



THE DIOXIN CRISIS

- In an unprecedented move for the Republic, all Irish pork products manufactured and sold since September are being recalled over fears of dioxin contamination of pig feed. Movement of pigs on 10 farms have been restricted. This comes at a very bad time for the Irish pork sector, which is suffering high financial losses.
- 300 workers at Dawn Meats in Grannagh & 850 at Rosderra Meats were laid off. With as many as 6,000 jobs on the line and an estimated €200m needed just to restart the industry.
- The Department of Agriculture has said the company in County Carlow at the centre of the pork scare did not use proper oil in its machinery. Millstream Recycle plant did not have a licence to use the oil that caused the contamination. The Food Safety Authority Ireland said that industrial oil had tainted ingredient at the company, which uses recycled bread and dough in production.
- The Government will make a desperate plea for emergency EU cash to save jobs. The elements of the deal are likely to include financial aid for processors, a meat storage scheme, compensation for the nine farms directly affected where pigs will have to be slaughtered and disposed of, and an international marketing drive. The Government has so far refused to compensate the processors.
- Test results on pork products from the affected farms confirmed the presence of about 100 times the EU maximum level of 1 picogramme/gram fat for dioxins and 1.5 picogramme/gram fat for total dioxins and "dioxin-like" PCBs.
- China and other third countries placed a ban on Irish pig meat and animal feed imports.
- It emerged that contaminated product had gone to as many as 30 countries worldwide, leaving Ireland's reputation for quality agricultural produce in tatters.
- There are fears that the longer-term effects will mean jobs and home market share being lost as major food companies turn to foreign suppliers in a bid to assuage consumer concerns.
- Rebuilding confidence in Irish pork and bacon is now a priority, Bord Bia stressed last night, as €368m of Irish pigmeat, or €1m a day, is exported annually.
- Consumers have been told that the immediate risks posed by eating the pork contaminated with dioxins are virtually negligible. Health experts said that while some types of the contaminant can cause cancer, this would only happen after prolonged exposure to high levels over a period of decades.
- Supermarkets were forced to remove millions of euro worth of pork and bacon from their shelves in the biggest ever recall of Irish food in recent years. Only

three supermarkets chains were offering full refunds, with only two saying they would refund people who didn't have receipts.

- After 36 hours there were in excess of 1,700 newspapers articles on the crisis in titles spanning the globe.
- "SAVE OUR bacon" was the plea from pig farmers protesting outside the Department of Agriculture yesterday [10th Dec] to demand that pigmeat processing plants be reopened as soon as possible. More than 100 farmers and representatives of the industry gathered on Kildare Street in Dublin for the demonstration organised by the IFA.
- The European Food Safety Authority, is an independent EU-funded agency based in Parma, has given the Irish pork industry a much-needed boost by declaring that it has few concerns for human health arising from the contamination of some pork with dioxins. Its conclusions were welcomed by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, which said they confirmed the risk assessment taken by Irish authorities last weekend. By recalling all Irish pork and bacon products, the time of exposure to potentially contaminated product had been reduced.
- Farm organisations, political parties and State bodies have welcomed the European Food Safety Authority's finding that Irish pork is safe to eat. The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) said "the cloud over Irish pork and bacon" had been removed now that the products had been given the all-clear.
- In a bid to restore confidence both home and abroad, a new label was unveiled as part of the Irish food board's consumer information campaign to reassure shoppers.
- "The damage done to our reputation by the contamination scare and the spin which may have been put on it by our rivals in the marketplace must be reversed through a political, diplomatic and marketing offensive" said Michael Creed (Fine Gael agriculture spokesman).
- Many small suppliers had been awaiting the new Bord Bia label before they could begin selling their safe pork products which had been in lock up. All pig products will now carry the newly unveiled label confirming they are safe to consume and have no association with the potentially contaminated feed.
- The Government last night [10th Dec] struck a €180m deal to get the pork industry up and running again after pork and bacon went back on the shelves. The compensation package will cover the buy back of pig meat and destruction of stock and slaughtering of pigs on the 10 farms where contaminated feed was given to the animals.
- The 10 farmers at the centre of the pork contamination crisis are to receive €8m from the taxpayers to compensate them for the loss of their stock.
- Trade unions say they hope hundreds of people laid off in the pig-meat processing sector over the past week will be able to resume their jobs in the coming days.

- There is no ban in place on Irish pig meat within the EU, which accounts for 80% of Irish exports. Once all the pork meat has been recalled, trading will resume as usual, Mr Murphy said (Bord Bia)
- Gardai are continuing to focus their investigation into the source of the oil that contaminated the pig feed at the centre of the pork scare on a business in NI.
- Edel Conway, information manager with the FSAI, said more than 3,000 calls to the food safety watchdog's hotline had been received since news of the recall broke. The numbers dropped substantially on Tuesday to around 200 calls.
- Retailers have been attempting to put a price tag on what the massive pork and bacon recall has cost, after consumers returned ham and pork around the country.
- Workers in the pigmeat industry who have been laid off as a result of the health scare surrounding pork are to hold a lunchtime protest at Leinster House today. The union Siptu said it was organising the demonstration because of delays in resuming production. It said many workers were in "dire straits" financially and some were unable to claim social welfare payments.
- Two men based in the Republic have now been identified as middle men in the supply of contaminated oil from Northern Ireland to the feed recycling plant in Carlow at the centre of the pigmeat crisis, according to Garda sources.