com/AHDBPork](https://facebook.com/AHDBPork)

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