

NEWS RELEASE



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Improving pig welfare could save British Farmers' bacon

In a new report released by the National Pigs Association, Compassion in World Farming argues that improving pig welfare could help the British pig industry.

At a time when the pig industry is under serious threat, Ian Campbell of the NPA presented his Fellowship Report - *Mapping the Changes Ahead to Manage in an Expanded EU Marketplace* to members of the pig and animal feed industries at the Pig and Poultry Fair yesterday 13 May.

Looking at the challenges and opportunities for the British pig industry over the next five years, Compassion in World Farming's contribution to Mr Campbell's paper sets out improvements that could become real marketing opportunities as high welfare becomes increasingly important to consumers.

The British pig industry is already ahead of European counterparts:

- castration is rarely practised
- the sow stall cage was banned in 1999
- straw is used by a significant proportion of pig farmers
- a third of British pigs are born outside

To claim high welfare standards, there are still many issues to be addressed:

- It remains common practice for pig farmers to dock piglets' tails despite a ban on the routine use of the practice
- It is also common for those British sows which are kept indoors to be confined in farrowing crates before giving birth to their piglets
- All pigs should be provided with straw or similar materials
- Piglets in the highest welfare systems should be weaned later

These issues and practical solutions are addressed in detail in *Animal Welfare Aspects of Good Agricultural Practice – pig production*, an educational tool developed by Compassion in World Farming for farmers and agricultural and veterinary students.

“A move to higher welfare systems would be good for British farmers as well as for British pigs,” says Phil Brooke, Welfare Development Manager for Compassion in World Farming.

“Farmers should be paid a fair price for a fair product. Already supermarkets such as Waitrose are demanding higher welfare. If the British pig industry can put animal welfare first, British pig farmers will be well placed to take advantage of the higher welfare marketplace of the future.”

Notes to the Editor

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Animal Welfare Aspects of Good Agricultural Practice – pig production is used in agricultural and veterinary colleges across the UK. The education tool is a book and a film and is available from Phil Brooke, Compassion in World Farming 01483 521950, phil@ciwf.org.uk

Mapping the Changes Ahead to Manage in an Expanded EU Marketplace by Ian Campbell, is published by the Royal Agricultural College.