

WHAT'S WRONG WITH INTENSIVE PIG FARMING?

The factory farming of pigs is arguably one of the cruellest industries in Australia.

In our experience, Australia's pork industry goes to great lengths so its production methods are not disclosed to the public. We believe consumers would hesitate to buy pork, ham and bacon products if they knew what pigs endure in factory farms, and during the slaughtering process.

- There are around 2.4 million pigs in Australia at any one time ⁽¹⁾. Approximately 4.5 million pigs were slaughtered for human consumption in the year ending June 2009 ⁽²⁾. Most are young pigs (4 - 6 months old), but tens of thousands of sows, and some breeding boars, considered of no further 'use', are also sent to slaughter.
- Nearly all pigs in Australia are reared in intensive factory farming conditions ⁽³⁾. The Darling Downs produces approximately 60% of Queensland's intensively reared pigs ⁽⁴⁾.
- In hundreds of factory farms across Australia, female breeding pigs (sows) are treated as 'breeding machines', enduring a cycle of intense suffering and deprivation. Some large farms may have several thousand breeding sows on the one site ⁽⁵⁾.
- In Australia, the majority of the 263,000 sows ⁽⁶⁾ are continually confined inside crowded stinking sheds. After delivering a litter, sows are re-inseminated as soon as possible.
- Most sows are confined for at least some, if not all of their 16 week pregnancy ⁽⁷⁾ in tiny metal individual stalls called 'sow stalls' - so small they are unable to turn around. Most sows get swollen legs and joints because they are unable to move.
- Sow stalls have already been outlawed in the UK and Sweden, and are being phased out in the European Union, Florida (USA) and NZ ⁽⁸⁾.
- In intensive facilities, sows give birth in metal 'farrowing crates'. A strong instinct in pigs is to

make a nest to give birth. But most intensive pig farms in Australia provide no straw, no bedding and only a concrete floor on which to give birth. Farrowing crates separate nursing mothers from their babies.

- Piglets routinely have their tails cut off and teeth clipped without pain relief. Male piglets who are castrated, receive no anaesthetic. There is evidence that some can die from the shock.
- Since 1995 it has been legal to inject Porcine Somatotrophin (PST) into pigs to make them grow faster. Growing pigs already have abnormal bone development in their legs as a result of growing too fast. Because PST makes them grow even faster, there is an increase in leg problems ⁽⁹⁾.
- Pigs are highly intelligent, social animals who can suffer prolonged depression by being denied natural light, space and the opportunity of foraging for food in natural surroundings ⁽¹⁰⁾. Close confinement causes great mental and emotional stress which they express by biting the metal bars, trying to clamber out of the pens and constant head bobbing. Behavioural, mental and emotional needs are disregarded. Exercise is not allowed. Space means money. The pigs exist in their thousands, and are seen as "units of production" ultimately to create profit.



TOP: Suckling piglets unable to reach their mother in a farrowing crate.

ABOVE: A sow confined in a farrowing crate

ABOVE: Sow stalls are so small pigs cannot turn around