



Food Chain Centre
Best practice for your business

LincPork

Reduce product variability	✓
Better manage the problem of carcase balance	✓
Improve product quality	✓

Key Messages

- 1 By seizing the initiative and working as a team to understand and respond to customer needs, a group of pig farmers is enjoying a price premium above the market norm.
- 1 The processor and farmer group have agreed to split the benefits of their initiative 50/50.
- 1 New pig carcase classification technology is just starting to change the way that producers are paid, incentivising them on total lean meat produced, rather than absence of fat.

Pig farmers are used to receiving new demands from customers and changing their methods in response. It can be disruptive but it is a necessary part of serving the market and retaining customers.

“But how much better”, reasoned John Godfrey, “to be on the front foot, understanding what the customer ideally wants and making longer term plans to provide it.”

So in 2000, he approached his customer, Geo Adams & Sons Ltd with a proposition. “How can we work with you to produce an animal that more closely meets your customers requirements?”

Produced in partnership with



Red Meat



Nov
2004



'It was refreshing to be approached by one of our leading pig producers asking how he could meet - our - his customer s requirements better'.

Bob Howe, Meat Plant Director, Geo Adams.

There are now 7 farmers from East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire involved in what is called the LINCPOK scheme supplying nearly 3,000 pigs a week in an exclusive arrangement with Budgens. The end result - all of the producers are now enjoying a 100p premium per pig with prospects of further benefits in future. This is on top of receiving a premium for producing lean pigs on the Adams contract.



'We in the UK will never be the lowest cost producers in a world wide market so we have to make sure that we produce what our customer requires and make it difficult for them to obtain the same specification from abroad'.

John Godfrey



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Breeding

The breed of pig was the starting point.

The mission of the Pig Improvement Company (PIC) is to be the leading worldwide supplier of genetic improvement to pork chain customers through innovative and outstanding genetics, health and services.

Given its longstanding relationship with Geo Adams and John Godfrey, PIC was invited to work with the LINCORK farmers.

The legs and loin are the most valuable parts of the pig. PIC selected a boar with the right characteristics to maximise these parts. They specially selected a new boar line using gene markers from which all LINCORK pigs are now bred. They also incorporated other important traits, such as disease resistance and leanness.

John Godfrey continued to act as champion and trailblazer for the scheme. Other producers, initially reluctant to change the genetics of their herd, were won over by the huge improvement in carcass quality from the initial tests.

Feeding

PIC assigned an expert nutritionist to the project. Although there is not yet a standardised LINCORK ration because of the difference in farming regimes, the farmers are each developing a better understanding of how to maximise live-weight gain.

Grading

A recent innovation at Geo Adams is the use of a new ultrasonic device called AutoFOM for carcass grading.

The traditional intrascope mechanical device measures the depth of fat around the carcass at a particular point. However, it cannot measure the total shape of the carcass and therefore does not calculate the total amount of lean meat.



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By contrast, AutoFOM can take around 2,500 simultaneous readings of the loin and rear leg area and produce an accurate lean meat assessment. It means that farmers can be paid according to the total production of lean meat, rather than the absence of fat.

Geo Adams is the first company to test AutoFOM in the UK. The trials have proved very successful and it is hoped that in the near future, Geo Adams will run AutoFOM in parallel with its traditional grading system and then switch entirely to AutoFOM.

Some producers will gain and others will initially lose from the new payment basis. LINCPOK farmers are best placed to benefit immediately because their animals have been selected for a high lean meat content.



‘Having data from AutoFOM should help producers breed the type of carcass we need and hence lift their returns’.

Mark Haighton, Geo Adams

If, as many predict, AutoFOM is rolled out to other processors it will provide similar financial incentives for pig producers everywhere.

Quality

Until the new grading method is bedded in, Geo Adams continues to pay its producers according to fat depth and weight. This information along with the AutoFOM lean meat data is fed back to all producers for each of their animals.



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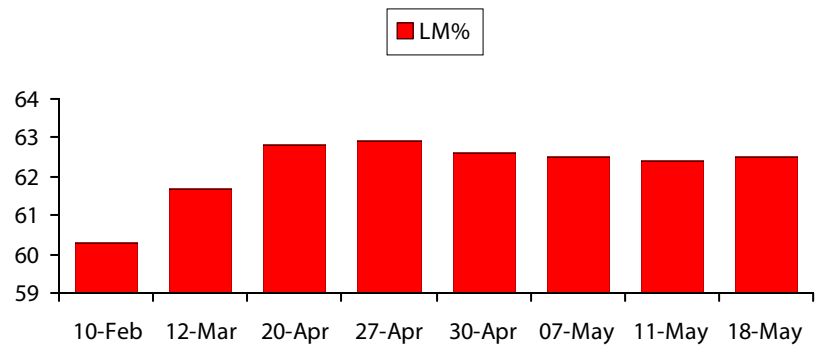
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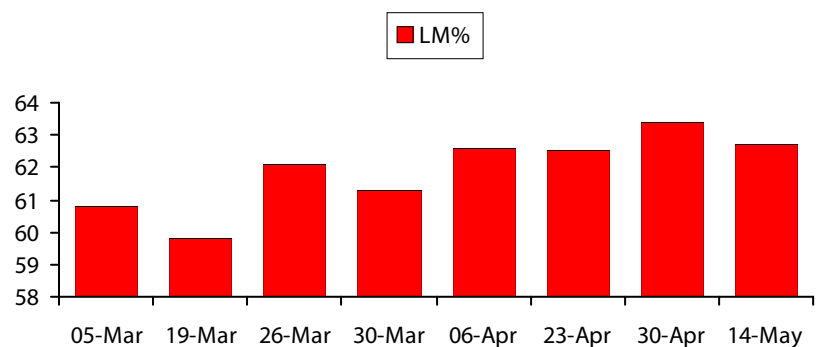


The data is helping LINCPOK farmers to increase their lean meat % as the following evidence for two producers illustrates.

The first farmer joined the scheme on 20 April, having prepared for membership in the two preceding months. During this period his lean meat % increased by over a percentage point.



The second producer joined on 6 April. Although the lean meat % has fluctuated it has remained consistently higher using the LINCPOK bred pigs.



The improvement in carcass quality has been observed by all producers in the scheme. Geo Adams shares the benefits on a 50:50 basis with producers. All LINCPOK farmers are therefore gaining an extra 100p for each of their animals in the scheme, setting them apart from the industry norm.



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Conclusions

LINCPORK is proving a financially successful venture for the farmers involved because of a combination of reasons:

- 1 Determination to be proactive and take the initiative.
- 1 Eagerness to listen and respond to customer needs. All LINCPORK producers meet with Geo Adams on a quarterly basis and visit the plant to see at first hand, the meat improvements from their pigs.
- 1 Sense of comradeship in which local farmers band together. Over the last 4 years a club atmosphere has developed. They share information on pig performance and costs and jointly discuss ideas for new developments
- 1 A focus on data as the signal of opportunities for improvement and a willingness to embrace the new technology of AutoFOM.



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