

NEWS RELEASE



20 May 2009

Compassion in World Farming
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 521 952
+44 (0) 7771 926005

UK REGULATOR BACKS PIGLET CRUELTY ADVERTISEMENT

ASA judgement: Compassion in World Farming ad ‘substantiated and truthful’

Compassion in World Farming, the leading farm animal welfare charity, today welcomed a ruling by the statutory UK advertising regulator the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) concluding that intensively farmed piglets whose teeth are clipped without anaesthetic have a similar pain response to that of human beings.

The ASA was asked to investigate Compassion in World Farming’s recent newspaper advertisement in which the reader was asked: *“What noise does a piglet make when its teeth are cut off with pliers – without anaesthetic? Same as you.”*

Routine clipping of the teeth of young pigs is banned under EU legislation but is commonplace in most standard intensive pig farms in the UK. Despite the ban, the British Pig Executive (BPEX) report that 57% of pig farmers in the UK clip the teeth of all of their pigs.

After reviewing the scientific evidence as to whether clipping piglets’ teeth causes distress, the ASA concluded that Compassion in World Farming was truthful in stating that piglets suffered pain as a result of teeth clipping without anaesthetic.

Scientific evidence reviewed included:

- research into behavioural responses to tooth clipping showing that the intense and strident vocalisation of piglets squealing during tooth clipping indicated severe pain and distress - **corresponding with a human scream in response to a similar procedure without anaesthetic**. (Noonan et al., 1994, Rand et al.,2002).
- the European Commission's expert Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare conclusion that 'mutilation to piglets such as tooth clipping is associated with pain'.
- the conclusion of the European Commission's Scientific Veterinary Committee that as piglets' teeth contain nerves, 'the feeling of pain in young or adult pigs when tissue was damaged was similar to that which humans would feel'.

Philip Lymbery, Chief Executive of Compassion in World Farming said:

"This ruling is a victory for common sense. Tooth clipping is painful. It is banned in leading pig producing countries such as Denmark and Germany. The ASA has recognised the reality of modern intensive pig farming. Our legislators need to do the same and act now to end such cruel and unnecessary mutilations."

- ends -

For further information or to arrange interviews contact Valentina Moressa on 01483 521952 or 07771 926005 (out of office hours) or email valentina@ciwf.org

Notes to Editors

The advert

The ASA investigated the advert under CAP Code clauses 3.1 (Substantiation) and 7.1 (Truthfulness) but did not find it in breach.

The adverts appeared in six national newspapers during January and February 2009. It is currently appearing in this month's edition of Jamie Oliver's magazine (Jamie - May/June '09).

The advert was produced by The Good Agency www.thegoodagency.co.uk

Tooth clipping

Piglets often have their teeth clipped shortly after birth to minimise biting injuries to the teats of sows and to other piglets. This is usually carried out without anaesthetic or pain relief and can cause lasting pain. The damage caused to teeth by clipping can also result in long-term pain and make them prone to infection. Such mutilation is not necessary if pigs are kept in high welfare systems.

Higher welfare systems – how to prevent bite injuries without tooth clipping

Allowing a sow to move around freely in plenty of space and providing enrichment in a well managed environment to encourage play and foraging behaviour helps solve the problem of biting injuries. Many higher welfare systems – both indoor and outdoor – successfully rear pigs without tooth clipping.

EU Legislation

Tooth clipping is banned in two key pig producing countries in the European Union – Denmark (FVO, 2007a) and Germany (FVO, 2007b). It is also banned in Norway and Switzerland. In all of these countries, the less invasive procedure of tooth grinding is practiced instead. Throughout the EU, routine reduction of corner teeth is banned by legislation. DEFRA recommends that tooth reduction (clipping or grinding) should only be used as a last resort and that tooth grinders are preferred as there is a reduced risk of the shattering of teeth (DEFRA, 2003).

Scientific references

AHAW (2007a) Animal health and welfare aspects of different housing and husbandry systems for adult breeding boars, pregnant, farrowing sows and unweaned piglets. Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare. Question no. EFSA-Q-2006-028. European Food Safety Authority. *The EFSA Journal*, 572: 1-13.

AHAW (2007b) Scientific Report on animal health and welfare aspects of different housing and husbandry systems for adult breeding boars, pregnant, farrowing sows and unweaned piglets. Question no. EFSA-Q-2006-028. European Food Safety Authority. Annex to *The EFSA Journal*, 572: 1-13.

BPEX (2008) Structure of the UK pig industry. Tony Fowler, Economic and Policy Analysis Group, 6. November 2008.

Defra (2003) Code of recommendations for the welfare of livestock – pigs.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/pigs/pigcode.pdf> downloaded 09/03/09.

Noonan, GJ; Rand, JS; Priest, J; Ainscow, J., Blackshaw, JK (1994) Behavioural observations of piglets undergoing tail docking, teeth clipping and ear notching. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 39: 203-213.

Rand, J.S., Noonan, G.J., Priest, J., Ainscow, J. and Blackshaw, J.K. (2002) Oral administration of a 120/0 sucrose solution did not decrease behavioural indicators of distress in piglets undergoing

tail docking, teeth clipping and ear notching. *Animal Welfare* 11: 395-404.

SVC (1997) *The Welfare of Intensively Kept Pigs*. Report of the Scientific Veterinary Committee.