



PORK PLAYERS PARTNER FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Jamaican pork industry is a high value agricultural subsector and driver of economic growth. Pork is the second most important meat industry within the region, with Jamaica being the largest producer in the Caribbean. In fact, over the past 15 years, the country has doubled its output to meet increased local consumption of pork and eliminate the need for imports.

For many years, Jamaican households and tourists have enjoyed fresh pork proudly grown by thousands of local farmers. These men and women play an important role in the industry, providing jobs within their communities while helping to feed the nation.

However, recent news and global trends have raised concerns amongst local industry players. While China is the world's biggest producer and consumer of pork; the country's pig supply has been ravaged by African swine fever (ASF), a deadly contagious viral disease. ASF only impacts pigs and has no human health or food safety risks. It has also never been present in Jamaica. Still, to date, ASF has wiped out over 40 million pigs in China, 6 million pigs in Vietnam, and is now spreading to parts of Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Recognizing the importance of the pork industry to Jamaica's economy and the potential danger of this devastating disease, a number of players in the Jamaican pork industry are banding together to safeguard the future. Championed by the **Jamaica Pig Farmer's Association (JPFA)**, Hi-Pro and Nutramix, the groups have forged a partnership to further the development of a sustainable Jamaican pork industry and reduce the risk of foreign animal disease.

To date, there is no known cure or vaccine for ASF and the disease can be spread by both live and dead pigs. The only solution is a stringent and all-encompassing national prevention and control system.

According to the World Organization for Animal Health, *"Prevention in countries free of the disease depends on implementation of the appropriate import policies and biosecurity measures, ensuring that neither infected live pigs nor pork products are introduced into areas free of ASF. This includes ensuring proper disposal of waste food from aircrafts, ships or vehicles coming from affected countries and policing of illegal import of live pigs and pork products from affected countries."*

This welcomed collaboration between the **JPFA**, **Nutramix** and **Hi-Pro** will bring about the formation of an independently operated "National Pork Council." The Council will comprise of representation from all industry stakeholders, including public sector policy makers, suppliers, farmers, processors and retailers, which will be headed by a separate Executive Director to manage its day to day operations.

The Council will conduct ongoing market research to capture important data related to supply and demand, bio security, phytosanitary methods, disease surveillance, animal health and welfare, in addition to other pertinent matters. Most importantly, the Council will be responsible for communicating this data to industry stakeholders to allow all players to make better, more informed decisions, especially as it relates to the feast-famine cycle. The initial funding to operate the council will come from the voluntary contributions of stakeholders, including the Pig Feed Contribution collected by **Nutramix** and **Hi-Pro** and paid over to the JPFA on behalf of pig farmers.

President of the JPFA, Annabel Williams noted "This partnership is very timely, as the industry looks to safely and sustainably expanding to meet the growing hotel sector and increased household consumption of pork. We look forward to working together to do what's right for Jamaica's pork industry."