

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

## **The cruel truth behind Parmesan that is hard to stomach**

An undercover investigation released today has revealed the terrible truth behind the way popular Italian cheeses Parmesan and Grana Padano are produced.

Leading farm animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming has exposed the shocking welfare conditions cows producing milk for these famous cheeses have to endure every day.

Footage obtained across nine farms in the Po Valley region of Italy shows emaciated cows forced to live in barren barns with no access to the outdoors, wallowing in their own waste and unable to express many natural behaviours.

As a result, the charity is urgently calling on Parmesan and Grana Padano producers to give the estimated half a million dairy cows involved in this industry access to pasture and improved housing conditions.

*“What our investigators found was simply shocking and really exposes the misery of life in a factory farm,” explained Emma Slawinski, Director of Campaigns at Compassion in World Farming. “There were extremely underweight, overworked animals being treated like milk machines - some with signs of lameness and injury - suffering just so we can add a topping to our pasta.*

*“Parmesan and Grana Padano cheeses are marketed as ‘high quality’ when in fact the reality for the cows couldn’t be further from the truth. It’s time to put these animals back on the land where they belong.”*

These cows prop up a booming industry that boasts an annual turnover of around 5 billion Euros, yet worryingly there appears to be no animal welfare guidelines in their production standards.

Parmesan and Grana Padano, which are often marketed as premium products, are popular amongst Brits with the UK being the fifth biggest importer in the world.

To support the charity’s campaign please visit [www.ciwf.org/NotOnMyPasta](http://www.ciwf.org/NotOnMyPasta)

~ends~

**For photos and footage please email [mediateam@ciwf.org.uk](mailto:mediateam@ciwf.org.uk) or call 01483 541 886**

## Notes to Editors

1. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa.
2. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: [www.ciwf.org](http://www.ciwf.org)
3. Compassion is launching an international letter-writing campaign calling on Parmesan and Grana Padano to make a commitment to providing their cows with access to pasture as a matter of urgency. They are calling on the brands to activate a programme by 2018 aimed at monitoring and improving animal welfare which should include at least 100 days of access to pasture per year for their cows and to completely ban the practice of tethering.