



It **doesn't** have to be like this

Humane alternatives ensure that pigs have space and conditions allowing them to behave more naturally. Some are bred outdoors. Others are kept indoors; for example, in barns where groups of pregnant sows can move around with suitable bedding material such as straw.



In partnership with Food Animal Initiative, the WSPA has set up the Model Farm Project (www.modelfarmproject.org), which aims to establish an international network of development and demonstration farms. These show that humane and sustainable pig farming is a practical and viable reality.



© WSPA/Colin Seddon

What **you** can do

The WSPA is working with organisations throughout the world to end the suffering of intensively farmed pigs. YOU can help make a difference to pigs worldwide:

- If you buy meat, always choose free-range or organic pork, ham and bacon. In the UK, look out for certifications such as Soil Association, RSPCA Freedom Food and Helen Browning Organics.
- Watch out for misleading labels such as “fresh” or “farm assured” (unrelated to animal welfare) and question unclear labelling.
- Ask your local supermarket to stock more free-range and organic produce. Use customer comment

cards and helplines to tell suppliers you care about farm animal welfare.

- When eating out, complain if you see cruel products on the menu.
- Send for the WSPA's Farm Animal Welfare Information Pack.
- Order and distribute copies of this leaflet.



© WSPA

To take action, visit wspa.org.uk

For more information, visit www.wspafarmwelfare.org

– our portal for governments and animal welfare organisations.

WSPA, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7587 5000 • Fax: +44 (0)20 7793 0208

World Society for the Protection of Animals

The facts about our food: Intensive pig farming



“Each year 1.3 billion pigs are reared for meat worldwide.”

WSPA
World Society for the Protection of Animals

© WSPA/Colin Seddon



Inside intensive pig farms

The majority of pigs are farmed intensively in systems where they are caged, mutilated and unable to express their natural behaviours. The WSPA believes these intensive systems should be replaced by humane alternatives that are kinder to the animals, safer for humans and better for the environment.

Sow stalls

In many countries, pregnant sows are caged in rows of narrow stalls. On some farms, they are tethered to the ground or stalls using a heavy chain. Unable to express their natural behaviours, they perform pointless, repetitive motions such as biting the bars or attempting to root at the concrete floor. Experts regard these as clear signs of animal suffering. Prolonged confinement also affects their health and fitness, often causing lameness, foot injuries, weakened bones and painful abrasions.

From 2013, the prolonged use of sow stalls will be banned in the European Union, where one fifth of the world's pigs are kept. Stalls are already

banned in the UK. Similar legislation has been passed in the Philippines.

Farrowing crates

When ready to give birth, the sow is moved to the equally restrictive farrowing crate. This is so tiny that she cannot move other than to stand up and lie down. Her strong instinct to build a nest for her piglets is completely denied. Once her piglets are born, she is unable to mother them properly.

Early weaning

The sow is kept in the crate until the piglets are weaned at 3-4 weeks of age (compared with 13-19 weeks naturally). This premature removal from their

mother leads to severe stress, and withdrawal of their mother's milk causes increased susceptibility to stomach infections.

Just a few days later, the sow is re-impregnated artificially and returned to the sow stall. This maximises the number of piglets she produces each year to over 20 (compared with 6-8 naturally).

Barren fattening pens

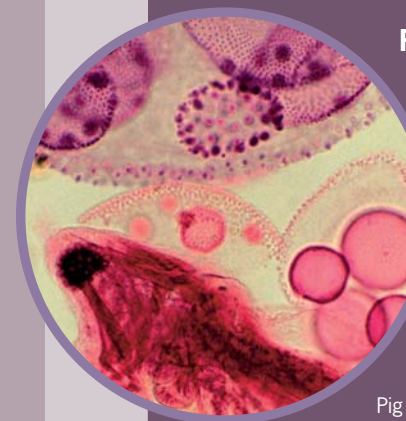
Selectively bred for rapid weight gain, the piglets are fattened for meat for 4 to 6 months. They are kept in conditions of severe deprivation – in small, overcrowded, often dirty pens. They live on bare concrete or slatted floors with no straw or other bedding material. They are unable to carry out natural behaviours such as rooting, foraging and exploring.



Mutilations

Bored and frustrated, the pigs fight and bite each other's tails. Mutilations such as tooth-clipping and tail-docking are routinely practised to reduce these behaviours. Males are often castrated. These procedures are usually carried out without anaesthetic, often leading to prolonged pain.

Research shows that the best way to prevent tail-biting is not to clip teeth or dock tails, but to keep the pigs in good conditions. Aggressive behaviour often occurs as a result of overcrowding in barren pens and mixing unfamiliar pigs, which are basic management mistakes.



Food safety

Antibiotics and hormones fed to intensively farmed pigs can leave residues in meat. Use of antibiotics is also believed to be causing an increase in antibiotic-resistant microbes.

Pig meat can be a source of food poisoning from *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, which both cause gastroenteritis.

Pig meat can also contain *Listeria*, which can cause miscarriages and still births.

New diseases such as pig meningitis in the UK, swine fever in Europe and Asia, and Nipah disease in Malaysia pose additional threats to human health.

The environment

Water: Nitrate contamination from pig manure seeping into groundwater may create greater risk of miscarriage in pregnant women. It can also damage aquatic life and wetland ecosystems.

Air: As pig manure decomposes, it releases toxic chemicals such as ammonia and methane into the air. Residents living near intensive pig farms have reported higher levels of tension, depression, anger, fatigue and confusion.

Soil: The nitrates and phosphates in pig manure are linked to a decrease in soil fertility.

