

NEWS RELEASE



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BRITISH PORK ADVERTS BANNED

A major advertising campaign for British pork has been banned from further use for misleading the public with claims of ‘very high welfare’.

A complaint made by Compassion in World Farming has today, Wednesday 11 February, been upheld by The Advertising Standard Authority (ASA). The *Pigs are worth it* adverts describing the British pig industry as having ‘very high welfare standards’ were deemed unacceptable and banned from further use by the ASA.

The advertisement by the British Pig Executive was featured in national press, bill board posters and magazines and stated that “British pig farms have very high welfare standards assured by the Quality Standard Mark. And well cared-for animals mean better quality meat...Help the pig farmers. Sign our petition for fairer prices at pigsareworthit.com and always look for the Pork Quality Standard Mark”.

The ASA ruling states that “some indicators of UK pig welfare, such as the percentage of piglets tail-docked, the percentage of finishing pigs that had access to straw bedding, and the use of farrowing crates for sows might be seen by some as indicating that the general level of pig welfare in the UK in certain areas should not be described as very high”.

Compassion in World Farming’s Chief Executive, Philip Lymbery, says: “This is a real victory for consumers and a spur to more honesty in how our food is produced. This ruling leads the way for an improvement in food labelling.”

“Farmers and retailers need to wake up to consumer awareness and stop hoodwinking people with false messages. The majority of the pigs we consume in Britain are

subjected to unlawful tail-docking, are not given straw bedding and are kept in overcrowded barren conditions.”

“The recent TV programme by Jamie Oliver showed that British pigs are treated better than many of their European counterparts because pregnant pigs are not kept in sow stalls. However it still remains a fact that around 80 per cent of pigs reared for meat in Britain are tail docked, 35 per cent are not given any straw and at least 50 per cent or more of British sows are kept in farrowing crates.”

“By moving to higher welfare systems such as outdoor rearing, free-range and organic British pig farmers could just save their bacon”.

ENDS

Notes to the editor

- **The ad:** The advertisement was on national press, posters and magazines and stated that “British pig farms have very high welfare standards assured by the Quality Standard Mark. And well cared-for animals mean better quality meat...Help the pig farmers. Sign our petition for fairer prices at pigsareworthit.com and always look for the Pork Quality Standard Mark”.

- **The complaint:** Compassion in World Farming submitted a complaint to the Advertisement Standard Authority on the basis of the following evidence:
 - Most pigs in the UK are tail docked despite the ban on routine tail docking. A survey reported by the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) of the European Food Safety Authority in 2007 found that 81 per cent of UK pigs are tail docked. The AHAW Panel reports that tail docking causes acute pain and may also result in long-term pain.
 - At least 35 per cent of fattening pigs in the UK have no straw or any other effective enrichment material. The AHAW Panel considers that appropriate enrichment is of great importance to avoid poor welfare from injurious behaviours, physiological problems and immunosuppression caused by barren environments.
 - Many UK sows are kept in farrowing crates from up to 7 days before giving birth until the piglets are weaned at 3-4 weeks of age. Sows experience poor welfare in farrowing crates because space is so restricted that they are unable even to turn around and they cannot fulfil their strong motivation to build a nest for their piglets. The large majority of the 60 per cent of British sows that are housed indoors are kept in farrowing crates.

For more information or interviews contact Valentina Moressa, Compassion in World Farming, on 01483 521952 or out of hours 07771 926005 or valentina@ciwf.org