

NEWS RELEASE



25 February 2008

Compassion in World Farming
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 521 970
+44 (0) 7771 926005

COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING RESPONSE TO HORIZON PROGRAMME

Compassion in World Farming is shocked and appalled by welfare claims allegedly due to be broadcast tomorrow (26 February) on *Horizon's* latest investigation, 'Supermarket Secrets'.

The Horizon programme contrasts organic farming, in which sows are able to mother their piglets naturally, with industrial systems in which sows are confined in tiny crates while giving birth to their piglets.

Peter Stevenson, Chief Policy Adviser said, "We are incredulous that *Horizon* is willing to portray a farming system which does not allow sows to exercise any natural mothering behaviours or even turn around, as acceptable. The reality is the complete opposite."

Farmers claim that these tiny crates (usually called 'farrowing crates') help to prevent the sow from accidentally crushing her piglets and so reduce piglet mortality. This, however, is not the case. Research shows that the mortality rate of piglets in outdoor herds which do not use farrowing crates is 9.46 per cent, while mortality rates are actually higher in indoor systems which do use farrowing crates, averaging at 11.60 per cent.

Peter Stevenson continued, "The assertion by the farmer in the Horizon programme that farrowing crates are analogous to a hospital is quite frankly laughable. If anything, they are rather like a prison. A recent report by the European Food Safety Authority is immensely critical of farrowing crates. It points out that these crates prevent sows from engaging in their natural nest building behaviours and can lead to stress, frustration, injuries, wounds and disease."

There are a number of organic certification schemes, each with varying standards of welfare. When looking for organic produce, consumers need to make sure that they are buying-in to a credible scheme which takes welfare seriously. Look for the Soil Association's logo for the highest organic welfare standards.

For more information please contact Emily Durrant at Emily@ciwf.org.uk or 01483 521952 or 07771 926 005 (out of office).